



THE ACTIVE PLAN

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY | ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN

MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM THE VALLEY BAPTIST LEGACY FOUNDATION



NOVEMBER 2016



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan (the “Active Plan”) has been developed jointly by a planning team led by Halff Associates, Inc. - with administrative oversight provided by the City of Brownsville. A special thanks is extended to the many residents, property owners, community leaders, regional, state and federal partners for their time, resources, knowledge, and insight into the assets that can be leveraged by the municipalities of Cameron County to build a vibrant active tourism economy. A special thanks is extended to the following individuals who are recognized for their significant contributions to the preparation of the Active Plan (listed in random order):

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...and countless other planning participants who continue to support regional economic development, transportation alternatives, and community health in the LRGV.

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The progressiveness and collaborative nature of this particular project fits very well with The Legacy Foundation’s health-care related mission. It’s refreshing to see communities thinking beyond their city limits to promote recreational fitness and health.

MADE POSSIBLE BY: A GRANT FROM THE VALLEY BAPTIST LEGACY FOUNDATION

Judy Quisenberry, Director of Grant Programs, Legacy Foundation; City of Brownsville, Feb. 13, 2015.

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RESOLUTIONS OF ADOPTION

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan (the “Active Plan”) has been adopted by resolution of 10 participating municipalities and two (2) metropolitan planning organizations. The commitment of participating entities was affirmed at a ceremony convened at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art on November 16, 2016.

Adoption resolutions may be found in **Appendix H**.

THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES:

City of Brownsville
September 20, 2016

Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization
October 12, 2016

Town of Combes
September 26, 2016

City of Harlingen
October 3, 2016

Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization
November 9, 2016

Town of Laguna Vista
September 13, 2016

City of Los Fresnos
September 13, 2016

Town of Los Indios
October 6, 2016

City of Port Isabel
September 27, 2016

Town of Rancho Viejo
September 13, 2016

City of San Benito
October 18, 2016

City of South Padre Island
October 5, 2016



Municipal leaders and regional contributors affirm their support for the Active Plan at a signing ceremony held on November 16, 2016. Source: Halff Associates

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, “The Active Plan,” is a collaboration of ten municipalities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley to develop and promote active transportation. The Active Plan provides a strategic framework for the development and promotion of biking and walking throughout Cameron County. The Active Plan is designed to provide participating municipalities with a coordinated approach to attract visitors to Cameron County and provide active amenities to permanent residents through area-wide bicycle and pedestrian transportation investments and the development of targeted tourism development strategies.

Statement of Purpose, Resolution of Support; Active Plan Signing Ceremony; November 16, 2016.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Blessed with natural beauty, cultural diversity, and an already vibrant tourism economy, the communities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), with the support of the Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation, have come together to create a one-of-a-kind active transportation and active tourism plan - the “Active Plan.”

The Active Plan is both a transportation plan and an economic development plan. It is designed to tap into the rapidly expanding market for “active tourism” which is a segment of the leisure and travel industry involving physical activity that combines elements of adventure, nature, and culture. By promoting the LRGV as a world-wide magnet for active tourists, facilities and infrastructure can also be developed which will ultimately provide one of the finest and most extensive region-wide non-motorized transportation networks anywhere in the United States. This is indeed an ambitious plan, but its benefits are far-reaching, both in terms of expanding economic impacts for a much greater portion of the LRGV, but also in increasing access by a wide cross-section of area residents to healthy activities and a sense of pride in the cultural and natural jewels of the region.

WHERE IS THE LRGV TODAY?

Rapid growth will more than double the LRGV region’s population over the next 50 years. But increasingly, area lifestyles are becoming much more like the remainder of the country, in that dependency on vehicular travel - especially for commuting to work - is now prevalent. Because of this, many indicators of health in the region are a growing concern, including high rates of diabetes, quality of life, and a need for more healthy activities (such as walking or bicycling).

Investment in trails and bicycling facilities is increasing in communities throughout the region, especially as federal and state funding resources become more widely available. But even if local investments in trails double, challenges in providing greater access for a growing population remain. Events such as the Jalapeno 100 in Harlingen, the Pedal to Padre bicycle ride over the Queen Isabella Causeway, and even a new open water swimming event at South Padre Island attract both LRGV residents and visitors alike, and are extremely popular.

