



## APPENDIX C: CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

Metropolitan transportation planning is a cooperative process conducted by the MPO in conjunction with the Texas and New Mexico DOTs, transit operators, stakeholders, and the public to create a vision for the future of the community. The 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.

23 U.S.C. 134(g) & (i)(5)-(6) and 23 CFR 450.316(b-e) set forth requirements for consultation in developing the MTP and TIP. Consultation is also addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.324(g)(1-2) and in 23 CFR 450.324(f)(10) related to environmental mitigation.

In developing the MTP and TIP, the MPO shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies as described below:

- *Agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities (State, local, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight)*
- *Other providers of transportation services*

### **Regional Planning Environment**

**Local Governments and Tribe:** Within the El Paso MPO region, there are seven municipalities and one county in Texas, two municipalities and two counties in New Mexico, and one tribal government. Local governments and the tribe participate in the transportation planning process via membership in TPAC and/or TPB, as well as through regional stakeholder groups organized around various topics. The MPO is also a participant in these groups as further described below.

**Transit Entities:** SunMetro is the oldest transit provider in El Paso County, primarily serving the City of El Paso, but with a coverage area extending slightly eastward and west of the municipal boundary. It provides both fixed-route and paratransit services. SunMetro serves on TPAC and TPB, and participates in WTEP. El Paso County Transit serves El Paso County outside El Paso city limits. The MPO contributed to its route planning studies and has funded its current incarnation, EPATS, since 2021. The City of Socorro operates a small paratransit fleet. A nonprofit organization, Project Amistad provides paratransit services within the El Paso region. SCRTRD provides fixed-route services in Southern New Mexico, with connections into the City of El Paso via SunMetro transit centers. El Paso County and the smaller cities within the El Paso MPO, excluding the City of Socorro, participate in the EPATS-LGC, and the both the MPO and SunMetro participate via ex-officio membership on the LGC board of directors. The MPO coordinates with all the local paratransit providers within our region through administration of the FTA 5310 funding program, which provides funds for paratransit capital purchases and operations.

**El Paso Airport:** The El Paso International Airport is owned and operated by the City of El Paso. It has its own Capital Improvements Plan separate from the City of El Paso, which contains its planned infrastructure improvements, to include transportation. It is overseen by a division of EPIA staff. The El Paso International Airport director serves on TPB.

**The Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG):** RGCOG is a voluntary association of local governments formed under Texas law. It includes: El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Presidio, and Brewster Counties in Texas, and Doña Ana County

and its local governments in New Mexico. The Rio Grande COG is active in local planning endeavors in the El Paso Region. It participates in several regional stakeholder groups and is working with the smaller communities within El Paso County to offer technical assistance and guidance on infrastructure projects and funding, to include transportation.

***The Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority (CRRMA):*** The CRRMA is a political subdivision of the State of Texas, created to give El Paso communities flexibility in funding their local transportation needs. The CRRMA collaborates with the MPO and local governmental authorities to assist in the development and construction of infrastructure projects that help address regional congestion problems.

***The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ):*** The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is the environmental agency for the State of Texas. It has oversight over air quality monitoring in the State of Texas, in compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act's National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The MPO coordinates with TCEQ in its congestion and air quality analyses, Congestion Management Process Document, and modeling activities associated with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

***The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED):*** NMED enforces state regulations and federal laws relating to protection of the environment, resources, and public health and safety. The MPO coordinates with NMED in its congestion and air quality analyses, Congestion Management Process Document, and modeling activities associated with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

***TXDOT:*** The TxDOT El Paso District office participates in the TPAC and TPB and works closely with the MPO on its project prioritization and long-range planning efforts. Additionally, MPO staff coordinates as needed with TXDOT Transportation Planning and Programming for all planning documents to include UPWP, TIP, and MTP. Monthly meetings are conducted with TXDOT Finance Division to ensure MPO can track project transactions and funding reconciliation for Categories 5, 7 and 9 of the TXDOT UTP.

