



WEBB COUNTY–CITY OF LAREDO REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

ABOUT THE AUTHORITY

The Webb County–City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority (the “WC-CL RMA”) is a political subdivision, formed pursuant to Chapter 370 of the Texas Transportation Code (the “RMA Act”). The formation of the WC-CL RMA was approved by the Texas Transportation Commission on February 27, 2014, pursuant to the joint request of Webb County and the City of Laredo.

The WC-CL RMA represents the Legislature’s vision to give local communities greater flexibility to develop and implement innovative transportation programs, while working with local governments and the Texas Department of Transportation (“TxDOT”). The WC-CL RMA can develop infrastructure projects in the South Texas region that otherwise might depend solely on state or federal funding. With the support and guidance of Webb County and the City of Laredo, the WC-CL RMA is evolving into an agile and effective organization.

ABOUT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Section 370.261 of the RMA Act and Article XVIII of the WC-CL RMA Bylaws provide for the issuance of a Strategic Plan each even numbered year for the operations of the WC-CL RMA covering the next five fiscal years, beginning with the next odd numbered fiscal year. The 2020 Strategic Plan is a continuation of 2018 and previous plans. Through strategic partnerships with the City of Laredo, Webb County, the Webb County Drainage District no. 1, the Texas Department of Transportation and private landowners, the WC-CL RMA will continue to work to develop transportation planning and roadways to benefit the traveling public in Laredo and Webb County.

BOARD MEMBERS

The Board is composed of nine members, with four directors appointed by the Webb County Commissioners Court and four directors appointed by the City Council of the City of Laredo. Pursuant to the RMA Act, the Texas Governor appoints the Board’s presiding officer.

Current Board Members:

- Jed A. Brown, Director Chair
- Jesus D. Romero, Precinct 1 County Representative
- Oscar O. Lopez, Precinct 2 County Representative
- George Beckelhymer, Precinct 3 County Representative
- Viridiana Fernandez, Precinct 4 County Representative
- Jose Murillo, District 1 & 2 City Representative
- Alfonso Mendiola, District 3 & 4 City Representative
- Douglas B. Howland, District 5 & 6 of the City Representative
- Arturo Dominguez, District 7 & 8 City Representative

Tony Arce will replace Jesus D. Romero in January 2021.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the WC-CL RMA is to assist the establishment of a comprehensive transportation system to directly benefit the traveling public within Webb County and the City of Laredo through the development of additional transportation alternatives within the region.

THE 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

Webb County and the City of Laredo encompass one of the nation’s fastest growing regions. The area is a major gateway for trade between the United States, Mexico and countries farther south. Therefore, effective transportation infrastructure is a priority for governmental entities, transportation officials, business owners and residents of the South Texas region.

The WC-CL RMA plays a key role in the region’s long-term transportation planning. The Authority strives to: (1) improve mobility in and around Webb County and the City of Laredo more quickly; (2) help meet the transportation needs of a rapidly growing population; and (3) help meet the transportation needs of the growing international trade and trucking businesses.

Without careful planning, anticipated growth in Webb County and the City of Laredo could lead to congestion and inefficiencies in the existing infrastructure. The populations of Webb County and the City of Laredo are growing at an accelerated rate. The population for the county in the 2010 Census measured 250,304 and is expected to grow to over 400,000 by 2040. Improvements to transportation infrastructure are vital to meet resulting demands.

Located in a strategic location along the U.S.-Mexico border, Webb County and the City of Laredo have played an important role in cross-border trade, especially since the inception of NAFTA in 1994. Exponential growth in international trade activities in recent years have placed significant stress on the regional transportation infrastructure, and the trend will continue in the foreseeable future.

The following represents the WC-CL RMA's proposed long-term goals and objectives for the next five years. Set in context of four major strategic initiatives (economic vitality, regional integration, innovation and sustainability), achievement of these goals will move the WC-CL RMA towards realization of its mission.

I. Initiative: Economic Vitality

A strong, reliable and efficient transportation network is an important component of a successful regional economy. Residents and businesses benefit from economic expansion that accompanies an improved mobility network. Local businesses may recognize greater efficiency and profitability due to greater reliability of the transportation network. Additionally, South Texans benefit from a financially sustainable transportation system, which provides increased resources to meet mobility needs.

The Webb County population is projected to grow from approximately 250,000 to 400,000 by 2040. With this level of sustained growth, the region has to anticipate, plan and implement a wide-range of integrated transportation solutions to ensure the quality of life of the community is retained and improved. Mobility is a key component for the future of the region.

Goal #1: Develop projects and programs that support economic development strategies.

Objectives:

- Adopt a process to evaluate projects based on their relative value in providing greater mobility given available resources.
- Develop transportation project priorities based on current and future international trade, housing and employment centers.

Goal #2: Lead efforts to increase transportation capacity and reliability in congested areas and desired development zones.