Tourism and visitor spending within the LRGV accounted for 3.9 million annual tourist visits and annual spending of more than \$800 million in 2014. More importantly, these numbers continue to grow.

RIO GRANDE VALLEY NATURE TOURISM



23%
of Rio Grande Valley visitors experience nature activities



Contributing
\$463
MILLION
to the economy

Supporting



6,613
JOBS

annually

Source: Economic Impact of Nature Tourism on the Rio Grande Valley: Considering Peak and Off-Peak Visitation for 2011, Texas A&M University, April 2012

The area's known attractions are extensive, and range from the beautiful sandy beaches of South Padre Island, to the beauty of the Laguna Madre and the world-class birding of Laguna Atascosa and other area birding centers. But they also include many other jewels, some known and some that are still hidden or less well known. These include the historic downtowns of Brownsville and Harlingen, the wild beauty of Boca Chica Beach near the mouth of the Rio Grande River, the peacefulness of the Arroyo Colorado, and quirky attractions such as "Little Graceland" (a museum and memorial to Elvis Presley) in Los Fresnos. LRGV dining favorites, ranging from "street tacos" to local "panaderias" (fresh bread vendors) to fresh seafood and shrimp make the area a cultural culinary delight. History abounds as well, ranging from the old lighthouse in Port Isabel to remnant battlefields. This strong tourism market, as well as the area's many physical, historical and cultural assets, are a strong foundation and framework for the implementation of the Active Plan.

COMPONENTS OF THE ACTIVE PLAN

The Active Plan contains two (2) key components, the Active Transportation Program and the Active Tourism Program.

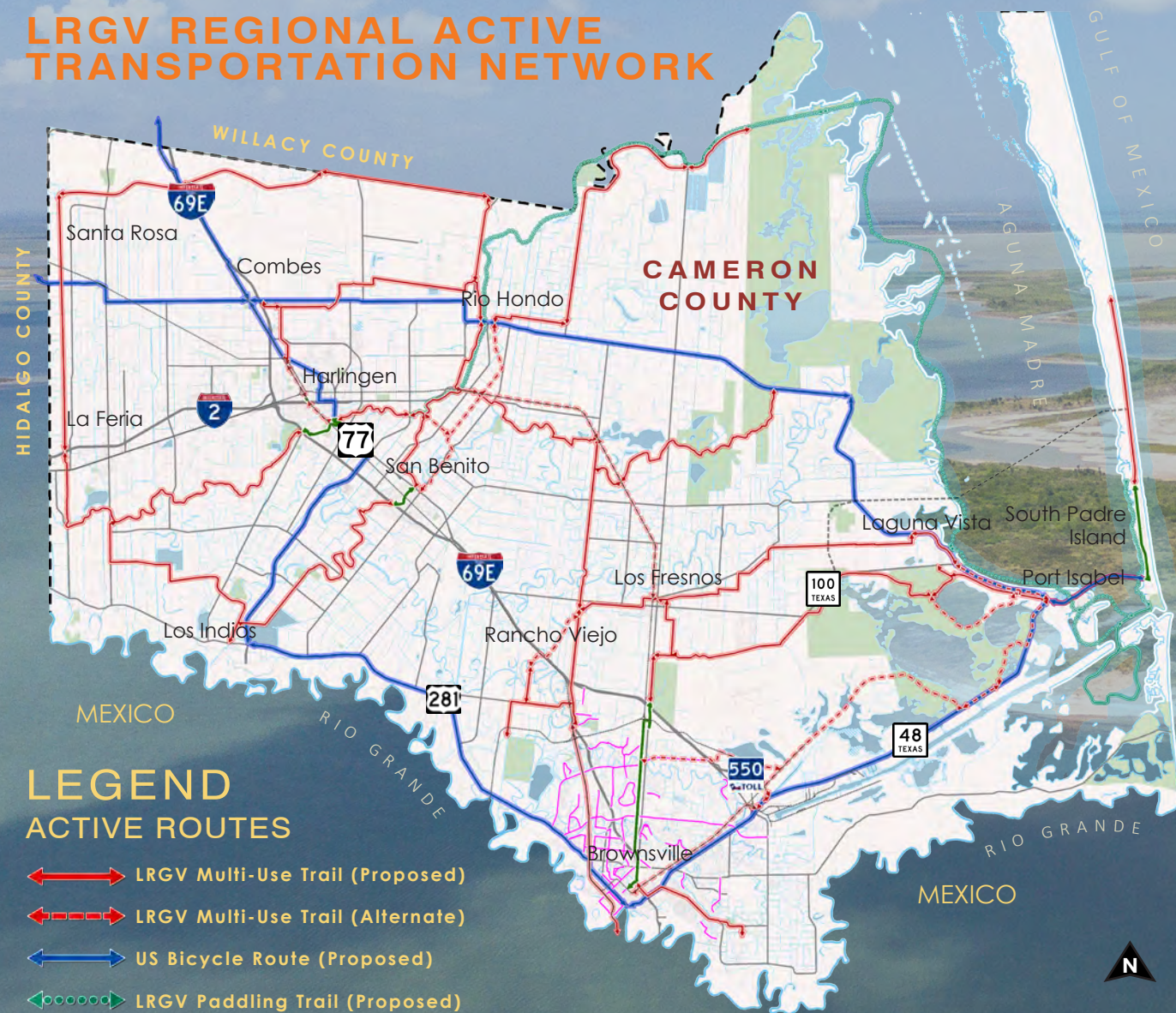
THE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM, which focuses on non-motorized transportation, is a combined network of on-street bicycle routes, multi-use trails, and paddling trails linking LRGV residents and visitors to area-wide communities and attractions. These combined county-wide networks