***NMDOT:*** The NMDOT District 1 office participates in the TPAC and TPB, and works closely with the MPO on its project prioritization and long-range planning efforts.

***FHWA and FTA:*** The MPO works closely with FHWA and FTA field representatives in both Texas and New Mexico to ensure that MPO work is carried out in a timely manner and to the requirements of relevant federal regulations. The MPO schedules a monthly coordination meeting with FHWA, FTA, and state DOT representatives to ensure clear communication.

***International Bridges Steering Committee:*** The International Bridges Steering Committee is hosted by the City of El Paso and is comprised of public and private stakeholders on both sides of the international border to facilitate coordinated problem-solving and decision-making. Its participants include GSA, CBP, Texas DPS, New Mexico Border Authority, local governments in both the United States and Mexico, CRRMA, the El Paso MPO, the El Paso delegation to the Texas State House of Representatives and Senate, the El Paso region's representatives in U.S. Congress, the Mexican Consulate in El Paso, the Chihuahua state government, local stakeholder groups like the El Paso Community Foundation, and the Border Industrial Association.

***UTEP:*** As one of the largest public land-owners and employers in the El Paso region, UTEP has a significant presence. A member of its leadership serves on TPAC.



**Fort Bliss:** Planning and infrastructure activities at the military base are conducted by its garrison command. Fort Bliss and TXDOT conduct monthly coordination meetings, which the MPO attends.

### **MTP and TIP coordination and consultation process:**

- **MTP:** The development process begins with visioning sessions conducted with various groups of community stakeholders and the general public. Projects are selected in consultation with the local municipalities and state department of transportation district offices. They are scored utilizing Decision Lens software, with criteria and weights assigned based upon the MPO's adopted project selection criteria. TPB approves the project selections following stakeholder outreach.

Once the project selections have been approved, a system-level analysis is performed to determine the potential environmental impacts of the proposed projects. This analysis is performed by the MPO, utilizing environmental and cultural resources data from various sources including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Register of Historic Places, and state and federal agencies via online mapping tools. This analysis includes consideration of environmental justice factors, identified via the Environmental Justice Index. The results of this analysis are presented to TPAC and TPB as part of the MTP system level evaluation.

A Plan document is then drafted based on the information developed in the project selection and systems level analysis. Following a public involvement process consistent with the MPO's adopted Public Participation Plan that includes public outreach, stakeholder consultation, and a public comment period, the document is adopted by the TPB. Following adoption and conformity review, this MTP serves as the basis for the TIPs developed for the years covered by the MTP. More information is presented in the following section about specific outreach conducted for the adoption of recent MTPs.

- **TIP:** TIPs that occur in conjunction with the adoption of an MTP go through a more robust development process than those that do not coincide with an MTP adoption. TIPs that are developed in conjunction with MTPs have a more involved and robust development process than those that occur between MTP development cycles. A project call is held, and coordination meetings are conducted with stakeholders to determine regional priorities. TIPs developed between MTP adoptions function more as continuations of the implementation of the most recently adopted MTP, and are limited to projects from the current network year as developed in that document. Individual meetings are held with each municipality and transit provider in the MPO region to confirm their projects. Cost estimates are updated, and projects are moved as required to achieve fiscal constraint. In all TIPs, once the draft, fiscally constrained list is developed, communication is held first with each entity with projects in the list, and then with TPAC and TPB to finalize and adopt the TIP project list. Once the project list is adopted, the MPO conducts analysis of the proposed projects' likely air quality impacts and how they are anticipated to impact the MPO's adopted performance measures. This information is then compiled into the TIP

document, which is brought to TPAC and TPB following a thirty-day public comment period.

