

APPENDIX: LIVE WORKSHOP COMMENTS AND RESPONSES



Public Comments for RMS 2050 MTP

Name	Comment	MPO Response
RMS 2050 Live Visioning Workshop (July 8th, 2020)		
Lucilla Najera	"I am Lucilla Najera, and I am with ____ (<i>Inaudible</i>)__ Neighborhood association, I am also of Mr. Henry Rivera's area. I just needed to better understand this workshop and its entirety. Now you are concentrating in transportation in its entirety, the bus lines, the commute from area to area, is that my understanding or is it more in the detail in which you are trying to put everything together to be able to get from east to east and north to south?"	Roger Williams - "We're looking at everything from a regional perspective as we develop the long-range transportation plan and being the agency that is responsible for regional projects, we're looking at everything from the principal arterials, the minor arterials, the freeways, interstates, public transportation, active transportation and anything that's got to do with the roadways and highways as far as congestion goes and it's a multi-modal approach. We're looking at everything and how it works together, the system if you will. "
Lucilla Najera	"Thank you for answering my question. The slides that you did prior to the presentation, or the question and answer is that basically a survey that after this live workshop we can go back and answer that or is it doing our workshop do we do those questions or that survey in its entirety?"	Roger Williams - "It's two things. There's a workshop itself and there's a survey. The survey is quicker to get through it gets to the same questions and provides you the ability to give us the same response as the actual workshop. You can do either one that works for you. Both are online on our webpage if you want to get to either the workshop or the survey you can also get from the workshop to the survey.
Lucilla Najera	"For example, if I have to leave right now, can I come back and review this posting in its entirety?"	Roger Williams-"That's right. Just don't leave the workshop website while the workshop is in progress, or you will lose all the information that you have provided if you close the workshop"
Thelma Ramirez	Question in chat box - How many times can we submit the survey?	Roger Williams - " You should only submit the survey once; we are trying to get the most accurate information from your survey so by submitting the survey more than one time it really kind of skews the results so please only take the survey or the online workshop gives your responses and submit them one time only"

<p>Lucilla Najera</p>	<p>"I have a question regarding the last question that was given to us doing the survey. We do have a lot of members in our community who travel in different sections itself whether it's by bus or they're own vehicle. How would they be able to transmit their experience whether if it's on the bus or as vehicle users?"</p>	<p>Roger Williams - "The best way to go about that is that as you go through the survey and the on-demand workshop it will ask you about your comments as it relates to different modes of transportation. So don't submit the survey twice so that you can get your response on two different modes, it'll allow you to select a mode and provide your comment and then select another mode and provide your comment. There's plenty of opportunity for you to make sure that you've covered all the bases in taking the survey one time."</p>
<p>Lucilla Najera</p>	<p>"You mentioned in regard to federal funds that are coming into the city in its entirety, does that apply to the railroad or is that something also that we have to tackle with cities and municipalities."</p>	<p>Roger Williams - " Well, when it comes to the railroads, we do very close coordination, but you got to understand that we're not as far as the railroad goes they have their own planning, they have their own funds and we do what I will mention here though an example of that are railroad overpasses. The surface transportation element of where we have conflicts with the railroad traffic if you will. That's a very good question, federal funds are available for those kinds of projects. We certainly are looking at high priorities as it relates to crossings and the need to provide safe crossings, those federal funds can be used for those types of projects. When it comes to the railroads, we're in close coordination as to what they're doing the timing of the projects that they're working with."</p>

<p>Lucilla Najera</p>	<p>"So, if we are wanting to for example have a quiet zone in our district, in our area, who will be our contact. Because I have been following up with quiet zone issues and I've been kind of hit with the wall. Now that you have brought this up will I be able to sit down with you and go over this and what other items will we be needing as a community to be able to make a quiet zone happen."</p>	<p>Roger William - " As far as quiet zones this has come up before, we're certainly open to hearing what's going on there. Certain funds may be eligible to allow for something like that a lot of the federal funds are geared towards specific types of things. But what's important is that you are working with your local municipality and they're submitting projects to us that we're making sure that those types of projects are as well provided and that we can look at them for eligibility and consider those types of projects. A lot of times those kinds of projects do get done by the local municipality depending on where they're at and the issue at hand. Again though safety is a major concern when it comes to the railroads and then the ability for traffic to flow, those are the kind of issues we are looking at; accessibility, connectivity, safety and congestion and when it gets to air quality specially"</p> <p>Eduardo Calvo - "Any concern that you have in terms of a specific need that you see, definitely make sure you submit a comment to us and we will make sure we channel that comment to the appropriate or the potential project sponsor."</p>
<p>Lucilla Najera</p>	<p>"The main issue we are having here in our area is basically that there's numerous times where the train is at a stop and blocks three crossings/intersections they do last anywhere from 20 minutes up to an hour depending on when they do it. The other thing is that since we have three main crossings have a tendency on holding on horns more so that what it would normally be so that has been a very big issue that has been brought to my attention or that I have asked into it. I have reached out to the railroad itself and looked up other areas within our city with the same issue and what they did and how they were able to do it, but I was not able to find a direct contact because that was a request that was made</p>	<p>Eduardo Calvo - "Any project that involves the railroad is a little different because railroads are private companies, and not only that but in most cases the rail tracks were there before anything else was so they own their right-of-way and so it is sometimes to deal with them or to pay attention. Again, legally they have a right to do whatever they want with their right-of-way and that's why sometimes it's difficult to negotiate with them because they hold a lot of the cards in their hand. But at the same time, the railroads have been good partners for sub projects here in El Paso and other regions as well. Depending on the type</p>

