

**JOINT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
HARLINGEN CITY COMMISSION & THE
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF HARLINGEN, INC.
TUESDAY, MAY 30, 2017
CITY HALL, TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
118 E. TYLER STREET
HARLINGEN, TEXAS**

Notice is hereby given that a Joint Special Meeting of the Harlingen City Commission and the Development Corporation of Harlingen, Inc. will be held **Tuesday, May 30, 2017 at 5:15 p.m.**, City Hall, Town Hall Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, 118 E. Tyler Street, Harlingen, Texas.

The Harlingen City Commission and the Development Corporation of Harlingen, Inc. meetings are available to all persons regardless of disability. If you require special assistance, please contact the City Secretary's Office at (956) 216-5001 or write Post Office Box 2207, Harlingen, Texas 78550 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

The Harlingen City Commission and the Development Corporation of Harlingen, Inc. reserves the right, pursuant to Texas Government Code Chapter 551, Subchapter D, to enter into closed executive session on any item posted on the agenda if a matter is raised that is appropriate for closed discussion.

- 1) Consider and take action to approve a Resolution in support of the formation of the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee, appointment of Ad Hoc Committee member, and the Memorandum of Understanding between Rail-to-Trails Conservancy and the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee. Attachment **(City Commission)**
- 2) Executive/Closed Session - Deliberations regarding possible modifications to the Development agreement between the Development Corporation of Harlingen, Inc. and Texas State Technical College, and to receive information from possible successors to agreement, pursuant to Section 551.087 of the Texas Open Meetings Act. **(City Commission and Development Corporation of Harlingen, Inc.)**

I, the undersigned authority, do hereby certify that the above Notice of Meeting is a true and correct copy of said Notice and that said Notice was posted on the bulletin board of City Hall, a place convenient and readily accessible to the general public at all times and said Notice was posted on May 26, 2017 at 4:15 p.m. at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of said meeting.

Dated this 26th day of May, 2017


Elena Garza, Assistant City Secretary


1)

**AGENDA ITEM
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: **May 30, 2017**

Agenda Item:

Consider and take action to approve a Resolution in support of the formation of the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee, appointment of Ad Hoc Committee member, and the Memorandum of Understanding between Rail-To-Trails Conservancy and the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee.

Prepared By: **Javier Mendez**
Title: **Director of Parks and Recreation**
Signature: 

Brief Summary:

Summary

Last year, the City of Harlingen together with 8 other municipalities in Cameron County ventured into creating a regional tourism and transportation plan. The City committed \$10,000 towards a matching grant from the Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation that the City of Brownsville successfully received. The Plan was presented to the City Commission in October 2016 and was unanimously voted on to approve. The City Commission then on January 2017, authorized the city to participate with funding of \$5,000 for an Economic Impact Study for the Plan. The phase of the plan is now at the level where the Action Committee needs to pursue the build out of the projects identified in the plan. Therefore, this Resolution will establish the goals, roles and responsibilities of the Rails To Trails and the LRGV Actives Plan Advisory Committee for the build out of the Plan.

Funding (if applicable):

Are funds specifically designated in the current budget for the full amount for this purpose? Yes No N/A

Finance Director's approval: Yes No N/A

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of this Memorandum of Understanding.

City Manager's approval: Yes No

Comments:

City Attorney's approval:  Yes No N/A

RESOLUTION NO. R2017-__

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HARLINGEN, TEXAS IN SUPPORT OF THE FORMATION OF THE LRGV ACTIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE, APPOINTMENT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE MEMBER, AND THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN RAIL-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY AND THE LRGV ACTIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

WHEREAS, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, the Active Plan, is a collaboration of nine municipalities in Cameron County to develop and promote active transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Active Plan was recently adopted; and

WHEREAS, the Active Plan recommends the formation of a LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee to advocate and carryout the guiding principles defined in the Active Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Rail-to-Trails Conservancy has parallel goals it hopes to achieve via the long-term build-out of the Cameron County active transportation system;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF HARLINGEN:

SECTION I: The City of Harlingen supports the formation of the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee and agrees to appoint a City of Harlingen representative to serve as a member of the committee;

SECTION II: That the City adopts resolution **R17-__** supporting a Memorandum of Understanding between The Rails-To-Trails Conservancy and the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee, noted as Exhibit 1, by authorizing the Mayor sign off on the document.

CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED THIS ____ day of May, 2017 at a Special Meeting of the Elective Commission of the City of Harlingen, Texas at which a quorum was present and which was held in accordance with GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 551, as amended.

CITY OF HARLINGEN

Chris Boswell, Mayor

ATTEST:

Amanda C. Elizondo, City Secretary

DRAFT MOU

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY AND THE LRGV ACTIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. **Parties**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into by and between the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), whose address is 2121 Ward Ct. NW 5th Floor, Washington, DC, and the Members of the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee located in Cameron County, TX.

