

# 2

## MTP VISIONS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES





## 2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This chapter describes the process by which the vision and goals of the planning process were established. It also describes the process by which the set of performance measures – used to gauge whether the recommended program of transportation projects supports the established vision and goals – was developed. Together the vision, goals, objectives, and performance measures comprise Destino 2045's **"Guiding Principles."**

The planning process used for the creation of the Destino 2045 is prescribed by state and federal regulations, but the vision that drives the process is developed locally.

This MTP visioning process is 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. Development of the MTP requires the collaboration of regional stakeholders, including local, state and federal agencies and governing bodies, public and private transportation providers, the business community, and includes extensive public input. All these stakeholders must work together so that the community's visions and goals coalesce into defined principles that will guide transportation policy and investment decisions within the El Paso Urbanized Area.

The resulting recommendations and proposed improvements will impact all users of the transportation system.



### FEDERAL GUIDELINES

In 2015, the FAST Act became the fifth intermodal surface transportation bill passed by Congress since 1991, the previous four 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 (MAP-21).

The FAST Act continues the eight federal planning factors established under ISTEA and expanded under SAFETEA-LU, while adding two additional factors for consideration in the planning process. The following ten factors must be considered during the planning process:

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; and
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. \***
10. **Enhance travel and tourism. \***

*\*New factors introduced by the FAST Act*

The FAST Act also continues the requirement for a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) long range transportation planning process for making transportation decisions in metropolitan areas, while continuing and further defining requirements for state DOTs and MPOs to set performance measures and goals, which were set forward in MAP-21.

## 2045 DEMOGRAPHIC AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

A major component of identifying future transportation needs is understanding future population and employment growth trends for the region. Land use and growth patterns directly impact how people travel. In places where development is spread out and land use is separated, people are likely to take more long-distance trips in a personal vehicle throughout the day. On the other hand, in more dense, mixed-use environments, people can take more short trips and utilize other modes of transportation such as transit and walking. To better assess the transportation needs of the region, Destino 2045 first considered the potential growth trends that will impact both the performance of the transportation system as well as how travelers interact with the system.

Additional factors like household size and median income are major forces behind travel behavior. The 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) data indicates that the El Paso MPO Region's median household income is roughly \$36,800 and each household has an average size of 2.92 people. The region's median household income is lower in comparison to those of Texas (\$53,207) and New Mexico (\$44,963), with concentrations of low-income households along the United States-Mexico border, downtown El Paso, the Mission Valley, and in Dona Ana and Otero Counties just north of the Texas/New Mexico state line.

Since travel along a transportation system relies so heavily on where people live and work, the 2045 El Paso Travel Demand Model (TDM), which is a travel forecasting tool that is explained further in later sections, includes an estimate of population and employment distribution for current and future years.

For this metropolitan transportation plan, the El Paso MPO updated a community-driven demographic forecast that was originally developed for the 2040 Horizon MTP. **Figure 2-1** shows population growth in the region between 2012 and 2045 based on estimates produced for the TDM.

Based on the demographic forecast, the region's population is anticipated to grow to nearly 1.4 million people by 2045, or by roughly 57% from 2012. **Figure 2-1** shows the largest population increases are expected to occur outside of the current City of El Paso limits, particularly where there is more undeveloped land. Specific areas expected to experience high population growth compared to the rest of the region include the area near Eastlake Boulevard and the area east of Zaragoza Road at US 62. The forecasts also show significant growth in New Mexico west of El Paso County, as well as near Vinton and along Dyer Street at the northern part of El Paso County.

**Figure 2-2**, which shows percent increase in population between 2012 and 2045, confirms these forecasted growth trends where areas outside of the City of El Paso are expected to experience much higher levels of growth relative to the population already living in those areas.



FIGURE 2-1: POPULATION GROWTH (2012-2045)

