



# Regional Freight and Trade Plan Goals and Objectives

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## WA7: Rio Grande Valley Freight and Trade Transportation Plan

July 15, 2020

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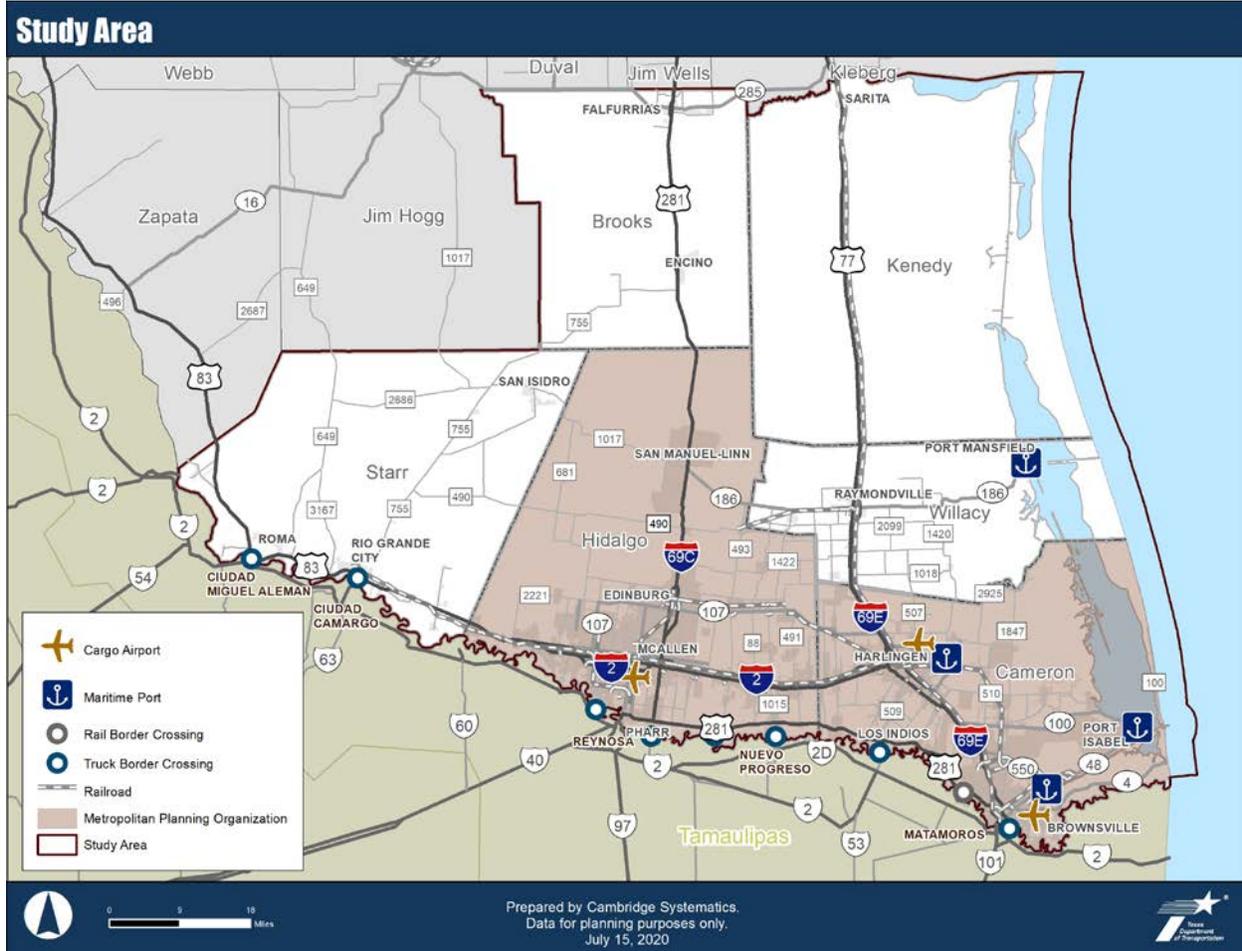
## Acronyms