complement localized active transportation networks (both existing and planned) being developed by area municipalities.

The recommended LRGV regional active transportation network is an overlapping system of 425 cumulative miles of on-street bicycle routes, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and paddling trails. Facility types include:

- **LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK.** A system of off-street multi-use trails suitable for bicycling, walking, hiking, and jogging, extending throughout Cameron County's urban and rural environments (including a link to Matamoros, Mexico). It is intended to provide health, recreation, and transportation opportunities to the greatest possible combination of residents and visitors considering age and ability. **THE ACTIVE PLAN PROPOSES OVER 230 MILES OF MULTI-USE TRAILS.**
- **UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE (USBR).** An on-street bicycle route linking LRGV communities and attractions to a national bicycle route system. Intended for residents and visiting cyclists of advanced ability, the USBR will utilize existing roadways to convey persons between various points in Cameron County in the most direct and efficient manner possible. **THE ACTIVE PLAN PROPOSES A USBR IN CAMERON COUNTY OF OVER 120 MILES.**
- **LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM.** A series of paddling trails linking the tidal waters of the Laguna Madre with inland reaches of the Arroyo Colorado. Taking advantage of Cameron County's abundant water resources, the paddling trail system will offer access to novices and enthusiasts of varying ability. **THE ACTIVE PLAN PROPOSES OVER 78 MILES OF PADDLING TRAILS.**

LRGV REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



An intricate network of irrigation canals (which transport water from the Rio Grande River to agricultural fields miles away) and drainage canals (which help relieve flooding in the very flat topography of the region) create an opportunity for one-of-a-kind routes across the region. Many of the corridors shown to the left utilize these corridors, and the natural appeal of those routes is captured by the illustration on this page.

THE ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM'S purpose is to ensure that communities and businesses are able to maximize the economic benefits of the recreational, natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The program works to address tourism issues and opportunities through regional cooperation and to build the connection between the region's active tourism assets and the cities and towns they serve.

To organize and advance the region as an active tourism destination, this plan recommends promoting the LRGV as "a hidden gem" that has yet to be discovered by the many visitors to the state of Texas and visitors from within the state. Through engagement with the active tourism plan, communities will create links to regional assets and develop the infrastructure, lodging, and services needed to attract a wide range of visitors. Active travelers are looking for services that fit their active and typically healthy lifestyle, including:

- Access to high quality, fresh and local food, both in restaurants and at grocers and markets is a high priority. Food is fuel and it is particularly relevant for those partaking in recreational activity on to their vacations. Active tourists are also interested in foods that are culturally relevant to the area they are visiting.