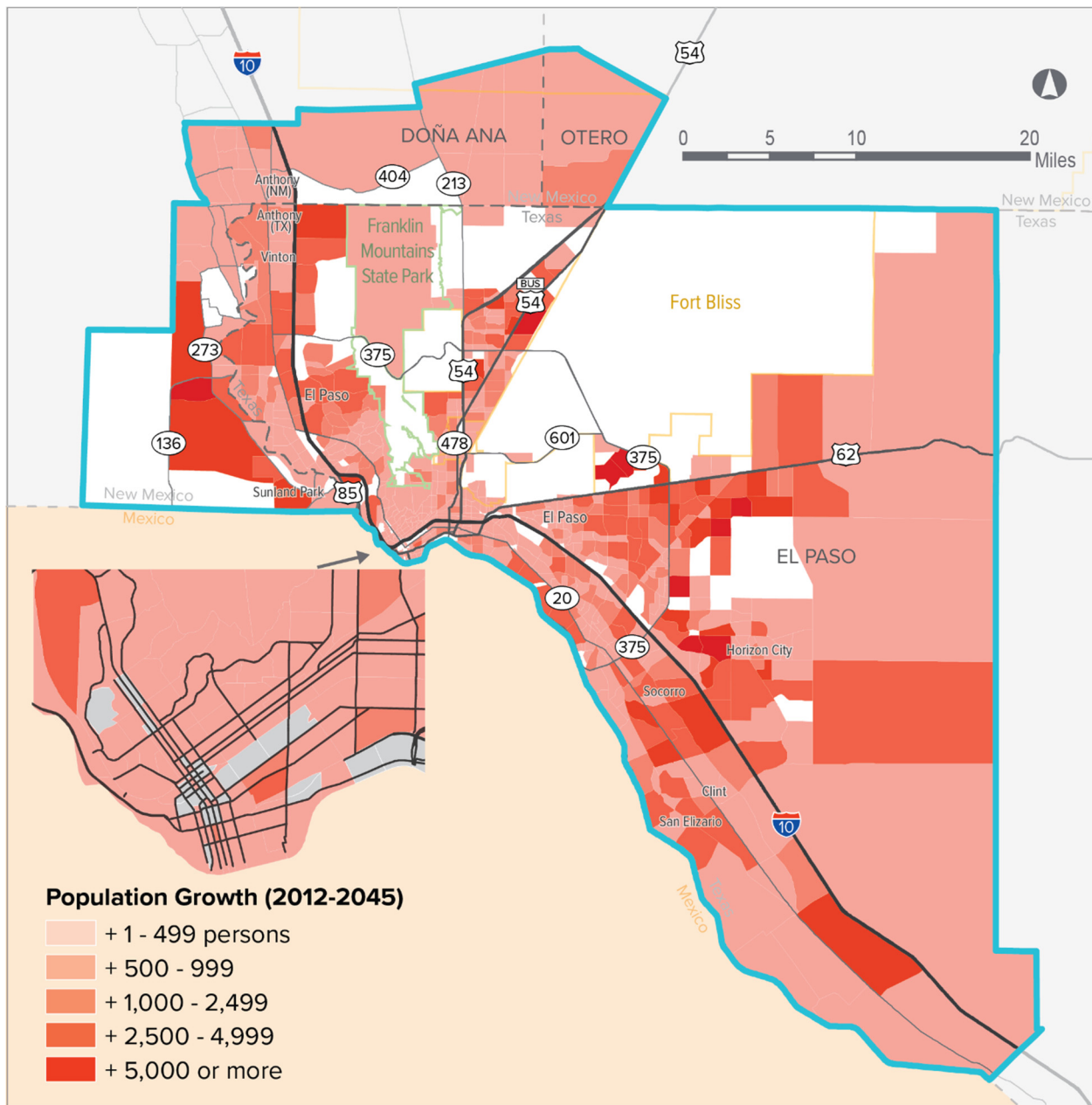
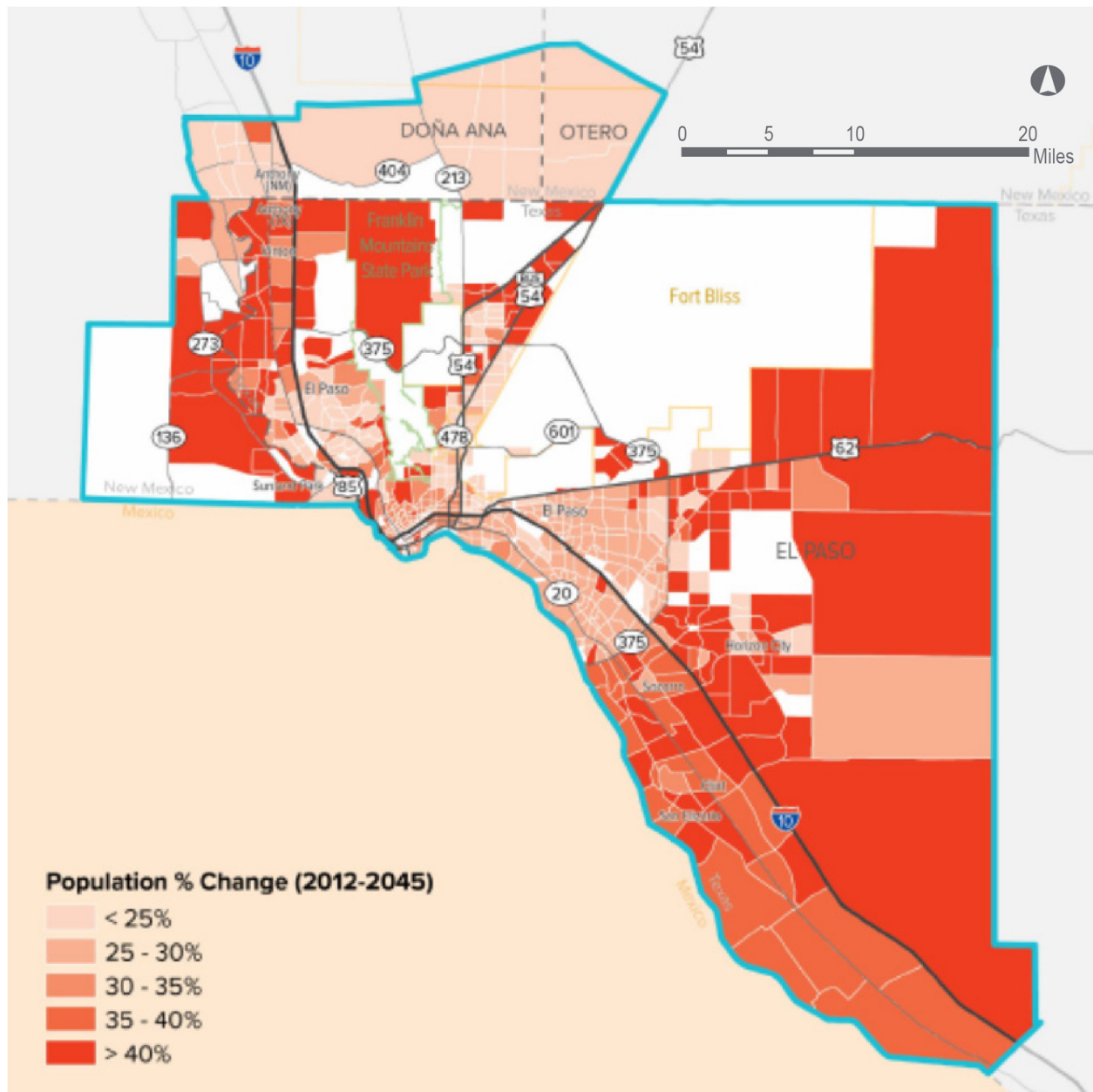