BTMP	Border Transportation Master Plan
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTZ	Foreign Trade Zone
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
OS/OW	Oversize/Overweight
POE	Port of Entry
RGV	Rio Grande Valley
RGVMPO	Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
RGVSC	Rio Grande Valley Steering Committee
TxFAC	Texas Freight Advisory Committee
TFMP	Texas Freight Mobility Plan
TMFN	Texas Multimodal Freight Network
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation

## 1.0 Introduction

During the development of the 2018 Texas Freight Mobility Plan (TFMP), stakeholder engagement workshops were held throughout the state, including in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Brownsville, to discuss freight issues impacting the region and the state. During these workshops and meetings of the Texas Freight Advisory Committee (TxFAC), freight movement and trade at the Texas-Mexico border was identified as a significant contributor to regional, statewide, and national economic vitality. This project builds on the work started by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) with the TFMP by creating a regional freight plan covering the six counties of Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Kenedy, Starr, and Willacy as shown in Exhibit 1. Additionally, the project complements the concurrent Border Transportation Master Plan (BTMP) which will identify transportation issues, needs, challenges, and opportunities and strategies of moving people and goods across the border, the border regions, and beyond.

Exhibit 1: Study Area



## 1.1 Context of this Memorandum

TxDOT is developing a Rio Grande Valley Regional Freight and Trade Transportation Plan (“Regional Freight and Trade Plan”). This Regional Freight and Trade Plan is critical given the importance of the RGV to freight movement in Texas and nationally. The region is linked to many strategic Texas supply chains such as manufacturing, agriculture, and energy production, particularly through international trade activity. To complete this Regional Freight and Trade Plan, the following technical tasks will be completed:

- **Task 2.1: Develop Goals and Objectives.** Develop goals and objectives for the Regional Freight and Trade Plan in alignment with existing and ongoing planning efforts and stakeholder input. *This task is the subject of this memorandum.*
- **Task 2.2: Regional Data Collection, Inventory and Analysis.** Collect, review, and analyze plans, studies, and data relevant to the RGV region. This task will culminate in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database that will be updated throughout plan development.
- **Task 2.3: Regional Trade and Freight Corridor and Network Identification.** Identify transportation assets to be included in the Regional Multimodal Freight and Trade Network through data analysis and stakeholder input. This task will culminate in the freight network used to prioritize recommendations and ultimately to update the TFMP.
- **Task 2.4: Existing Regional Freight and Trade Needs Identification and Assessment.** Identify and assess the existing conditions, issues, and trends related to freight and trade movement in the region. This task will culminate in a needs assessment identifying the types and locations of high priority needs in the region and form the basis for implementation recommendations.
- **Task 2.5: Regional Trade and Freight Commodity Flow Profile.** Describe current freight and trade movements in the region using commodity flow and border crossing data. This task, in combination with Task 2.6, will culminate in a commodity flow and forecast summary.
- **Task 2.6: Regional Trade and Freight Forecasting.** Forecast commodity flows and freight movements for 2030, 2040, and 2050 and estimate the impact of freight growth on the transportation network. This task, in combination with Task 2.5, will culminate in a commodity flow and forecast summary.
- **Task 2.7: Regional Trade, Freight, and Economic Analysis.** Document the importance of the RGV’s freight and trade movements to the regional, state, and national economy by quantifying jobs, income, gross regional product, and tax revenue related to freight and trade activities. This task will culminate in a summary of economic importance and fact sheets.

- **Task 2.8: Regional Land Use and Community Impacts.** Assess current and planned land use for industrial, commercial, and residential uses as it relates to the freight transportation network. This task will culminate in a summary of land uses, potential economic development opportunities, and environmental justice concerns.
- **Task 2.9: Regional Project Identification and Prioritization.** Identify transportation strategies to improve freight and trade movement in the region and prioritize projects based on the needs assessment completed in Task 2.4. This task will culminate in a prioritized list of strategies to include projects, programs, and policies.
- **Task 2.10: Regional Recommendations and Investment Plan.** Refine recommendations based on the strategy identification and prioritization conducted in Task 2.9. This task will culminate in a Freight Investment Plan for the RGV.
- **Task 2.11: Implementation and Action Plan.** Develop an implementation and action plan describing responsible parties, timeframes, and funding options for the recommendations identified in Task 2.10.
- **Task 2.12: Final Plan Documents.** Develop a final Regional Freight and Trade Plan and Executive Summary consolidating the technical and stakeholder engagement tasks completed throughout this project.