### **Specific Collaboration Conducted for our Adopted Plans: RMS 2020 Plan Outreach**

- **Roles:**
  - Lead: MPO
    - *Conducted analysis, created RMS 2020 document*
  - Stakeholders: EP County, EP County Transit, COEP, Horizon, Socorro, Vinton, San Elizario, Ysleta del Sur, Anthony, NM, Sunland Park, NM, Dona Ana County, Sun Metro, TXDOT and NMDOT local district offices
    - *Provided input, discussions on funding prioritization*
  - Adoption: TPAC and TPB
- **Responsibilities:**
  - *Data gathering and analysis:* MPO
  - *Project Selection:* MPO in coordination with local municipal governments and state department of transportation district offices
  - *Plan adoption:* TPB
- **Decision points:**
  - *Plan goals:* presented to TPB August 19, 2019. Presentation included purpose of the document and a tentative schedule.
  - *Project selection:* Project selection criteria was determined based on the previously approved project selection process (approved by the TPB June 6, 2014). The approved criteria included the National Goals Carbon Mitigation Plan strategies as well as project readiness. Scores were developed by MPO staff and then subsequently given to each project based on these criteria.
  - Several internal MPO meetings were conducted from October-November 2019 to review Project Request Forms for priority projects submitted by sponsoring entities to determine the scoring of criteria. Final scoring was divided between local government projects and TXDOT projects and presented to the TPAC and TPB along with the recommendation to adopt the RMS 2020 Plan.
  - Project list presented to TPB: October 18, 2019, as a report item
  - Plan adoption: December 13, 2019
- **Meetings conducted for RMS 2020 Outreach:**
  - Village of Vinton, RMS 2020 Strategic Plan
  - CRRMA Board, RMS 2020 Strategic Plan
  - Texas Society of Professional Engineers, RMS 2020
  - Congresswoman Escobar, RMS 2020
  - Rotary Club of El Paso, RMS 2020

- Mobility Coalition of the El Paso Chamber, RMS 2020
- Texas Secretary of State, RMS 2020
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of El Paso, RMS 2020

### RMS 2050 Plan (MTP) Outreach:

- **Roles:**
  - Lead: MPO
    - *Conducted analysis, created RMS 2050 MTP document*
  - Stakeholders: EP County, EP County Transit, COEP, Horizon, Socorro, Vinton, San Elizario, Ysleta del Sur, Anthony, NM, Sunland Park, NM, Dona Ana County, Sun Metro, TXDOT and NMDOT local district offices, general public
    - *Provided input, discussions on funding prioritization*
  - Adoption: TPAC and TPB
- **Responsibilities:**
  - *Data gathering and analysis:* MPO
  - *Project Selection:* MPO in coordination with local municipal governments and state department of transportation district offices
  - *Plan adoption:* TPB
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- **Decision points:**
  - *Visioning process:* A virtual public visioning workshop was conducted during the summer 2020 to identify the priorities and needs of the region. (Refer to Appendix E of the RMS 2050 MTP for more information)
  - Additionally, after obtaining demographic information from the US Census Bureau and Texas Demographic Center, a Delphi process was conducted to determine likely future growth patterns in the region and inform the development of the RMS 2050 Travel Demand Model. Invitation letters were sent to approximately 94 community leaders to participate in the Delphi panel. Recipients represented entities throughout the El Paso region with expertise in a variety of areas. Of those invited, 74 accepted the invitation. These panel members were recruited from regional government agencies; community organizations; the real estate and development communities; area employers; financial institutions; educational institutions; transit agencies, and other organizations. Invitations were sent to the following community agencies and organizations. For more detailed information on the Delphi process, please see [Appendix F-TDM Demographic Development.pdf \(elpasompo.org\)](#)
  - *Project selection:* The proposed project evaluation and prioritization process was presented to the TPAC and TPB in July 2020 . This included the draft criteria to be used for the projects. In August 2020, the TPB members participated in a pairwise



comparison to determine the relative weights of the criteria which was recommended by the TPAC at the August 5, 2020 meeting and approved by the TPB on September 18, 2020. MPO staff coordinated with sponsoring entities to submit updated Project Request Forms for their proposed projects to evaluate utilizing Decision Lens.