2. **Purpose**

The purpose of this MOU is to establish the goals, roles and responsibilities of RTC and the Cameron County Active Plan Advisory Committee in order to achieve the successful buildout of County's Active Transportation Network. The guiding principles (GP) previously defined in the Active Plan will drive this process and are couched within the five major outcomes that RTC hopes to achieve via the long-term buildout of the Cameron County active transportation system:

1. Expanding Transportation Options
 - Active Plan GP: Create a regional active transportation network.
2. Fueling Strong Businesses and Economies
 - Active Plan GP: Generate new economic opportunity throughout the LRGV.
 - Active Plan GP: Diversify the local tourism market.
3. Promoting Social Equity
 - Active Plan GP: Link Cameron County communities.
4. Improving Health and Wellness
 - Active Plan GP: Promote healthy lifestyles.
5. Protecting the Environment

Phase I of the project will build upon the efforts made during the Active Plan process to further these five long-term outcomes and Active Plan guiding principles by pursuing the following six-part project strategy:

- I. **Coalition Structure.** The Active Plan process was organized by the City of Brownsville. Going forward, a framework around which the group is formalized and organized, will serve as the underpinnings for keeping this important work moving forward. This will be the "operating manual" for how the Coalition is put together and more specifically how members will work together, how leadership is chosen and how decisions are made. It will also be explored whether or not this Coalition should eventually become a separate and formalized nonprofit entity. Within this Coalition structure there will be two critical elements: the leadership team and the broader partner network:

- a. Leadership Team, representative of all Active Plan participating municipalities will need to be created to manage the following elements of the project:
 - i. Drive trail gap closing activities within and outside of city lines;
 - ii. Diversify funding streams to support the build out of the trail network infrastructure;
 - iii. Monitor performance indicators to measure the transportation, economic development, environmental and public health outcomes of the project;
 - iv. Establish policies and strategies for a designation, branding, marketing, signage and cultural tourism strategy for the initiative;
 - v. Support policy and advocacy efforts with local municipalities, transportation entities and elected officials.
 - b. Partner Network. During the Active Plan process, a diverse coalition made up of representatives from the public, transportation, economic development, tourism and health sectors came together to define and approve the plan itself. The hope is to continue to build upon the meetings that were held during this process and further solidify this group to advance the work of the Active Plan. This may include the creation of various working groups to work on implementing specific goals, trail projects, etc.
- II. **Mapping and Analytics.** The participating Active Plan communities defined the active transportation network during the yearlong planning process, identifying existing and proposed active transportation corridors as part of their local planning efforts. This effort will be built upon by gathering relevant transportation, economic development, public health and environmental data and storing it in an easily accessible geospatial database that the network of partners will access to inform strategies that will advance the Active Plan. The database will allow for a variety of analyses to inform decision-making strategy, and to monitor and evaluate results related to each of the Long-Term Outcomes.
- III. **Gap Filling Strategy.** Active Plan participants have identified six proposed “catalyst” projects which will be prioritized in the buildout of the Cameron County active transportation network. The Partner Network will work to develop and implement strategies that will guide the development of these projects, as well as identifying new priority projects.
- IV. **Policy and Legal Strategy.** The Plan’s implementation program identifies multiple communities and agencies as principal implementing partners – with support from many of the other stakeholders that participated in the planning process. The Coalition will work together to identify current barriers to implementing the plan along with strategies (e.g. policy, legal etc.) to overcome these barriers.
- V. **Fundraising Efforts.** The Active Plan Committee secured key fundraising support from participating municipalities and the Baptist Valley Legacy Foundation for the development of the Active Plan.

Over the next three years, there will be a focus on growing and diversifying that support by securing private dollars from individuals, foundations and corporations located within and outside of the community to implement the Active Plan. These dollars will be used as a local match that could also unlock larger public dollars needed for the buildout of the active transportation network.

- VI. **Branding, Communications and Engagement.** A steady drumbeat of community activism and earned media exists, particularly in Brownsville, and can serve as a foundation for the Active Plan's promotion strategy. RTC plans to build upon these efforts by working with the Active Plan Leaders to tailor a specific communications strategy that will guide branding and marketing efforts. The strategy will be intended to build support for the plan across Cameron County and the Lower Rio Grande Valley and to maximize trail system use by local residents while attracting tourism from outside the region.

3. **Terms**

This MOU is effective upon the day and date last signed and executed by the duly authorized representatives of the parties to this MOU and the governing bodies of the parties' respective counties or municipalities and shall remain in full force and effect from April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2020. The scope of work is anticipated to extend beyond this time frame and as such both parties will have the opportunity to revisit and possibly extend this MOU in the lead up to March of 2020.

4. **Responsibilities of RTC**

In an effort to achieve the five long-term outcomes, RTC proposes focusing on the following deliverables within each of the seven-part project strategy over the next three years. This is not an exclusive list of activities that will take place over Phase I of this project, but is instead an initial overview of the work that may take place:

I. **Coalition Structure: Leadership Team and Partner Network**

- a. Hire and manage an on-the-ground Project Manager who will help coordinate the delivery of RTC resources to the initiative.
- b. The RTC Project Manager will work with designated leaders from each participating Cameron County jurisdiction to:
 - i. Develop the Coalition structure that will implement the Active Plan;
 - ii. Formalize the aforementioned Leadership Team and Partner Network;
 - iii. Work with the group to determine a schedule of meetings and check-ins with necessary members of the Coalition to ensure that the network is making progress towards its long-term goals.