## *1.2 Organization of this Memorandum*

The remainder of this memorandum contains the following sections:

- Section 2.0: Developing Goals and Objectives for the Plan
- Section 3.0: Final Goals and Objectives of the Plan
- Appendix A: Written Comments on Goals and Objectives
- Appendix B: Goals and Objectives Brief

## **2.0 Developing Goals and Objectives for the Plan**

The goals and objectives for the Regional Freight and Trade Plan were initially developed to advance TxDOT goals and recommendations from the 2018 TFMP, and were revised based on stakeholder input. Policy and program recommendations from the TFMP, supported by this Regional Freight and Trade Plan include the need to support:

- Regional freight planning,
- Economic competitiveness,
- Multimodal freight network development,
- Texas' position as a global trade and logistics hub,
- Mobility at international border crossings, and

- Coordination with national, state, and local agencies, including Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

The draft goals and objectives were reviewed and vetted by stakeholders through the plan kick-off meeting and the RGV Steering Committee (RGVSC). Additionally, input from four transportation forums held in the region in February 2020, as well as several BTMP development meetings, informed the understanding of the plan goals and objectives. An online survey was also distributed to stakeholders on the invitations and agendas for in-person meetings, to share with individuals who could not attend. Invitations were sent to approximately 2,900 recipients and were shared with local organizations such as the South Texas Manufacturers Association and the Texas International Produce Association. The survey was available from December 9, 2019, to February 29, 2020, and received 14 responses. Stakeholders were asked about their individual freight transportation related priorities to generate additional discussion beyond a direct response to the draft goals and objectives. The following sections describe the evolution of the goals and objectives through stakeholder engagement.

### *2.1 Kick-off Meeting Input, September 12, 2019*

In addition, the project team and their partners in the TxDOT International Trade & Border Planning Branch, key stakeholders from the TxDOT Pharr District, maritime ports, the region's MPOs,<sup>1</sup> and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) were invited to the plan kick-off meeting held on September 12, 2019, at the TxDOT Pharr District Office. The preliminary goals and objectives shown in Exhibit 2 were presented during this meeting. At this time, attendees were also told that the goals and objectives would be refined and confirmed through a stakeholder engagement process.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the kick-off meeting, three MPOs still existed in the RGV. These MPOs were consolidated into a single RGV MPO in October, 2019.

## Exhibit 2: Preliminary Goals and Objectives, September 12, 2019

Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Integrate multimodal, regional, and statewide international freight transportation considerations into the local and regional transportation planning, programming, and implementation processes.</li><li>▪ Identify the region's freight and trade-related transportation needs and opportunities impacting the Texas Multimodal Freight Network (TMFN) and statewide economic competitiveness.</li></ul>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Supplement state data through local and regional data collection activities specific to border crossings, maritime traffic, and regional movement.</li><li>▪ Enhance regional freight forecasts, specifically related to international and maritime trade.</li><li>▪ Identify and assess the regional multimodal transportation network serving freight and trade needs.</li><li>▪ Examine the link between local land use and freight transportation demand and operations.</li><li>▪ Define the RGV's sphere of influence and document key economic and transportation connections at the regional, statewide, national, and international levels.</li><li>▪ Develop recommendations for enhancing freight transportation mobility, connectivity, and safety on the local and regional transportation system.</li></ul>

No changes to these goals and objectives were specifically recommended. Presentation and discussion of these objectives prompted the attendees to comment on recent growth in the oil and gas industry in the region, the importance of traditionally prominent industries such as produce and warehousing, and the need to capture the economic activity generated in Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs).