THE ACTIVE PLAN

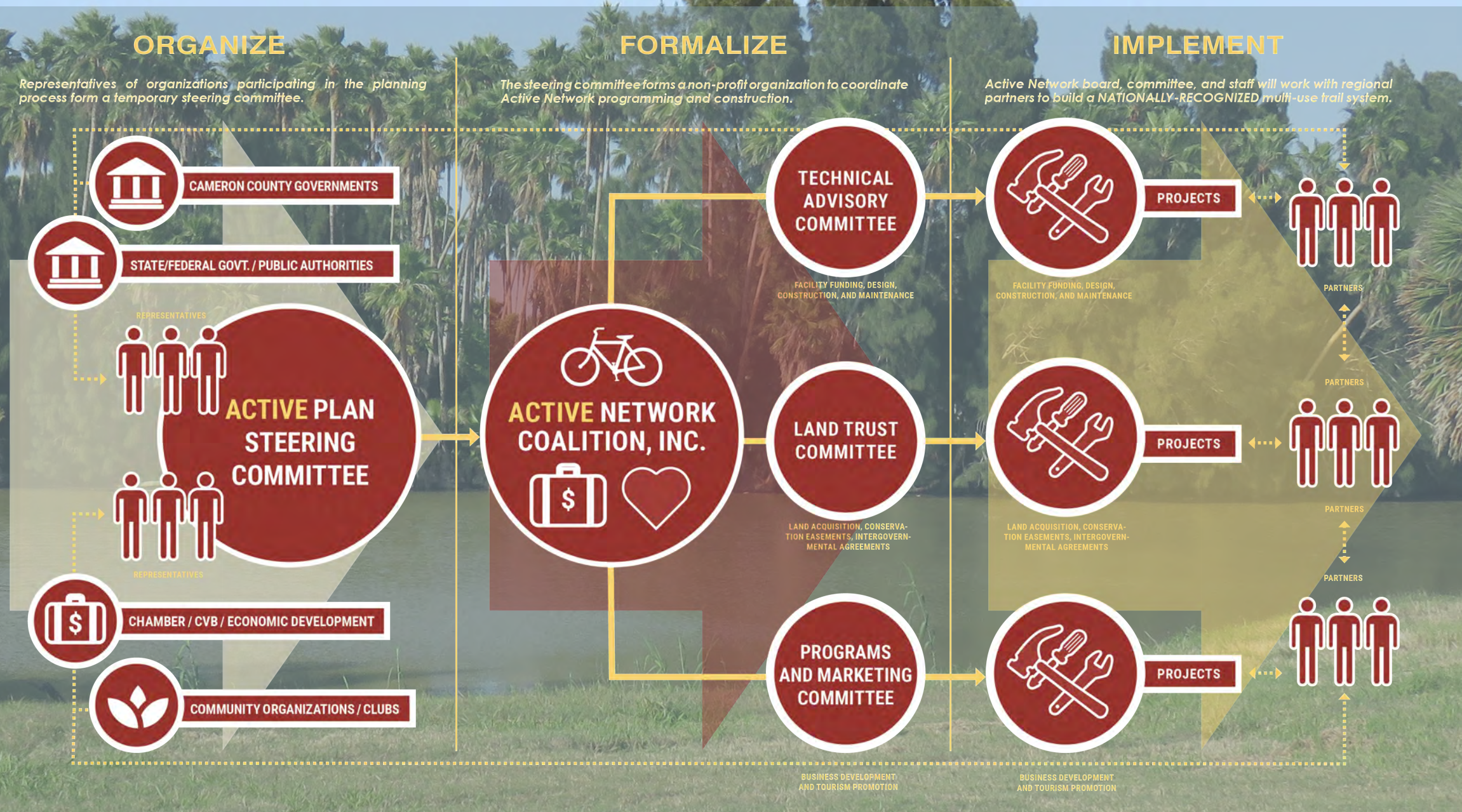
- Camping and accommodations that cater to the active traveler, including hostels and bed and breakfasts or locally-owned motels. Hiker Biker sites that offer simple camp spots and assure the traveler that they will be accommodated without a reservation are a great amenity and typically does not have a high cost to install or maintain.

Success will bring resources to support further investment in local “place making.” The Active Tourism program is organized around the following five (5) key components:

- Leadership and capacity building
- Small business support
- Municipal and community engagement
- Marketing and promotion
- Monitoring and evaluation

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Successful Active Plan implementation is dependent on the continued coordination exhibited by LRGV communities and partnering organizations during the preparation of this plan. The implementation process is summarized by the three (3) steps depicted in the graphic to the right: Organize, Formalize, and Implement.