	<p>to me by the young lady that I spoke from the railroad. It is very cumbersome because the traffic will go all the way to our next main which is north loop"</p>	<p>of project or type of issue we can certainly bring the railroads to the table to talk. Whether it's, in your case within the city limits, to include city staff and representatives, put together an idea and see how we can address those issues. If it's specifically quiet zones those may be a little bit difficult to get federal funding for to establish a quiet zone but there's other things that we can help explore to solve that problem, you have there. We invite you to provide that comment in writing and we will definitely look at it and see if we can help"</p>
<p>Veronica Carrillo</p>	<p>Question in chat box - How is the MPO and RMS 2050 MTP reconciling the need for transportation (getting around) and the need to reduce carbon emissions? Is this a central focus at the MPO and will it be for the RMS 2050 MTP?</p>	<p>Roger Williams - "Yes, it is a central focus for the MPO and the development of the RMS 2050 MTP. We have in place a congestion management process (CMP) where we need to be looking at how we are getting around town and the need to reduce all kinds of emissions. With the CMP before we add capacity to a roadway, we need to look at other alternatives and considering active transportation in conjunction perhaps with transit and maybe there's a combination of these kinds of things, we don't just take added capacity projects that are going to add to our pollution problem here in El Paso. We are a non-attainment area MPO and as a non-attainment MPO we have this process in place that we must follow, and we do go through to that when we consider and prioritize projects. We are looking at multi-modal transportation and because of our air quality and non-attainment status we also have specific requirements as it relates to emissions that we must go through a very rigorous process to get air quality conformity. The more we can do to keep good air quality the better, so yes, it is definitely a big thing that we consider as we move to this process. "</p> <p>Eduardo Calvo - "To add to that the</p>

		<p>question also raises a very important point in having different goals interact and specifically the questions are the need for transportation and balancing that specifically with reducing carbon emissions. There's always the balance between providing efficient transportation and being good stewards of the environment, just like safety is also a very important goal. All of us somehow have a struggle, we all have different opinions on what is more important but at the end of the day the MTP will be a collection of projects that addresses all of their concerns and these goals. And that is why public meetings are so important, we need to hear from the public what is important to you. So please continue to participate and send your comments"</p>
<p>Veronica Carrillo</p>	<p>"Thank you for that answer to my question. I am very glad to hear that finding ways to get people around town is also being reconciled with the need to lower carbon emissions. I just want to emphasize that while people may have different opinions about transportation and how to get around, what is a fact is that we need to lower carbon emissions and I'm hoping that mass transit will be a focus at the MPO going forward. And perhaps I will be able to follow up to get more information on just how front and center mass transit is in your plans in the future"</p>	<p>Eduardo Calvo - "Absolutely, we definitely welcome that feedback and conversation on how to balance the need of moving people with highway improvements and public transportation and so on. What is also very important is when you talk about whether it's a highway improvement or public transportation you're talking more about the supply of transportation and how to provide for those needs. But I think another important piece of the question and especially now during this COVID-19 situation, we haven't talked to much about the demand, how do we control the demand for transportation. We focus a lot on the supply building highways and providing transit but are there ways of trying to reduce the need to travel. Of course, it happened for the wrong reasons under COVID-19 but we</p>

		<p>are learning that we don't need to travel as much as we thought we did before COVID 19. Obviously, there's still a need but I think you know there are some important lessons that we all can take from the pandemic and what it did to our travel behavior.</p>
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RMS 2050 Live Visioning Workshop (July 13th, 2020)

<p>Noemi Rojas</p>	<p>"I know that the MPO and TXDOT study our corridors, but do you study other cities and how they manage for example their freight traffic or safety?"</p>	<p>Marty Boyd, TXDOT "We do on our statewide studies. I know for the freight that is what they're doing and for our borders we got three very distinct and different border districts. That's one of the things that our office of transportation planning and programming, they look at it statewide and how other cities compare, and we like to learn by their findings and see what can apply to El Paso"</p> <p>Eduardo Calvo "To answer from the MPO perspective yes, we always are looking at other regions and looking for best practices and what other MPOs and communities are doing. But on the other side it's important to realize every community is different, no two regions are alike. Of course, we have similar issues, but every community is different, specially here in El Paso being a border community. Looking at the MPO we have two states but really our border plex region covering three states and two countries and such an important symbiotic relationship between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Politically we are two different countries divided by an international border but there is so much activity moving people, moving goods across the border in both directions. That is</p>
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<p>Noemi Rojas</p>	<p>Question in Chat Box- Does the MTP provide funds for the Port of Entry Bridges and does the MTP encourage innovation at the bridges and how is that innovation encouraged?</p>	<p>Eduardo Calvo - "Projects that are specifically on the bridges and ports of entry are candidate projects to be included in the MTP. The movement of people and goods across the border is so important to us, from an economic development standpoint but also as a community. We have families living on both sides of the border, so it is very important to improve those connections. As far as innovation there is a lot of good things going on. The City of El Paso that owns three of the important crossings here they have been looking at ways to improve the flow of vehicles and people through innovation. It also requires close coordination with our Federal Partners because any time you talk about the international border you need to balance the efficient movement of people and goods with national security goals and those not always align. Anything that we can do to improve the flow is welcome including technology and yes, we are looking at different ways to incorporate technology in the process.</p>