When asked more broadly about priorities for the region, several comments aligned with the proposed objectives, specifically:

- Promoting efficient movement of people and goods,
- Identifying priority trade corridors,
- Integrating transportation and land use considerations, and
- Prioritizing projects based on need.

Other comments identified additional priorities for the region that should be reflected in the Regional Freight and Trade Plan, including:

- Cooperation among stakeholder groups, especially for communicating a regional vision,
- Quantifying the region's importance to state and national economies,
- Recommendations that are implementable based on regional perspectives, and
- A sustainable, reliable transportation system.

At the close of the meeting, the attendees were asked about outcomes that would make the Regional Freight and Trade Plan successful. Many comments focused on collaboration, cooperation, and coordination within the region, including stakeholder engagement and receiving input from system users.

Based on feedback from this meeting, three additional objectives were proposed:

- Identify and communicate the impact of regional freight movement and cross-border trade through the region to local, state, and national economies,
- Support identification of freight transportation projects for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGMPO), and
- Enhance transportation planning and investment decision-making processes, through stakeholder engagement.

## *2.2 Steering Committee Input, December 4, 2019*

The first meeting of the RGVSC was held on December 4, 2019, at the Pharr Events Center. Attendees included representatives of local governments, industry and trade groups, ports of entry (POE), maritime ports, and local freight businesses. The members were presented with the same goals and objectives described in the previous section, and the three additional proposed objectives. Written comments are included as Appendix A.

Steering Committee members were also asked to comment on their desired outcomes of the Regional Freight and Trade Plan, through the following discussion prompts:

- What does your organization need from a regional freight and cross-border trade plan?
- Put another way, how would this plan be useful to your organization?

Responses to these prompts were collected through Menti, an online polling platform, allowing participants to respond to many types of questions with their smartphone, tablet, or

computer. This platform also displays the responses as they are received, and a facilitated discussion followed.

No changes to the presented goals and objectives were proposed. However, the discussion further defined, and reinforced, the draft goals and objectives, through two central themes: communicating a strategic vision, and addressing specific regional transportation needs. The RGVSC viewed the merger of the three MPOs in the region as an opportunity to develop a more strategic view of the region as a whole. This outlook included greater connectivity due to more comprehensive transportation planning in the MPO's transportation plans. Additionally, the need to communicate the economic role of the region as a single system was discussed. Members also clarified the need for implementable, feasible recommendations in the Regional Freight and Trade Plan as well as consideration of funding mechanisms.

Specific areas within the data collection and needs assessment objectives were also discussed. Regional connectivity, particularly east-west, was identified as a common challenge. Quantifying oversize/overweight (OS/OW) traffic in the region, was also identified as a desired outcome of the Regional Freight and Trade Plan. The RGV handles significant OS/OW traffic due to its trade with Mexico, and this traffic is supported by designated OS/OW corridors in Hidalgo County and near the Port of Brownsville. The need to measure this traffic and plan for additional accommodation of it through the region was identified during this discussion.

Based on feedback from this meeting, both goals and all nine objectives were deemed relevant.