II. **Mapping and Analytics**

- a. Create a geospatial database to assist in consolidation, management and analysis of data that will support the Active Plan.
- b. Work with local partners to bolster any current trail counting efforts and define a trail count strategy so that counts can be used as a baseline metric.

- c. Provide GIS training for interested Cameron County municipal employees.
- d. Determine feasibility of using BikeAble™ in Cameron County.
- e. Determine viability and scope of a trail town strategy that could overlap with Active Plan tourism findings. Such a strategy would work to ensure that communities and businesses are able to maximize the economic benefits of the completed trail network.
- f. Beta-test health care cost savings calculator on one to three existing multi-use trails in Cameron County.

III. **Gap Filling Strategy**

- a. Conduct a fine-grained assessment of the connectivity and gaps within the current trail system.
- b. In addition to prioritizing the six previously identified catalyst projects, RTC will utilize the network of partners and the geospatial database to develop a prioritized list of trail system investments focused on closing gaps that will increase usage at the lowest possible cost.
- c. Work with the Coalition to develop a funding strategy to pay for priority gap completion.

IV. **Policy and Legal Strategy**

- a. Develop a menu of local, state and federal funding options to diversify and accelerate progress in building the network.
- b. Correlate the trail funding options to the prioritized list of trail system gaps to match segments to potential resources and develop a timeline for applications and associated advocacy.
- c. Work with the City of Brownsville and other local agencies to identify strategies and potential policy changes amongst the ten Cameron County communities within the project scope to secure formal endorsement of final trail plans from applicable authorities and facilitate participation in regional network of trails.
- d. Assist the Active Plan Committee in persuading state and federal agencies to amend policies or making necessary determinations that support LRGV multi-use trail implementation.
- e. Provide legal guidance that could support local efforts to navigate relationship with Union Pacific in support of the West Rail Trail.
- f. Provide assistance on the bi-national connection between Brownsville and Matamoros.
- g. Leverage the findings of the spring 2017 economic impact study to engage local elected and decision makers.

V. **Fundraising Efforts**

- a. Develop a menu of funding needs for the Phase I rollout of the Active Plan.
- b. Identify, cultivate and secure funding from individuals, corporations and foundations that would be willing to work support this project.
- c. Leverage privately raised funds that can serve as matching grants to secure larger public funds for infrastructure build out.

VI. **Branding and Engagement**

- a. Announce the trail network as one of RTC's premier trail-building initiatives.
- b. Develop a cohesive communications strategy, including target audiences, key messages and activities for engagement across earned, shared, paid and owned media channels.
- c. Establish a name and brand for the network.
- d. Leverage RTC's audiences to elevate the project on a national stage and highlight Cameron County trails/tourism offerings.
- e. Organize public events to support communications objectives and engage audiences. Leverage Trailink and its volunteer/events portal to support Cameron County's tourism goals and engage trail-side businesses.
- f. Develop way-finding/branded signs for existing and proposed trail network.
- g. Create a regional active tourism website for the project.

5. **Responsibilities of the LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee.**

The Active Plan Advisory Committee will act in good faith and bring the following local resources to each element of the project strategy in an effort to achieve the goals and objectives of this partnership:

- I. **Coalition Structure: Leadership Team and Partner Network**
Identify potential candidates that could serve as the Project Manager and, once hired, Support them in their efforts to engage key stakeholders and connect those who should be brought into the project support team.
- II. **Mapping and Analytics**
Share existing Cameron County data and support the collection of additional data to ensure that that the team has the deepest understanding of network gaps and opportunities.
- III. **Gap Filling Strategy**
Commit to participating in identifying and prioritizing gaps within the identified network as well as participating in strategy development to complete priority projects.
- VII. **Policy and Legal Strategy**
Provide the background and connections needed to identify political opportunities and communicate the benefits of this project with local decision makers. Ensure that all Active Plan Advisory Committee members take action – through resolution or other formal statement of endorsement – to commit to making the plan become a reality.
- IV. **Fundraising Efforts**
Participate in, as needed, prospecting, cultivation and proposal writing activities tied to raising key funds for this project.
- V. **Branding, Communications and Engagement**
Engage in activities around the development of a comprehensive communications strategy for the Active Plan, including the development of a trail network brand.

6. **Signatures**

In witness whereof, the parties to this MOU through their duly authorized representatives have executed this MOU on the days and dates set out below, and certify that they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms and conditions of this MOU as set forth herein.

The effective date of this MOU is the date of the signature last affixed to this page.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Keith Laughlin, President	Date
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Liz Thorstensen, VP of Trail Development	Date
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The LRGV Active Plan Advisory Committee

[Name and Title]	Date
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[Name and Title]	Date
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