FIGURE 2-2: POPULATION % CHANGE (2012-2045)



High employment growth areas are scattered throughout the region, according to the demographic forecast (**Figure 2-3**). The largest concentration of employment growth appears east of El Paso International Airport on land formerly belonging to Fort Bliss and near the intersection of Loop 375 East and IH 10. Other areas of expected employment growth include the industrial and logistics development

occurring near the Santa Teresa Port of Entry in Doña Ana County, the former smelter lands west of UTEP, and portions of the Upper West Valley along IH 10 and near the new westside hospital. **Figure 2-4** combines the top employment and population growth areas, as forecasted by the TDM, to show the areas expected to experience the highest amounts of total growth.

FIGURE 2-3: EMPLOYMENT GROWTH 2012-2045)

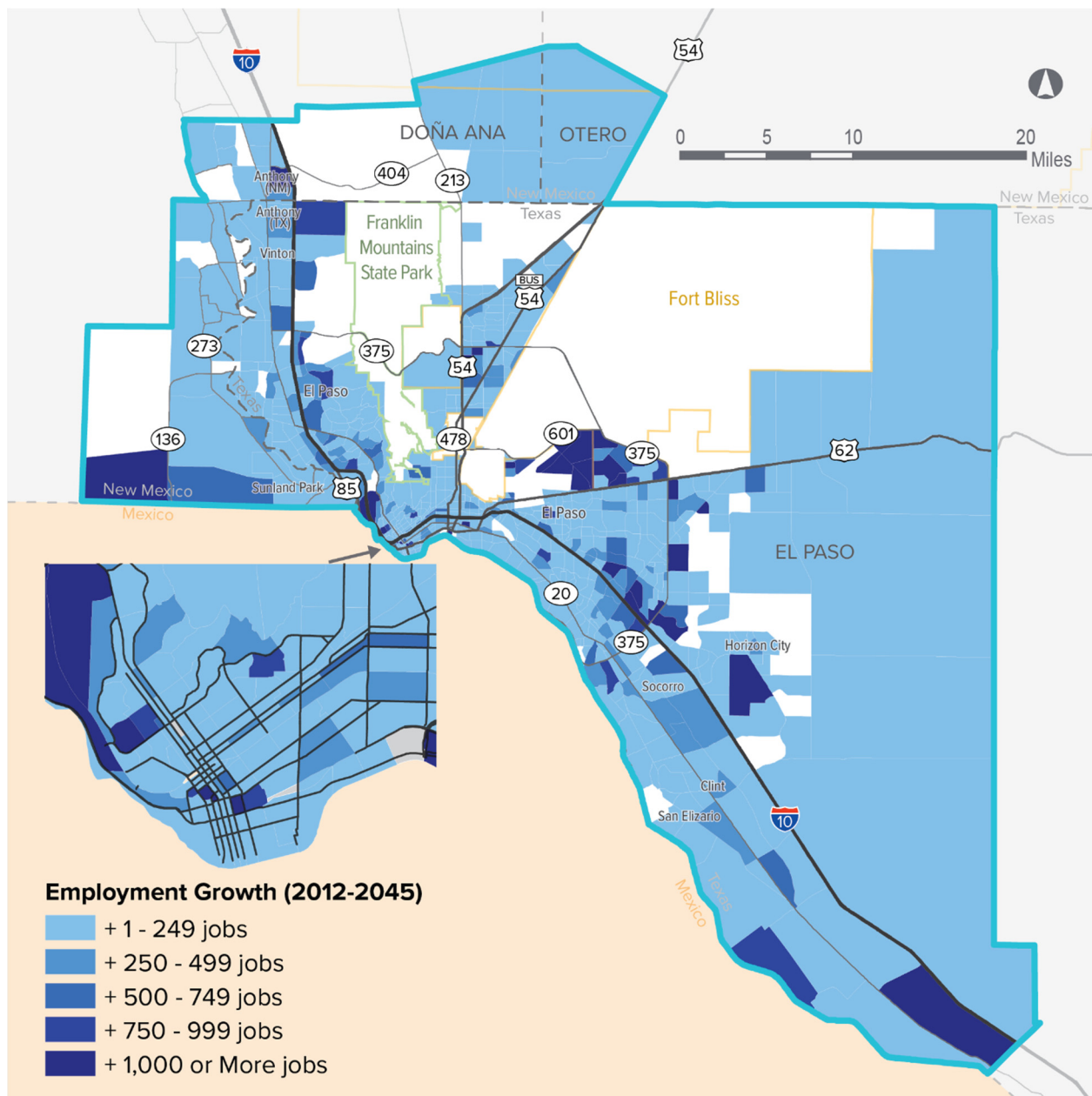
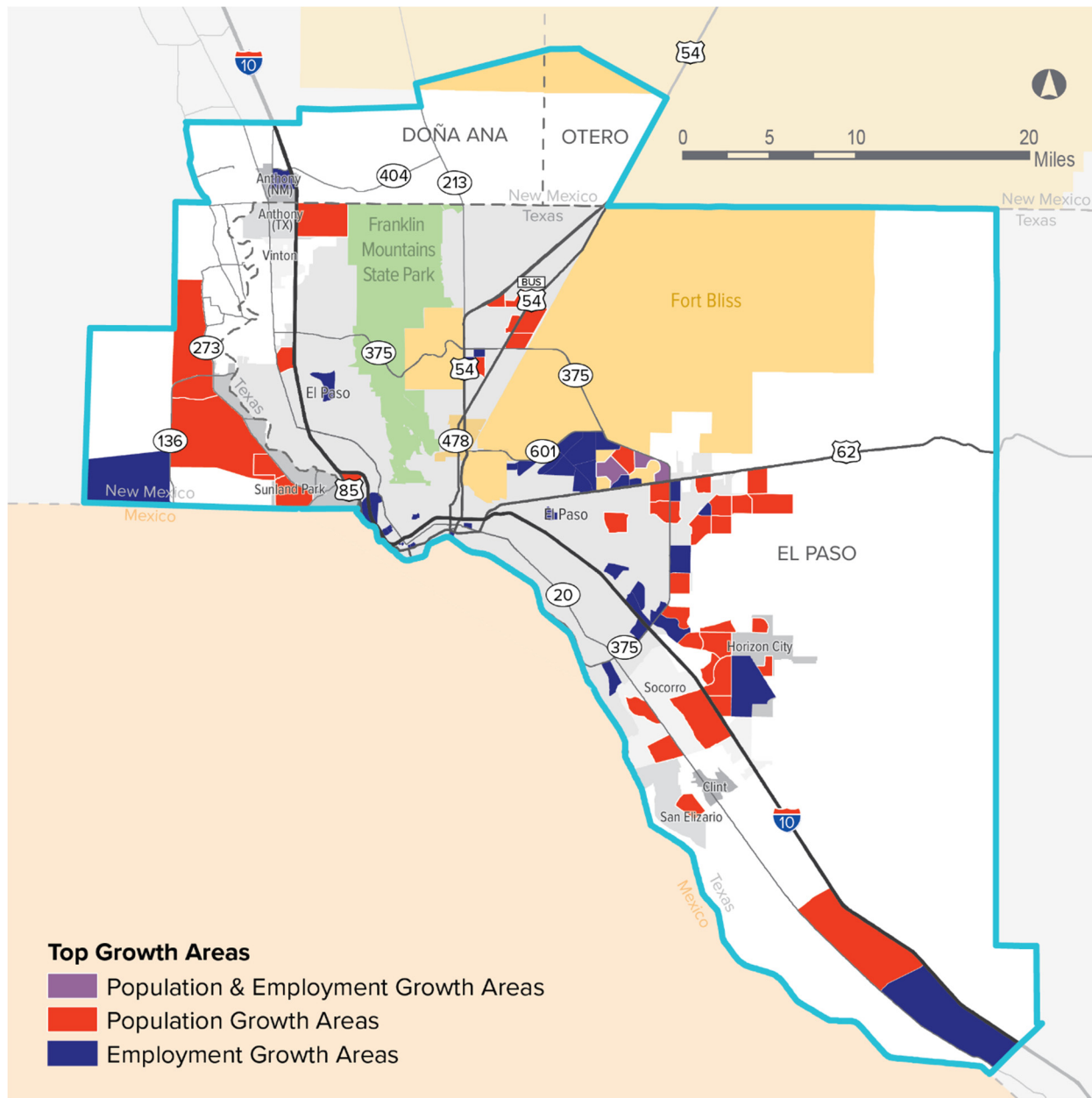