### *2.3 Additional Input through February 2020*

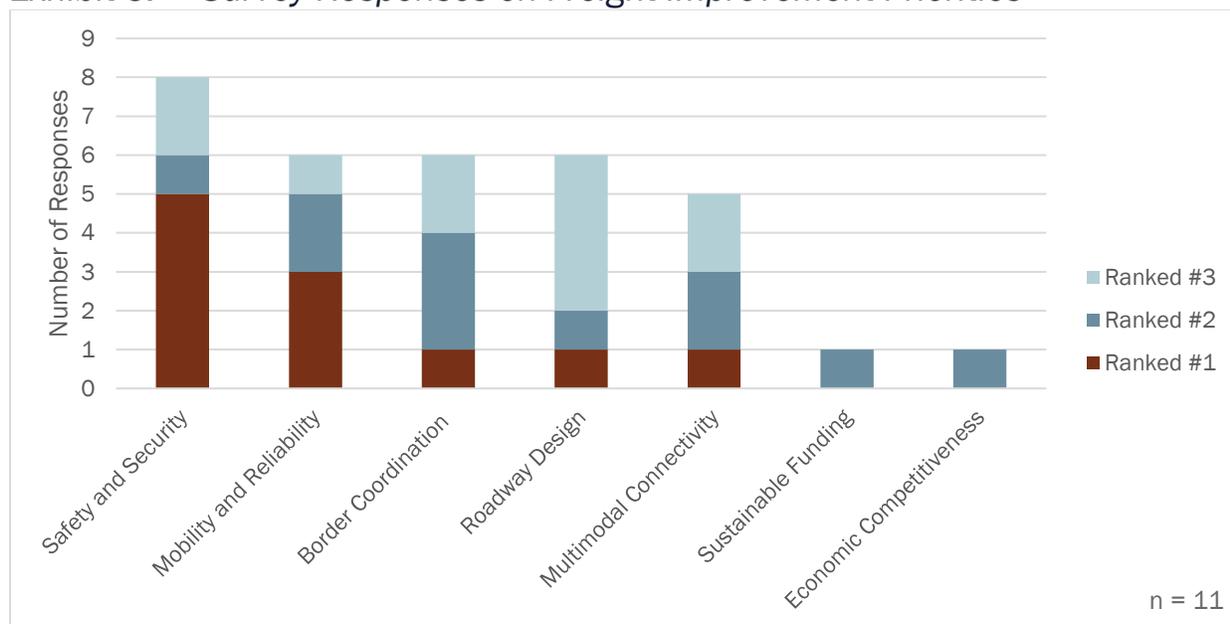
Two other forms of stakeholder input were used to verify the goals and objectives that were established between September and December 2019. Four Freight and Trade Transportation Forums were held from February 18-20, 2020. Statewide freight goals and their relationship to the Regional Freight and Trade Plan were presented to educate stakeholders about the study motivation and desired outcomes (displayed in the following section in Exhibit 5). Stakeholders were asked whether the goals were appropriate, and the attendees agreed in each of the four meetings. One stakeholder commented on the Mobility and Reliability goal area, suggesting an emphasis on “up time,” or the amount of time that infrastructure is available for use, in the analysis. For example, are the assets available and reliable when you need them?

An online survey was also available from December 9, 2019, through February 29, 2020, including questions on regional priorities, freight challenges, routes, and demographic

information. No questions were asked about objectives directly. However, the first question prompted the respondent to rank their top three freight transportation priorities. There were 14 respondents to the survey and 11 responses to this question, shown in Exhibit 3.

“Safety and Security” was ranked as the top priority more frequently than any other choice, and it was also the response most often ranked in the top three. “Mobility and Reliability” was the next most common choice for the highest priority in the region, tied with “Border Coordination” and “Roadway Design” for all rankings. No adjustments were made to the goals and objectives based on this feedback, but these priorities will be reflected in the Regional Freight and Trade Plan under the existing objectives.

**Exhibit 3: Survey Responses on Freight Improvement Priorities**



The articulation of the goals through each statewide goal area was adopted from this point forward as it more accurately conveys the desired outcomes of the Regional Freight and Trade Plan. No revisions to the objectives were recommended.

## 2.4 Supporting the Texas-Mexico Border Transportation Master Plan (BTMP)

TxDOT, in collaboration and partnership with the Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC), is working with binational federal, state, regional, and private sector stakeholders to undertake the development of the BTMP. The development of the BTMP goals and objectives was based on a comprehensive data-driven and analysis process, as well as extensive consultation and consensus-building with binational stakeholders. These goals and

objectives, shown in Exhibit 4, have been documented through development of the BTMP and will be incorporated into the final plan.

Eight of these goals align with overarching goals adopted by TxDOT, and a ninth specifically addresses cross-border resiliency due to the binational nature of the plan. Similarly, the final goals for the RGV Freight and Trade Transportation Plan presented in the following section are tied to each of the eight statewide goals. TxDOT is closely coordinating these two efforts to ensure that they complement and enhance each other.