- *Project list adoption:* TPAC recommended for approval at their September 1, 2021 meeting, and TPB approved the fiscally constrained list at their September 17, 2021 meeting
- *Plan adoption:* March 25, 2022
- **RMS 2050 Environmental Analysis:** For the system level analysis of potential environmental impacts, MPO staff gathered environmental and cultural resources data from various sources including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Register of Historic Places, and state and federal agencies via online mapping tools.

The systems-level analysis of potential environmental impacts is intended to function as a resource for agencies and elected officials responsible for project implementation. The results of the analysis were present during TPAC and TPB presentation of the final document.

In addition, as stated in the MTP, the Environmental Justice populations (low-income and minority groups) were identified via the Environmental Justice Index, and the capacity expansion projects that may impact identified Environmental Justice areas were presented to TPAC and TPB as part of the MTP system level evaluation.

- **RMS 2050 Outreach:** RMS 2050 Plan coordination required outreach and coordination for the visioning exercise during the COVID-19 Pandemic and its virtual public engagement environment. The MPO reached out to multiple entities for virtual, one-on-one meetings and charettes. The MPO also conducted virtual public meetings at key points in the development process. The following meetings were also held with area stakeholders towards this endeavor:
  - American Council of Engineering Companies, RMS 2050 visioning
  - Greater El Paso Association of Realtors, RMS 2050 MTP
  - University of Texas at El Paso - ASPIRE Cohort, RMS 2050

### **TIP 2021 – 2024:**

TIPs that do not share implementation years with MTP updates, like the 2021 – 2024 TIP, function more as continuations of the implementation of the most recently adopted MTP, and are limited to projects from the current network year as developed in that document. Individual meetings are held with each project sponsoring entity in the MPO region to confirm their projects. Cost estimates are updated, and projects are moved as required to achieve fiscal constraint. Once the draft fiscally constrained list is developed, communication is held first with each entity with projects in the list, and then with TPAC and TPB to finalize the TIP project list.

- **Roles:**



- Lead: MPO
  - *Conducted analysis, created 2021 - 2024 document*
- Stakeholders: EP County, EP County Transit, COEP, Horizon, Socorro, Vinton, San Elizario, Ysleta del Sur, Anthony, NM, Sunland Park, NM, Dona Ana County, Sun Metro, TXDOT and NMDOT local district offices
  - *Provided input, discussions on funding prioritization*
- Adoption: TPAC and TPB
- **Responsibilities:**
  - *Data gathering and analysis:* MPO
  - *Project Selection:* MPO in coordination with local municipal governments and state department of transportation district offices
  - *Plan adoption:* TPB
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- **Decision points:**
  - Project list approval:
    - 21-24 TIP: was approved as the implementation stage for part of RMS 2020 approval on December 13, 2019
  - Plan adoption: TPB date:
    - 21-24 TIP: May 22, 2020

### TIP 2023 – 2026

TIP 2023 – 2026 was developed in conjunction with RMS 2050 Plan and the public processes for both documents were intertwined to ensure proper coordination between the documents.

- **Roles:**
  - Lead: MPO
    - *Conducted analysis, created 2023 - 2026 document*
  - Stakeholders: EP County, EP County Transit, COEP, Horizon, Socorro, Vinton, San Elizario, Ysleta del Sur, Anthony, NM, Sunland Park, NM, Dona Ana County, Sun Metro, TXDOT and NMDOT local district offices
    - *Provided input, discussions on funding prioritization*
  - Adoption: TPAC and TPB
  - Final Approval: TXDOT, NMDOT, FHWA, FTA
- **Responsibilities:**
  - *Project Call:* MPO
  - *Data gathering and analysis:* MPO
  - *Project Selection:* MPO in coordination with local municipal governments and state department of transportation district offices
  - *Plan adoption:* TPB
- **Decision points:**
  - *Project call:* Through the project call conducted for the development of the RMS 2020 Plan and the RMS 2050 MTP, MPO staff conducted individual meetings with sponsoring entities



to identify the priority projects to be implemented during the years of the 2023-2026 TIP. The meetings with each of the sponsoring entities also allowed the MPO to coordinate in the review of the scope of the projects to determine cost estimates and the eligible funding categories.