Objectives:

- Adopt an objective and transparent process to evaluate projects based on their relative value in providing greater mobility given the limited availability of resources.
- Incorporate bike lanes and shared-use paths where applicable into existing and future projects.
- Develop projects that ensure consistent and predictable travel times.

Goal #3: Partner with regional entities to facilitate economic development initiatives driven by mobility and transportation.

Objectives:

- Continue involvement in regional planning activities with community partners such as business, transportation, logistics and manufacturing associations.

II. Initiative: Regional Integration

Webb County and the City of Laredo will benefit from greater access to a regionally integrated network of transportation modes that provide safe, reliable, efficient and affordable travel and an improved quality of life. The international ports of entry in the area are significant due to Laredo's location on Interstate 35 and Highway 85, the Mexican interstate highway counterpart. This level of international trade presents unique challenges in relation to the roadway infrastructure. These highway systems create a large percentage of trucks on local streets and roadways. In addition, the City of Laredo is designated as the western terminus of Interstate 69 as it is developed over the next decades.

Creating enhanced regional integration will have local benefits. Emergency services experience reduced response times. Travelers through South Texas benefit from increased safety. Drivers benefit from reduced auto insurance rates attributed to less congestion and greater safety. Finally, citizens of South Texas benefit from reliable travel times and new transportation options.

Goal #4: Advocate for and develop reliable, efficient modes of regional multimodal transportation options.

Objectives:

- Develop a planning and financing process that results in the creation of a short and long-range multi-modal program.
- Be on the forefront of utilizing existing and emerging to enhance the efficiency of transportation networks.

Goal #5: Provide a highly reliable and appropriately maintained regional roadway network.

Objectives:

- Design and construct transportation facilities that provide for reliability and safety.
- Develop and implement reliable and efficient maintenance strategies that protect the initial investment.
- Facilitate driver roadside assistance programs that preserve existing capacity.
- Manage the transportation capacity available in the region through the use of technology.

III. Initiative: Innovation

The WC-CL RMA is a regional transportation leader and service provider that uses innovative practices and transparent processes. In particular, transportation infrastructure users benefit from innovative financing mechanisms. As traditional sources of funding for transportation projects continue to only cover a fraction of the costs of needed projects, the WC-CL RMA can help the region overcome these funding shortfalls.

Additionally, mobility in general is facing a major transformation. Not only will there be more people to serve, but every aspect of moving people and goods will change. Implementing new technology and social media can increase transportation choices, improve decision making and increase efficiency.

Goal #6: Advocate for increased transportation management and funding options.

Objectives:

- Work closely with elected officials to educate and enact legislation that ensures flexible options to achieve regional mobility, including funding mechanisms and efficient construction methods.
- Explore and utilize public-private partnership (P3) opportunities.
- Lead efforts to increase all levels of funding for regional mobility.
- Investigate and maximize the use of all potential funding tools, including traditional funding from federal and state sources (e.g. the motor fuels tax), the Optional Vehicle Registration Fee, and the creation of Transportation Reinvestment Zones.

Goal #7: Implement the most efficient and cost-effective management of transportation facilities in South Texas while providing the best possible customer experience.

Objectives:

- Increase effectively the use of technology to support traffic management.
- Maintain leadership in utilizing innovative and industry best practices.
- Preserve and maintain system assets to ensure long-term financial sustainability of the system

Goal #8: Enhance the citizen experience through effective WC-CL RMA communication and accessibility.

Objectives:

- Reach out proactively to the community and engage the public in transportation issues.
- Enhance WC-CL RMA’s transparency through financial and operations reporting.

IV. Initiative: Sustainability

WC-CL RMA will use sustainable methods in its planning, implementation and maintenance of transportation facilities. The goal of sustainability extends to the environment, financing and operations of WC-CL RMA’s infrastructure projects.

Communities across the U.S. will need to comply with tougher air quality requirements and stricter environmental standards. Increased efficiency in transportation can help the community meet these requirements. Additionally, the environment is protected through sustainable air and water quality initiatives and the proactive mitigation of congestion.

Goal #9: Define, use and advocate for environmentally sound design and construction methods for WC-CL RMA projects.

Objectives:

- Identify and implement innovative techniques to encourage sustainable, cost-effective design.
- Encourage and increase scientific advancements of material usage.
- Consider innovative land use and mitigation options.

Goal #10: Build, maintain and operate assets for long-term preservation and reliability.

Objectives:

- Identify opportunities for and encourage increased use of sustainable materials and innovative environmentally responsible construction methods on all projects.
- Develop methods to analyze costs from a sustainability perspective.
- Identify and implement strategies to increase efficiency of roadway and traffic operations.

Goal #11: Increase public awareness of environmental benefits related to improved mobility systems.

Objectives:

- Advocate and promote environmental benefits in all presentations and communications regarding WC-CL RMA activities.
- Promote WC-CL RMA's sustainability achievements.