*Exhibit 4: BTMP Goals and Objectives*

Goals	Objectives
<p><b>Mobility and Reliability</b>  <i>Reduce congestion and improve system efficiency and performance on the binational transportation system</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve cross-border travel time reliability for greater efficiency of cross-border movement of people and goods.</li> <li>• Improve the capacity of the multimodal, binational transportation system to accommodate future growth in movement of people and goods.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Competitiveness</b>  <i>Improve the contribution of the binational transportation system for economic competitiveness, productivity, and development in the border regions and beyond</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support gross domestic product (GDP) growth and economic growth in the border regions and the states.</li> <li>• Support job creation and retention in the border regions and the states.</li> <li>• Support continued growth in trade value in the border regions and the states.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Safety and Security</b>  <i>Improve binational, multimodal transportation safety and security</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of crashes on the binational transportation system that result in fatalities and injuries, including those at ports of entry.</li> <li>• Enhance the secure movement of people and goods.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Multimodal Connectivity</b>  <i>Provide binational transportation options and improved system connectivity for all modes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve first- and last-mile connectivity for seamless movements of people and goods.</li> <li>• Provide for multimodal options for the cross-border movement of people and goods.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross-Border Resiliency</b>  <i>Capacity of the system to continue operations after disasters/emergency events</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the safe and expeditious evacuation of people from the area in the event of a potential disaster.</li> <li>• Improve redundancy of the binational transportation system.</li> </ul>

Goals	Objectives
<p><b>Sustainable Funding</b> <i>Identify and sustain funding sources for the binational transportation system</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding for the binational transportation system.</li> <li>• Leverage alternative funding sources to pay for improvements to the binational transportation system.</li> <li>• Identify multimodal cost-benefit impact to infrastructure improvements to optimize investment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asset Preservation</b> <i>Maintain and preserve cross-border region infrastructure that supports multimodal, binational movement of people and goods</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure infrastructure related to the cross-border movement of people and goods is maintained in a state of good repair.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Customer Service</b> <i>Understand and incorporate customer feedback in decision-making processes and be transparent in all agency communications</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the provision and distribution of information to users about the border.</li> <li>• Actively solicit and incorporate customer feedback in binational transportation planning processes.</li> <li>• Educate government agencies and related officials in the U.S. and Mexico about the border environment and the role and responsibilities of the different agencies facilitating binational trade and travel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stewardship</b> <i>Manage environmental and agency resources responsibly and foster accountability and transparency in cross-border investment and decision-making</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve binational coordination of infrastructure development.</li> <li>• Reduce the environmental impact throughout the binational transportation system.</li> <li>• Consider community impacts and opportunities through improvements to the multimodal, binational transportation system.</li> <li>• Sustain and grow the job base in border communities and promote workforce development.</li> <li>• Inform and engage the public about environmental and investment decisions related to the binational transportation system.</li> </ul>

### 3.0 Final Goals and Objectives of the Plan

The goals shown at the transportation forums were adopted, as the final goals of the Regional Freight and Trade Plan. These goals are aligned with TxDOT's eight goal areas for the state and ensure that the plan will advance the agency in each of these areas. Exhibit 5 displays each of the goals and the state goal area it corresponds with.