FIGURE 2-4: TOP GROWTH AREAS



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

In addition to future population and employment growth, environmental justice considerations are also a critical step in addressing a region's transportation needs. Environmental justice considerations aim to minimize negative externalities created by a transportation system and ensure that harmful effects of infrastructure investments are avoided in areas with concentrations of populations that have been disproportionately impacted by past interventions, such as neighborhoods demolished for freeway construction or families living near heavy-polluting industrial development. Introduced to metropolitan scale planning in 1994 by Executive Order 12898 and stemming from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the regulation specifically seeks to:

- Avoid or mitigate disproportionately high public health, socioeconomic, and environmental effects on low-income and minority populations;
- Locate and include all potentially impacted communities in the decision-making process;
- Prevent the denial or lack of receipt of benefits from the process by low-income and minority populations.

With SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21, and now the FAST Act further outlining these principles, Destino 2045 incorporated environmental justice considerations into the multimodal needs assessment to evaluate and locate environmental justice zones (EJZs) throughout the region. Accordingly, Destino 2045 utilized GIS analysis tools and 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) data detailing households below the poverty line and limited English proficiency (LEP) households. While minority population is an important consideration in any environmental justice analysis, the high concentration of Hispanic population in the El Paso region makes it difficult to consider this population in the analysis, since nearly the entire study area would be designated as an environmental justice area based on minority population criteria. For this reason, minority status was not used as an indicator for EJZs.

Furthermore, the ACS data revealed that areas with high concentrations of households in poverty closely overlapped with areas where there were high concentrations of households with limited English proficiency. Therefore, Destino 2045 identifies households below the poverty line as the primary indicator for determining EJZs.