The LRGV's active transportation and tourism programs, developed with the sustained participation of representatives from multiple LRGV communities and organizations, are ambitious and will require continued collaboration and coordination to implement. To ensure effective coordination, the Active Plan recommends the creation of a professional organization - not just to build the active transportation network and supporting active tourism programs - but to maintain these assets over the long-term.



A bicycle and pedestrian connection across the Queen Isabella Causeway is a critical component of the LRGV Regional Active Transportation Network.

CATALYST PROJECTS

Active Plan participants identified six (6) proposed “catalyst” projects intended to form the backbone of a region-wide United States Bicycle Route, multi-use trail network, and paddling trail.

Recommended catalyst projects are shown on Map 3.6 through 3.11 (pages 3.39 - 3.49) and include:

- LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: ARROYO-RESACA SEGMENT
- LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: BAHIA GRANDE SEGMENT
- LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: BATTLEFIELD SEGMENT
- LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: SPI SEGMENT
- LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM: ARROYO COLORADO SEGMENT
- UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE #55: LAGUNA MADRE SEGMENT

In addition to the six (6) identified catalyst projects, the Active Plan identifies the Queen Isabella Causeway - connecting inland Cameron County to South Padre Island - as a critical component of a region-wide bicycle and pedestrian network. Providing a safe bicycle and pedestrian linkage between the barrier island and the mainland at America's front porch can help thrust the LRGV into the consciousness of the active tourist.

IN SUMMARY

The ideas and recommendations contained in the Active Plan represent an extraordinary level of initiative among the plan's local government planning partners; with a shared focus on regional goals and mutual benefit.

The Active Plan is ambitious, will take time to accomplish, and will require continued collaboration and coordination to bring it to reality. But it can and will forever transform the LRGV and make the region a global attraction, an enormous source of pride to local residents and a wonderful place to call home.



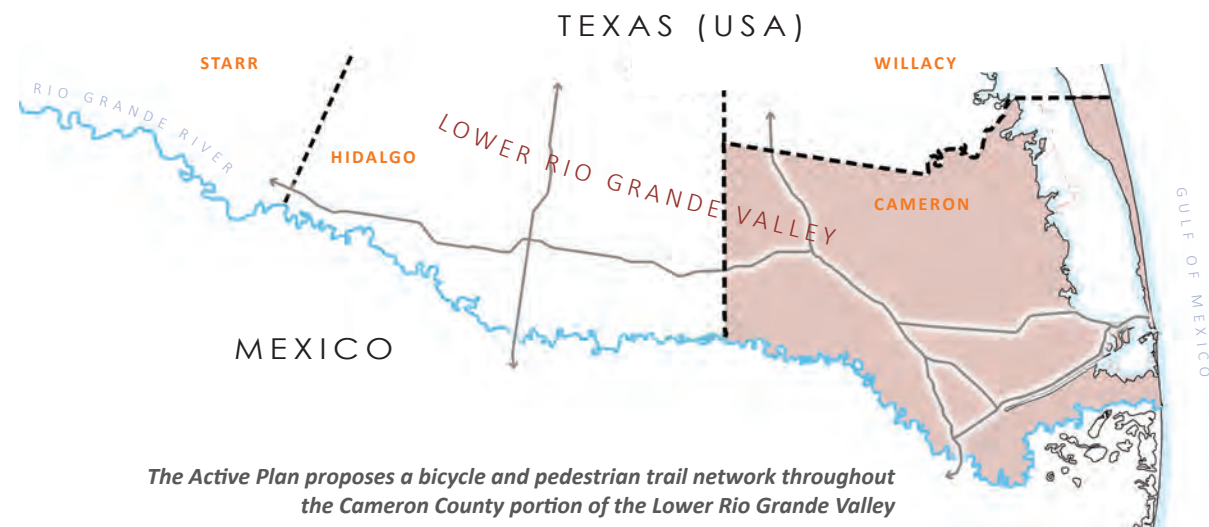


CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

PASEO DE LA RESACA, BROWNSVILLE

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan (the "Active Plan") is a collaboration of the municipalities, economic development agencies, and health organizations of Cameron County, Texas. The Active Plan provides a strategic framework for the development and promotion of biking and walking throughout the County. It is designed to provide participating local governments and partnering agencies with a coordinated work program by which they can attract visitors to the County, and provide active amenities to permanent residents through area-wide bicycle and pedestrian transportation investments and the development of targeted tourism development strategies.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (the "LRGV") region is comprised of multiple counties (including Cameron County) at the southern tip of Texas bounded by the Gulf of Mexico, and sharing a border with the United Mexican States along the Rio Grande River.