*Exhibit 5: Final Regional Freight and Trade Plan Goals*

State Goal Area	Rio Grande Valley Freight and Trade Transportation Plan Goals
Safety	Improve the safety of the Rio Grande Valley region's multimodal freight system which includes highways, railroads, maritime ports, POEs, airports, and pipelines.
Economic Competitiveness	Enhance the economic competitiveness, productivity, and development in the Rio Grande Valley and beyond by ensuring the region's freight transportation network is robust enough to support cross-border trade and freight intensive industries.
Mobility and Reliability	Enhance mobility and improve system efficiency and performance on the Rio Grande Valley transportation system by expanding capacity and addressing freight bottlenecks.
Connectivity	Improve local, regional, and cross-border highway connectivity as well as connectivity between freight modes within the Rio Grande Valley.
Sustainable Funding	Identify sustainable funding sources for the Rio Grande Valley's freight and trade transportation system.
Stewardship	Manage environmental and state agency resources responsibly, and foster accountability and transparency in decision-making.
Customer Service	Encourage local ownership of and coordination in the development of the Regional Freight Plan by engaging public and private sector stakeholders in transparent dialogue and establishing consistent strategies and recommendations.
Asset Preservation	Maintain and preserve the Rio Grande Valley's transportation infrastructure that supports multimodal and cross-border movement of freight.

Three minor changes were made to the objectives prior to adoption and development of the Goals and Objectives Brief (Appendix B):

- Combining the “sphere of influence” and “economic importance” objectives into a single statement,
- Revising the “develop recommendations” objective to specify that strategies should be implementable, and
- Broadening project identification beyond the MPO’s TIP to include statewide planning.

The final objectives of the Regional Freight and Trade Plan are shown in Exhibit 6.

*Exhibit 6: Final Regional Freight and Trade Plan Objectives*

Supplement state data through local and regional data collection activities specific to border crossings, maritime traffic, and regional movement.	Enhance regional freight forecasts, specifically related to international and maritime trade.
Identify and assess the regional multimodal transportation network serving freight and cross border trade needs.	Examine the link between local land use and freight transportation demand and operations.
Define the Rio Grande Valley's sphere of influence and document key economic and transportation linkages at the regional, statewide, national, and international levels.	Identify implementable strategies for enhancing freight transportation safety, mobility, and connectivity on the local, regional, and state transportation system.
Support identification of freight transportation projects for inclusion in statewide and regional transportation improvement programs.	Enhance transportation planning and investment decision making processes through stakeholder engagement.

These final objectives will guide the remaining tasks, listed in Section 1.1 of this memorandum, and the development of the final RGV Freight and Trade Transportation Plan.

## **Appendix A: Written Comments on Goals and Objectives**

The following written comments were received during the first meeting of the Rio Grande Valley Steering Committee.

### *Purpose*

Develop a Rio Grande Valley Regional Freight and Trade Transportation Plan that identifies freight and trade activities, opportunities, challenges, and strategies in the region.

- Need specific data on quantity and types of trucks moving cross valley, in/out of main valley, I-69 corridors, and to Laredo via Hebbronville/1017
- Binational incorporation

### *Draft Goals*

Integrate multimodal regional and statewide international freight transportation considerations into the local and regional transportation planning, programming, and implementation processes.

- Integrate loaded trucks inbound/outbound to/from Mexico

Identify the region's freight and cross-border trade related transportation needs and opportunities impacting the Texas Multimodal Freight Network and statewide economic competitiveness.

- One misconception officials have is trucks [moving?] internationally go straight out of town to highways. They don't, they go to a transfer warehouse or yard, so those areas need to be connected to the highways.

### **Additional Proposed Goal(s):**

- Identify impediments and develop solutions to address them on a timely manner.
- Definitely bring in federal agencies that need to be at table
- Identify the opportunity to increase use of rail to move goods and products from South Texas
- Binational incorporation
- Develop relationships with Mexican officials to coordinate transportation needs
- Enhance and improve rail connectivity in the region going North-South as well as East-West
- Provide solutions, recommendations to maximize efficiency of transportation routes for legislators for funding opportunities

- Communication with [illegible]
- Safety initiatives

### *Draft Objectives*

Supplement state data through local and regional data collection activities specific to border crossings, maritime traffic, and regional movement.

- None

Enhance regional freight forecasts, specifically related to international and maritime trade.

- Yearly actual study; How can you project without real studies
- When “international” is used, is it being used in place of land ports? Unclear.

Identify and assess the regional multimodal transportation network serving freight and cross-border trade needs.

- None

Examine the link between local land use and freight transportation demand and operations.