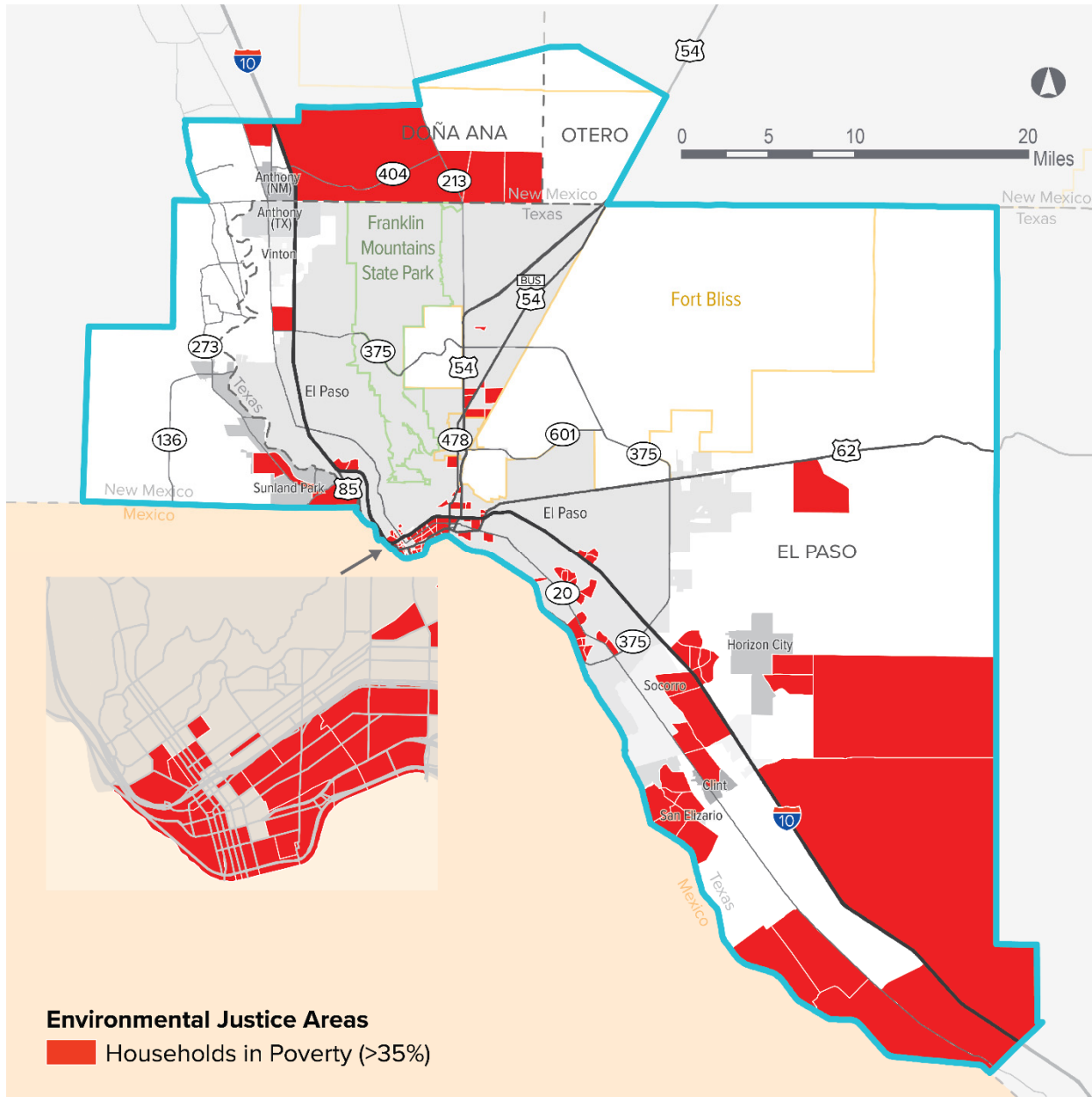
ACS household poverty status data originates at the census block group level and was aggregated to the region's traffic analysis zones (TAZ) to highlight low-income areas in relation to the El Paso MPO's transportation system. The analysis identifies EJZs as any TAZ where 35% or more of households are considered to be in poverty (i.e. household income is below a certain poverty threshold determined by the ACS). **Figure 2-5** shows the location of EJZs within the region. In general, the Mission Valley (e.g. San Elizario and Socorro), the area south of IH 10 near downtown El Paso, and portions of Doña Ana County in the north of the study area show the highest concentrations of EJZs. Analysis of EJZs serves to identify and assess potential impacts created by proposed transportation improvements, ultimately resulting in the development of mitigation strategies for the system. This process also explores the benefits of proposed transportation projects in terms of commute times and improvements specific to EJZs.

Further analysis of how the EJZs are impacted by the Destino 2045 program of projects can be found in Chapter 5.





FIGURE 2-5: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ZONES



## REGIONAL VISIONING PROCESS

To support the development of the Destino 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the project team conducted a series of public visioning workshops as a part of the robust public engagement effort associated with this plan. Additionally, to cultivate more public input, the visioning workshop materials were used to develop an online visioning survey, which was posted on the El Paso MPO and Destino 2045 project websites. These workshops and online visioning sessions were designed to:

- 1) gather information regarding transportation needs in the region;
- 2) identify deficiencies in the current transportation system;
- 3) develop a community vision for future growth within the region; and
- 4) identify appropriate modes and infrastructure for supporting future growth.

During the public visioning workshops and online visioning outreach, participants identified several deficiencies with the existing transportation system, including; congested roadways, connectivity and cooperation throughout the region, mobility and accessibility barriers for older adults and individuals with disabilities, safety and security concerns, and a shortage of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. In addition to identifying transportation system deficiencies, participants completed activities to determine the most important focus areas for prioritizing projects in the MTP. These factors included: increasing multimodal options, improving safety and quality of life, connecting modes of travel, and improving access.

The project team conducted a series of six identical public visioning workshops between May 1st, 2017 and May 6th, 2017.