The Active Plan proposes a bicycle and pedestrian trail network throughout the Cameron County portion of the Lower Rio Grande Valley

While blessed with natural beauty, cultural diversity, and a vibrant tourism economy, Cameron County and the greater LRGV region is also challenged by high rates of poverty and traditionally poor public health indicators. These divergent community-wide attributes suggest that a stronger physical and economic connection can be forged between the majority of Cameron County's citizens and the community's assets.

How can the region's positive economic attributes be better leveraged to improve the overall quality of life of local residents? Active Plan partners – representing organizations with many distinct perspectives – have determined that a key linkage to enhance regional economic growth and public health is through coordinated investment in active transportation.

To some degree, many Active Plan partners are already engaged in the types of infrastructure investments and marketing programs advocated in this Plan – but such initiatives have not always been coordinated regionally, or have been inhibited by competition between area communities and/or funding challenges. Active Plan participants have joined to create a combined active transportation and active tourism program because they recognize that the efforts which they have expended on their individual initiatives can have a greater cumulative impact on their communities if integrated as part of a unified effort.



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1.1 PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES OF THE ACTIVE PLAN

The Active Plan was initiated by LRGV municipalities, with the support of the Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation, to develop a County-wide bicycle and pedestrian network that will provide enhanced access to the region's many tourist destinations and communities. With a thriving local tourism economy concentrated around the pristine beaches of South Padre Island, Plan participants determined that the development of an "active" transportation network linking all Cameron County communities – specifically through the development of walking and biking trails – could expand the geographic reach of local tourist expenditures, extend area visits, and otherwise reduce seasonal lulls in visitors traveling to Cameron County.

Outside of the contemporary amusements that often augment the offerings of tourist communities, many of Cameron County's most prominent destinations include pristine natural habitats and unique cultural and historical amenities. The Active Plan proposes bicycle, pedestrian, and paddling trail connections to these destinations as a "low-impact" way to visit and experience the sights, sounds, and significance of LRGV attractions. Ultimately, the combined LRGV bicycle, pedestrian, and paddling trail networks recommended in this Plan are intended to be of a scale that they themselves entice an active type of tourist to experience the LRGV as a destination for an extended adventure.

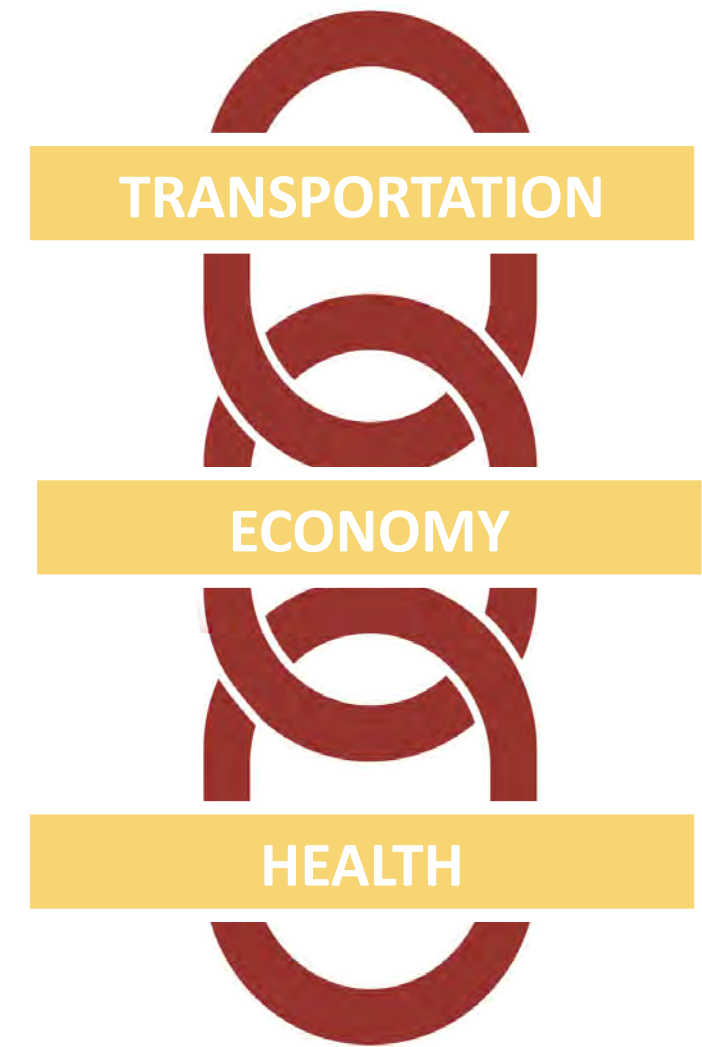
The investments envisioned by the Active Plan are not intended solely for the use of LRGV visitors. They will provide residual and long-term benefits to Cameron County residents as well – in the form of "access" and "awareness." The Active Plan's proposed