- Oversize windmill trucks from Port of Brownsville all over South Texas. Tank trucks from Port of Brownsville to Pharr Bridge. Instead of pipeline as the cartels were robbing the pipeline

Define the RGV’s sphere of influence and document key economic and transportation connections at the regional, statewide, national, and international levels.

- None

Develop recommendations for enhancing freight transportation mobility, connectivity, and safety on the local, regional, and state transportation system.

- None

### **Additional Proposed Objective(s):**

Identify and communicate the impact of regional freight movement and cross-border trade through the region to local, state, and national economies.

- None

Support identification of freight transportation projects for inclusion in the transportation improvement program (TIP) of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization.

- Check mark indicating this is a desired objective.

- Need MPO input and support to prioritize and develop projects.

Enhance transportation planning and investment decision making processes through stakeholder engagement.

- None

New:

- Need for binational content, continued communication.
- Showing commitment from the region aside from MPO
- Safety; TxDOT's objective of zero fatalities and safety component

# RIO GRANDE VALLEY FREIGHT AND TRADE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



## Overview

The Rio Grande Valley in South Texas is a multimodal freight and international trade hub, and its impact to the state and national economy is growing. During the development of the 2018 Texas Freight Mobility Plan, TxDOT identified the need for a regional freight and trade transportation plan to promote regional connectivity, efficiency at intermodal facilities and border crossings, and continued economic prosperity for the region, Texas, and the nation.

## Rio Grande Valley Study Area



## Rio Grande Valley Freight and Trade Transportation Plan Purpose:

Identify freight and trade activities, opportunities, challenges, and strategies in the region.

# RIO GRANDE VALLEY FREIGHT AND TRADE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

## Plan Goals

The process used to develop the goals and objectives of the Rio Grande Valley Freight and Trade Transportation Plan includes extensive stakeholder outreach as summarized below.



State Goal Area	Rio Grande Valley Freight and Trade Transportation Plan Goals
<b>Safety</b>	Improve the safety of the Rio Grande Valley region's multimodal freight system which includes highways, railroads, maritime ports, border ports-of-entry, airports, and pipelines.
<b>Economic Competitiveness</b>	Enhance the economic competitiveness, productivity, and development in the Rio Grande Valley and beyond by ensuring the region's freight transportation network is robust enough to support cross-border trade and freight intensive industries.
<b>Mobility and Reliability</b>	Enhance mobility and improve system efficiency and performance on the Rio Grande Valley transportation system by expanding capacity and addressing freight bottlenecks.
<b>Connectivity</b>	Improve local, regional, and cross-border highway connectivity as well as connectivity between freight modes within the Rio Grande Valley.
<b>Sustainable Funding</b>	Identify sustainable funding sources for the Rio Grande Valley's freight and trade transportation system.
<b>Stewardship</b>	Manage environmental and state agency resources responsibly and foster accountability and transparency in decision-making.
<b>Customer Service</b>	Encourage local ownership of and coordination in the development of the Regional Freight Plan by engaging public and private sector stakeholders in transparent dialogue and establishing consistent strategies and recommendations.
<b>Asset Preservation</b>	Maintain and preserve the Rio Grande Valley's transportation infrastructure that supports multimodal and cross-border movement of freight.

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## RIO GRANDE VALLEY FREIGHT AND TRADE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Rio Grande Valley Freight and Trade Transportation Plan support the statewide and regional goals and are listed below.

Supplement state data through local and regional data collection activities specific to border crossings, seaport traffic, and regional movement.

Enhance regional freight forecasts, specifically related to international and maritime trade.

Identify and assess the regional multimodal transportation network serving freight and cross-border trade needs.

Examine the link between local land use and freight transportation demand and operations.

Define the Rio Grande Valley's sphere of influence and document key economic and transportation linkages at the regional, statewide, national, and international levels.

Identify implementable strategies for enhancing freight transportation safety, mobility, and connectivity on the local, regional, and state transportation system.

Support identification of freight transportation projects for inclusion in statewide and regional transportation improvement programs.

Enhance transportation planning and investment decision-making processes through stakeholder engagement.

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