Workshops were held at various locations across the El Paso region to maximize participation by providing individuals with multiple opportunities to engage, and those that were not able to participate in one of the meetings were invited to provide their input through the survey on the Destino 2045 website



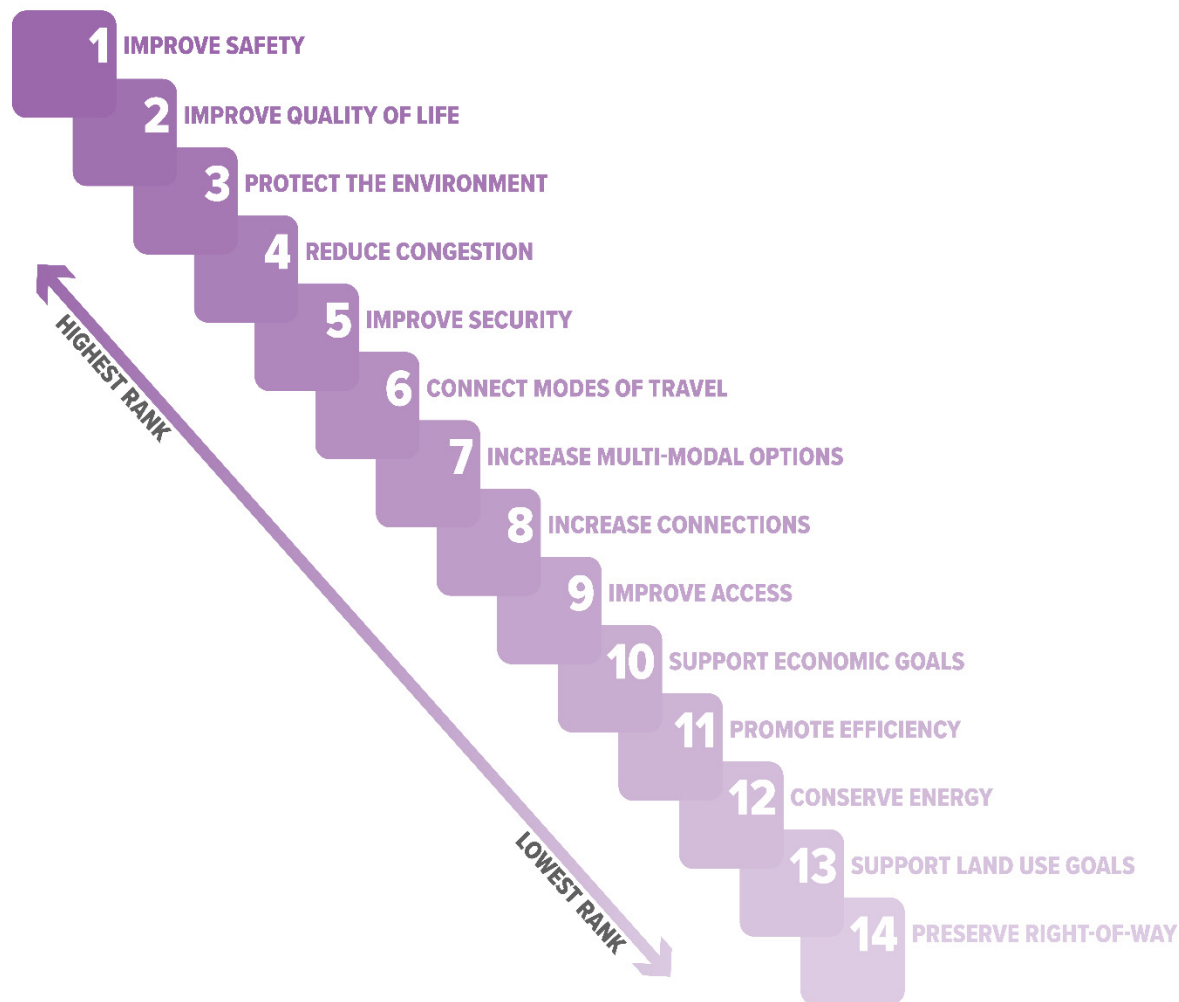


## VISIONING RESULTS

The public visioning workshop and online activity results were essential to identifying a community vision, and participants provided valuable comments on the current state of the transportation system and identified specific needs and desires for the future transportation system. This public input was utilized by the El Paso MPO during the development of Destino 2045.

For example, participants' ranking of the evaluation criteria for future transportation projects helped the MPO develop performance measures to guide the evaluation of transportation system alternatives in the MTP. The final ranking of evaluation criteria (combining the workshop rankings and online surveys) is shown in **Figure 2-7**. Also, the identified growth areas and areas of need help ensure limited resources are utilized to provide the most benefit to the region.

FIGURE 2-6: CRITERIA RANKINGS



## REGIONAL VISION STATEMENT

Considering the priorities established during the visioning process and honoring the vision and goals laid out in the El Paso MPO's Horizon 2040 MTP, the project team crafted the following vision statement to guide the development of the Destino 2045 MTP:

*“Destino 2045 envisions the El Paso Region being served by a reliable multimodal transportation system which equitably enhances accessibility and connectivity within the region and beyond, ensures safety for all transportation system users, preserves the environment, and promotes high quality of life and economic wellbeing.”*

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To meet the mandates of its charter as a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), and because a great deal of the transportation funding that will support the implementation of the Destino 2045 MTP comes from the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), the El Paso MPO must seek to address both local and national transportation needs. The El Paso MPO must address the identified transportation issues of the region both in terms of local needs and the role that the region's transportation facilities play in the national transportation network, including international ports of entry. Therefore, the goals and objectives developed for the Destino 2045 MTP were developed to address identified local priorities while also considering the region's role in the national transportation system.

Goals and objectives provide the framework to guide decision-making about selecting and prioritizing projects that will address identified needs, and which will be included in the Destino 2045 MTP. Goals provide broad statements about what the MTP is trying to achieve, and objectives are specific measurable actions to achieve the stated goal. The Destino 2045 MTP goals and objectives incorporate: public input; goals and objectives identified in previous planning efforts in the region; and the US Department of Transportation's national performance goals. The Destino 2045 MTP states a set of comprehensive

goals and objectives that balance local need and national priorities.