LRGV regional active transportation network will be dispersed throughout the County, and may be accessed by a wide cross-section of area residents to promote healthy activity and habits. As the network gradually expands, linkages to area attractions will increase local awareness of those cultural, historical, and natural gems of Cameron County that can often seem inaccessible. In this manner, the Active Plan is a pathway for showcasing the people, places, and events of which residents of Cameron County can be proud.

To summarize the general purpose of the Active Plan, participating stakeholders endorsed five (5) guiding principles which represent statements of intent. The guiding principles of the Active Plan include:

- **GENERATE NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY THROUGHOUT THE LRGV.**
- **DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL TOURISM MARKET.**
- **LINK CAMERON COUNTY COMMUNITIES.**
- **CREATE A REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK.**
- **PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES.**

The Active Plan presents an ambitious active transportation and active tourism development program that requires substantial regional cooperation and coordination to successfully implement. As implied by the guiding principles, it is understood by stakeholders that the Active Plan program cannot be achieved solely through individual or localized effort. It is a program that requires a **unified** effort by participating local entities to advance **regional** economic development, transportation enhancement, and community health.



The Active Plan proposes a development program that links the objectives of economic development commissions and bureaus, local governments, and health organizations. Regional bicycle and pedestrian transportation investments will entice focused tourist segments to the LRGV, and support local initiatives aimed at improving long-term community health.

PLANNING AREA: LRGV OR CAMERON COUNTY?

Because the LRGV is not an official geographic subdivision, the specific counties and municipalities which constitute it vary depending on individual perspective. Nonetheless, the geographic scope of the Active Plan is limited to Cameron County. Unless specifically noted, the use of the acronym "LRGV" is used to refer solely to Cameron County throughout the Plan - although Active Plan transportation network and tourism program recommendations could be extended to other LRGV counties in the future.



1.2 ACTIVE PLAN SCOPE

The Active Plan is both a transportation plan, and an economic development plan. It is designed to expand the LRGV's regional bicycle and pedestrian network, and the local tourism industry. This dual-track planning approach is represented by two (2) inter-related concepts: **active transportation** and **active tourism**.

WHAT IS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION?

There is not a single definition for active transportation; yet, a common understanding of the concept yields similar results including:

“Active transportation’ is a means of getting around that is powered by human energy, primarily walking and bicycling. Often called ‘non-motorized transportation,’ we prefer the term ‘active transportation’ since it is a more positive statement that expresses the key connection between healthy, active living and our transportation choices.” **Partnership for Active Transportation.**

“Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered transportation – walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, in-line skating or skateboarding.” **Public Health Agency of Canada.**

“Active Transportation Network. The system of bicycle, pedestrian, and/or multi-use facilities supporting bicycle and pedestrian activity within a community that provide non-motorized transportation options to citizens and visitors. The active transportation network is composed of facilities that are components of the street system, as well as those developed outside and independent of the street system.” **City of Harlem (GA), Subdivision Regulations.**

Basically, the term “active transportation” most typically refers to walking and biking. The Active Plan stretches this idea. In addition to regional bicycle and pedestrian network development recommendations, the Active Plan includes recommendations for the development of paddling trails along many of Cameron County's waterways.

