



Far West Texas El Paso Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (WTEP)

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Minutes - Meeting was in-person and Virtual – May 25, 2023 @ 3pm

- I. Meeting Called to Order Yvette Lugo, WTEP Vice Chairperson
- II. Steering Committee Members – 2023
 - A. Officers
 1. Chairperson Victor Reta, City of Socorro
 2. Vice Chair Yvette Lugo, Area Agency on Aging
 3. Secretary Mary Nuñez, Big Bend Community Action Committee
 - B. Steering Committee
 1. Lourdes Torres New México Family Services
 2. David Armijo South Central Regional Transit District
 3. ~~Astrid Bunner~~ El Paso Sun Metro
Claudia Garcia Elected 5-25-03
 4. Xavier Bañales Amistad
 5. Vacant
- III. Welcoming Comments / Introductions Yvette Lugo welcomed the members.
Chairperson Victor Reta was unable to attend.

IV. Approval of Minutes of meeting on January 19, 2022

The minutes had been sent via email. Members were asked if anyone had questions, comments, or changes. None were presented. X Bañales Moved to approve the minutes as presented. Claudia Garcia Seconded the Motion. Motion passed.

V. Business items

- A. Ms. Lugo announced that Claudia Garcia from Sun Metro would replace Astrid Bunner as the representative from Sun Metro – City of El Paso. Since Ms. Bunner was on the Advisory Committee, the Chair entertained a Motion to replace Ms.

Bunner with Sun Metro's new representative, Claudia Garcia. The Motion was approved unanimously. **(Goal I Objective 1)**

- B.** Report re: presentations to policy entities per Goal IV, Operating Objective 4. *"Inform Policy makers about WTEP events and activities through presentations at board meetings (City Council, Commissioners Court, MPO, COG, etc.)". (Goal IV - Objective 1)*

Presentations made to date:

1. County Commissioners. El Paso County. Feb 27, 20 attendees.
2. City of Socorro City Council. April 6, 18 attendees.
3. EP Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Feb 17, 25 attendees.
4. El Paso Transportation Council. April 19, 14 attendees.
5. City of Socorro. April 6, 18 attendees.
6. SC Regional Transit (NM). April 26, 12 attendees.
7. Rio Grande Council of Governments – COG. Mar 17, 23 attendees.
8. City of El Paso – Sun Metro. The date of the presentation was changed from March to June. The presentation will be made to the Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee and to the City's Mass Transit Board (City Council).

Mr. Bañales stated that so far, the number of attendees has totaled approximately 130. Ms. Lugo commented that the attendees represented a great majority of the members of policy making boards within El Paso County, as well as officials from the rural counties through the presentations at the Rio Grande Council of Governments and The Metropolitan Planning Organization. Thus, she stated, **Goal IV, Operating Objective 4 is being met rather well.**

X Bañales reported that there were several questions / comments made by attendees at the various presentations.

- El Paso County – February 27. A goal of the State of Texas referred to in the PowerPoint presentation addressed the need to reduce pollution. Commissioner Stout asked what has been the impact in addressing the goal? X. Bañales responded that member agencies that prepare reports addressing this topic will be contacted and asked to provide data addressing this question. Agencies noted were Sun Metro, County of El Paso, MPO, Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), and TxDOT. A follow-up response will be presented to Commissioners Court later this year. **(The State Goal in question is listed in the PowerPoint Presentation – see WTEP Website.)**
- Rio Grande Council of Governments (March 17) and South-Central Regional Transit in New Mexico (SCRT – April 26). "The PowerPoint Presentation listed entities from New Mexico as member agencies. Why are they members of the West Texas El Paso Regional"? In the response, it was stated that there are communities that straddle the

border between Texas and New Mexico (Chaparral, Sunland Park, Anthony, and several other unincorporated communities). Residents from these communities use services from Texas and New Mexico and it was appropriate to include entities from New Mexico as members of WTEP (**Goal I Objective 3**).

Furthermore,

- ✓ Dona Aña County and El Paso County have cooperative agreements, memorandums of understanding whereby both entities will cooperate on issues that affect health and safety and transportation issues for residents along their border.
- ✓ Dona Aña County and El Paso County have operated a bus route for several years (The Gold Route) that transports persons from El Paso to Las Cruces. Funding is provided by the Departments of Transportation from New Mexico and Texas.
- ✓ The SCTR is eligible to apply for and receive funding through the Metropolitan Planning Organization. As such, their responses to an RFP are reviewed by WTEP before their request for funding is submitted to the MPO. Hence, there is a need for SCRT to participate as a WTEP member agency. (It was also noted that Family Services of New Mexico based in Sunland Park New Mexico is also a member of WTEP. This agency provides various social services throughout Dona Aña County.)

- C. Production of a video regarding WTEP. At a meeting in the fall of 2022, a suggestion was made to produce a video providing a summary of activities by member organizations that related to community services and transportation services. The video would be presented to policy makers as well. The was to be spearheaded by the City of Socorro and would also meet **Goal IV, Operating Objective 4**. A report was not presented.
- D. Discussion followed regarding the status of other Operating Objectives. Ms. Celia Garcia reported that the Quarterly Activity Report has been sent to TxDOT. The report contained information as to the progress of meeting the various objectives. She reported that at the next WTEP meeting, a detailed report will be presented to the member agencies as to the status of meeting the various objectives as listed in **Chapter VI – Goal I, Objectives 1 and 2 of the Regional Plan**.
- E. Status - Letters of Participation. Ms. Garcia reminded the member agencies that Letters of Participation were due and asked the members to submit updated letters. While many entities had submitted such letters, they were completed in 2018 and 2019, and it was time to renew them as several entities have experienced changes in the boards (**Goal 1, Objective 3**.)

- F. WTEP’s Website – A summary of recent presentations to policy makers has been added to the website. Furthermore, the information about New Mexico entities being a part of WTEP appears in the updated PowerPoint presentation **(Goal IV - Objective 1; Also, see the PowerPoint Presentation in the WTEP website.)**

- G. New brand image: **(Goal 4 – Objective 1 & 5)**. A suggestion was presented that WTEP’s brand image is in need of change. The committee has been known as WTEP, but it is time to rebrand the regional planning committee as it is often confused with UTEP. Options discussed at the Steering committee meeting included:
 - Transportation Regional Planning Committee TRPC
 - Regional Transportation Committee RTC
 - Transportation Regional Coordinating Committee TRCC

Members were asked to submit other options for consideration.

- H. Other Business Items

- I. Announcements and major events by member agencies **(Goal I – Objective 4; Goal IV – Objective 5)**

VI. Next WTEP Meetings

- August 24, 2023
- October 26, 2023
- November 30, 2023

VII. Adjourned

Members present include:

1. Gabriel Lopez – MPO
2. David Armijo – SCRT
3. Ann Guayante – MPO
4. Yvette Lugo – AAA
5. Rosalva Hernandez – EP County
6. James Baca – Bienvivir
7. Claudia Garcia – City EP, Sun Metro
8. Patsy Jaramillo – HHSC
9. Lorenzo Lopez – Workforce Board
10. Alfredo Austin - City EP, Bicycle Program
11. George Inostroza – MPO
12. Harrison Plourde – MPO
13. Xavier Bañales – Amistad

14. Celia Garcia – Amistad
15. Kristina Peña – Amistad

Note: Fifteen individuals participated. They represented ten agencies.