The following sections describe these needs and priorities as established through public input and contained in local, state and national policy guidance.

## NATIONAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND PLANNING FACTORS

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in 2015, the fifth intermodal surface transportation bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), was signed into law, providing long-term funding from the federal government for surface transportation programs. The FAST Act requires that MPOs use performance-based planning processes and consider national performance goals. These national performance goals, which MPOs are required to consider to be eligible for federal funding, are as follows:

- Safety – Achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads
- Infrastructure Condition – Maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair
- Congestion Reduction – Achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System
- System Reliability – Improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system
- Freight Movement and Economic Vitality – Improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development
- Environmental Sustainability – Enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- Reduced Project Delivery Delays - Reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods



To help the MPO and the public fully understand what these national performance goals are designed to achieve, the FAST Act provides background information in the form of ten (10) planning factors that identify the primary considerations affecting the interstate and national highway systems that drove the development of the goals.

To ensure that federal funds will be available for improving the regional transportation system, it is important that these federal FAST Act performance goals, as well as the federal planning factors, are considered and incorporated into the development of local goals, objectives and performance measures.

### **SUMMARY OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WITHIN LOCAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

In addition to reviewing national performance goals and planning factors, the project team reviewed local transportation planning documents prepared by the El Paso MPO and its planning partners to ensure that the goals and objectives of Destino 2045 MTP address and are informed by local priorities and identified needs.

#### **MPO PLANNING DOCUMENT**

One of the most important considerations present in both the Horizon 2040 MTP and the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was the adoption of the MAP-21 (the previous national surface transportation act) performance goals as the guiding principles for transportation decision-making. The MPO also established several of its own goals and objectives in its 2013 Congestion Management Process (CMP), including providing mobility choices, mitigating congestion, minimizing air quality impacts, and promoting accessibility to efficient transportation. Some of the specific objectives from the CMP include increasing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improving bus reliability, continuing investments in Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology, reducing travel delays at traffic signals, and creating shared ride programs.

#### **STATEWIDE PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

At the state level, TXDOT and NMDOT share many of the same goal-setting sentiments. Safety is a high priority on both agencies' lists of goals, with Texas articulating the need to "improve multimodal transportation safety" and New Mexico seeking to "improve safety for all system users." Asset management is also a high priority for both DOTs, as resource preservation efforts tie into multiple goals and rank highly for the DOTs. Identifying potential funding sources that could then be distributed to many modes of transportation and managing those resources to improve accountability is a good example of these efforts.

Increasing investment in multi-modal forms of transportation is a high priority for both DOTs, with TXDOT officially publishing their Bicycle and Pedestrian Program (2017) in which they present the following goals:

- Promote an enhanced and safe bicycle and pedestrian system
- Address congestion by including consideration of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in project scoping
- Connect Texas communities with usable bicycle and pedestrian networks
- Develop a comprehensive and integrated bicycle and pedestrian program

NMDOT included coordinating transportation improvements alongside land use planning, stating that "Cooperative planning by land use and transportation agencies represents one of the most powerful and effective tools that a state can use to address its mobility needs in a mutually beneficial manner." NMDOT also lists "better access to public transit, shorter travel distances for cyclists and pedestrians, improved sustainability throughout the community, and less travel time for automobile users" as major benefits to this type of planning coordination.

### LOCAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Local entities throughout the region focus their goals on responding to their jurisdictional context. In their 2031 VISION strategic plan, El Paso County sets goals for improving the quality of life in the region through a strong economy, vibrant community, and an effective government that is financially sound. The plan points to transportation as a way to foster a vibrant community. Specifically, the plan lists fixed transit route modifications and a regional transit feasibility study as high priority action items. Doña Ana County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan envisions a future in which local character is preserved by supporting existing communities through investments in walking paths and parks, as well as providing more transportation choices by developing "safe, reliable, and affordable transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health."

Local agencies also expressed the importance of coordinated transportation and land use planning in their planning documents. For example, Plan El Paso, the City of El Paso's Comprehensive Plan, lists downtown revitalization as its top goal, with the addition that this includes "development linked with good transportation choices." In addition, the City of El Paso's objectives included adding new land uses, as well as actively working to develop homes and workplaces in closer proximity to one another. The El Paso Comprehensive Plan also states that: to improve mobility, the city must "Grow Up, Not Out." In this context, this means stopping urban sprawl with denser development around the core of the city and expanding the transit network - where every transfer center is an opportunity for redevelopment. The City of El Paso Sustainability Plan shares many of these sentiments, advocating for "an integrated, regional approach to transportation." While the El Paso MPO cannot statutorily regulate land use within the region, it can include goals to coordinate land use and transportation decision-making to facilities accessibility and improve transportation options.

Active transportation consistently appeared as a priority in numerous agencies' plans. The City of El Paso has written a Bicycle Master Plan in which they promote cycling as a viable and safe everyday activity. Numerous related goals are delineated within the document including: being awarded the designation of Silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists; coordinating land use and policy planning to promote cycling infrastructure; supporting programs that educate or increase awareness about cycling as a viable form of transportation; and encouraging the consideration of bicycling at every level of civic government in their jurisdiction. This Bicycle Master Plan works in tandem with the City of El Paso's Great Streets and Corridor Plan, which aims to match the character of the streetscape to the character of the surrounding land use; form a well-connected network of complete streets that is conducive to all forms of transportation (e.g. driving, walking, biking, transit); and capitalize on opportunities to invest in transit service as well as investments in walking and bicycling infrastructure. This goal-setting within the Great Streets and Corridor Plan closely follows the TXDOT state-level Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES RECOMMENDATION

Based on review of previous planning efforts within the region, consideration of the Federal planning factors and national performance goals, and listening to community input through the visioning workshops; the project team recommended the following goals for the Destino 2045 MTP:





Through establishing and achieving these goals, the MPO will get closer to realizing the vision set forth in Destino 2045 MTP and will improve transportation in the region. To achieve these goals, the project team developed objectives that describe specific,

measurable actions that decision-makers should work towards when balancing transportation investments throughout the region. **Table 2-1** lists several recommended objectives related to each overall goal.