- *Project selection:* Once priority projects had been identified, all projects submitted in the project call were evaluated and scored utilizing *Decision Lens* software. The scoring of the projects in *Decision Lens* was reviewed with each of the sponsoring entities. MPO staff conducted several workgroup meetings with representatives from the TPAC to review the draft project list during the summer of 2021 and determine scheduling of the projects to ensure fiscal constraint.
- *Project list adoption:* Project list for the TIP was presented through the review of the RMS 2050 MTP project list. TPAC recommended for approval at their September 1, 2021 meeting, and TPB approved the fiscally constraint list at their September 17, 2021 meeting.
- *Plan adoption:* March 25, 2022.
- **Outreach:** A 2023 – 2026 working group was convened to prioritize projects and develop a consensus-based fiscally constrained project list for the 2023 – 2026 TIP. The working group was comprised of representatives of entities with sponsored projects within the proposed document. The following entities participated in the working group: ELP District TXDOT, COEP, EP County, PDN Foundation, Socorro, Horizon, Vinton, Sun Metro, NMDOT.

### Ongoing public involvement and coordination: MPO public hearings:

- Transportation Policy Board: comprised of local elected leadership, state legislative representatives, El Paso Airport leadership, transit provider leadership, and TXDOT and NMDOT district senior leadership
- Transportation Policy Advisory Committee: comprised of local elected leadership, technical staff, TXDOT and NMDOT district leadership, transit provider technical staff, local university leadership, and tribal government
- Executive Committee: comprised of local elected leadership

### Project sponsor public meetings/hearings:

MPO staff attends public meetings and public hearings conducted by project sponsors to provide comment and to aid with information about MPO processes.

### Recurring coordination meetings

- Monthly coordination meetings with the City of El Paso & TxDOT District Office
- Bi-weekly coordination meetings with TxDOT District Office
- Monthly coordination meetings with El Paso County Public Works staff



- Monthly coordination meetings with FHWA/FTA/state DOTs
- Monthly District Design Review meetings
- Monthly TXDOT/Ft Bliss coordination meetings

***Regularly scheduled meetings for local entities which MPO staff attends regularly***

- Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority Board of Directors
- El Paso Area Transportation Services Local Government Corporation Board
- El Paso County Commissioners Court
- El Paso City Council
- Sun Metro Mass Transit Board
- West Texas/El Paso Regional Transportation Coordination Committee
- Project management meetings for the upcoming Nuevo Huevo Tanks and Arterial One construction projects

***Regional coordination groups in which the MPO participates***

- Borderland Expressway Coalition
- Quarterly Traffic Management Team meetings
- Mission Trails Alliance – stakeholder group comprised of leadership and technical staff from El Paso County, Rio Grande COG, El Paso Chamber of Commerce, El Paso Community Foundation, City of El Paso, City of Socorro, City of San Elizario, Mission Trails Historical Society, TXDOT, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo tribal government

***Meetings which MPO staff does not regularly attend, but does habitually review the posted agendas to keep informed on their activities:***

- City of El Paso Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Mesilla Valley MPO Policy Board, Technical Advisory Committee, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee
- South Central Regional Transit District Board of Directors

***Outreach conducted in conjunction with other regional plans:***

- El Paso Chamber, Border Transportation Master Plan
- Consejo de Desarrollo Económico Regional (CODER) in Ciudad Juárez, Border Transportation Master Plan
- Binational Border Infrastructure Roundtable, Cross-Border Coordination