**TABLE 2-1: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

GOAL	OBJECTIVES
Safety	Reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries related to traffic incidents
	Reduce the number of crashes at high-speed intersections with an abnormal number of incidents
	Reduce the number of conflict points between vehicles and active transportation users – e.g., pedestrians and cyclists
Maintenance & Operations	Decrease the percentage of facilities and assets not in a state of good repair
	Increase the number of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology assets
	Reduce delay at traffic signals
Mobility	Reduce delay on major thoroughfares
	Reduce travel time to key destinations
	Improve response time and clearance capabilities for first responders and emergency personnel
Accessibility & Travel Choices	Increase the number of jobs and key destinations that are accessible by all transportation modes
	Ensure that transportation system improvements provide equitable benefits to the region
	Expand access to and improve reliability of transit services, particularly for underserved areas and areas with high transit need
	Fill major connectivity gaps in the sidewalk, bike lane, and trail networks that support regional travel
	Encourage infill development and transit-supportive land use
Sustainability	Expand multi-modal access at regional Ports of Entry
	Increase the attractiveness of transportation options other than single-occupancy vehicles
	Reduce emissions produced by vehicles
	Achieve maintenance designation from EPA for criteria pollutants
Economic Vitality	Increase percentage of transportation assets that use alternative energy sources
	Improve accessibility to key tourist destinations
	Reduce delay on designated freight corridors and roads connecting to intermodal or freight facilities
	Increase access to major employment centers
Quality of Life	Improve operational efficiency at regional Ports of Entry
	Prioritize projects that demonstrate progress towards one or more Destino 2045 MTP goals and/or objectives

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The goals, objectives, plans and programs contained in Destino 2045 MTP must be 'outcome based'. The success of the program must be measured in terms of what the program achieves, and Destino 2045 MTP must make provision for and provide tools for measuring that achievement.

The Destino 2045 MTP performance measures described in this section are quantifiable indicators of whether the policies and proposed program of projects in the Destino 2045 MTP help the region achieve the desired outcomes articulated in the adopted goals and objectives. This approach provides decision makers with the ability to objectively set policies and prioritize projects based on the project's anticipated outcomes and whether those outcomes truly address the region's transportation challenges by achieving the local, state and national goals and objectives.

The use of an outcome-based process using objective measures in the planning process also allows the MPO to track transportation system performance as the Destino 2045 MTP is implemented by tracking project performance after projects are constructed. This tracking of project performance will help the MPO

determine whether the project's actual, real-world performance matches the results expected during the planning process. This approach also allows the El Paso MPO to meet its federal mandate for a process of continuous improvement of both the transportation system and the planning process itself.

The planning-level performance measures recommended for Destino 2045 MTP (**Table 2-2**) combine performance measures developed in collaboration with local stakeholders based on the adopted goals and objectives with performance measures required by the USDOT through federal regulations. In general, these performance measures fall into two broad categories. The first category includes those measures (such as mobility and accessibility) that can be modeled (using the MPO travel demand model of the regional transportation system) and quantified at the project level to evaluate the specific performance outcomes of individual projects or packages of projects. The second category includes measures (such as environmental sustainability) whose outcomes are more appropriately measured at the regional transportation system level (and which cannot be discretely modeled by the El Paso travel demand model).



TABLE 2-2: GOALS AND METRICS

GOALS	PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES	EXISTING SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Safety	Number of projects that include safety enhancements located near crash hotspots	Crashes per Vehicle Mile Traveled (regional)
		Total crashes resulting in fatality or incapacitating injury
		Total crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians
Maintenance & Operations	Number of projects that repair or replace deficient bridges or pavements	Number of deficient bridges
		Lane miles of deficient pavement
Mobility	Speed Index (actual travel speed versus non-congested travel speed)	*
	Annual hours of delay	
	Commute times from Environmental Justice zones	
Accessibility & Travel Choice	Percent of jobs, key destinations, and population within ½ mile of high-quality, rapid transit	*
	Percent non-SOV (single occupancy vehicle) trips	
	Average trip costs	
Sustainability	Estimated emissions	*
	Total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) & VMT per capita (regional)	
Economic Vitality	Annual hours of delay along major freight corridors	Average wait times by mode at POEs
	Number of projects that improve operations or multimodal access at current or future POEs	
Quality of Life	There is no specific performance measure for this goal. The indicator for this goal is a summary of performance on each goal for each alternative relative to the other alternatives.	

\*Same as Plan Performance Measures

These goals and performance measures are designed to function in support of State and National goals and performance measures, which are:

TABLE 2-3: NATIONAL GOALS AND METRICS

NATIONAL GOAL	MEASURE(S)
Safety	5-Year Rolling Crash Rates Total, Fatality, Serious Injury
Infrastructure Condition	Pavement Condition Bridges & Pavement On-system & Off-system (NHS)
Congestion Reduction	Peak Hour Excessive Delay Per Capita % Non-SOV Travel
System Reliability	% Person Miles Traveled on Network that are reliable
Freight Movement & Economic Vitality	Truck Travel Time Reliability Index (TTTRI)
*Environmental Sustainability	% Change in CO2 Emissions on NHS Compared to Calendar year 2017