Some LRGV communities have already embraced the concept of active transportation, and are incorporating bicycling and walking investments as key components of their overall transportation programs. For example, the City of Brownsville continues to implement bicycle and pedestrian projects that were recommended as part of *Connecting Brownsville: The 2013 Bicycle and Trail Master Plan*. In December 2015, the City of South Padre Island received almost 3.5 million dollars to fund bicycle and pedestrian enhancements for over 5 ½ miles of the island's main commercial thoroughfare. Similarly, Harlingen has recently opened the 25th Street Pedestrian and Bike Trail which connects local neighborhoods with schools, parks, and employment centers. Local leaders understand the direct connections between active transportation, economic vitality, and public health.



The City of Brownsville's commitment to active transportation resulted in it being recognized by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFCSM) in November, 2015. Source: City of Brownsville

With these upgrades to our infrastructure, our city will be a more favorable destination to visit increasing tourism dollars for local small business. At the same time, through this project, our residents will be able to enjoy a safer, more accessible city.

Mayor Barry Patel, South Padre Island, On the impact of a 2015 Transportation Alternatives grant to the City

WHAT IS ACTIVE TOURISM?

Active tourism is a segment of the leisure and travel industry involving physical activity which combines elements of adventure, nature, and culture. Active tourism activities include walking (sometimes referred to as rambling), hiking, bicycling, kayaking, canoeing, kite-boarding, caving, horseback riding, and animal and bird watching.

Active tourism is a large and growing segment of the tourism economy. According to a recent market study, in 2012, 42 percent of travelers from North America, South America, and Europe reported an adventure activity as the main activity of their last trip. The projected adventure travel market is worth 263 billion dollars, up from 89 billion dollars in 2009. In the period between 2009 and 2012, the adventure tourism market has grown 65 percent annually.



WHY PROMOTE ACTIVE TOURISM IN THE LRGV?

The growth in active tourism has important implications for both established and emerging travel destinations. Many travelers are seeking out active and adventurous vacations. Beach visitors increasingly want to expand their activities to include physical activity, adventure, nature, and cultural exchange.

Cameron County has the opportunity to tap into the active tourism market and bring significant economic activity to the region. With the established popularity of South Padre Island as a well-known destination, and the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the in-land communities, the region has the ingredients to become a highly successful active tourism location. Bird observation and the many animal species in and around state and federal wildlife refuges, access to water-based recreation, historic battlefields, and the warm local culture of the LRGV make Cameron County a natural draw for active tourists. The concurrent development of a region-wide active transportation network and a strong active tourism program will help the county maximize the tourism potential of the region's nature, history, and culture.

Hometown amenities linked to a larger system of trails can establish an interconnected network of communities. These regional systems are attractive to a growing segment of travelers that are seeking active and adventurous destinations. Photo by Halff Associates

ACTIVE TOURISM CATEGORIES.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE ACTIVE PLAN? The Active Plan combines the three key attributes of the active tourist with "active" (human-powered) transportation.

THE ACTIVE PLAN FOCUS:

ACTIVE TOURISM NETWORKS. ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN DESTINATIONS. Destinations are linked by active transportation networks (i.e. bicycle routes, trails, blue ways). Physical activity may or may not take place at each destination.

ACTIVE TOURISM NODES. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITHIN DESTINATIONS. Physical activity of similar theme within concentrated but independent nodes. Provides the reason for visiting the LRGV (ex. birding sites, kayak/canoe launches, etc.)

OTHER TOURISM:

ACTIVE PURSUITS. Cultural, natural, or physical activity is "accessory" to an attraction or destination (ex. carriage tour of historic district, tennis courts, swimming pools, paddle boat on a resaca, golfing at a resort, etc.)

TOURISM. General relaxation or entertainment (ex. beach combing, bar hopping, amusement parks, outlet malls, etc.)

The Active Plan focuses on the development, enhancement, and promotion of local attractions that draw visitors for physical activity, exploration, and discovery. Such destinations are often (but not exclusively) publicly owned and maintained, and sometimes lack the marketing budget and experience to entice visitors without the concerted efforts of local partners.



THE ACTIVE PLAN APPROACH - TWO PROGRAMS IN ONE

ACTIVE PLAN CHAPTERS



CHAPTER 1, INTRODUCTION. An overview of Plan purpose and principles. Defines the scope of the Active Plan, identifies participating stakeholders, and describes the planning process.



CHAPTER 2, LRGV EXISTING RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS. Summarizes existing active transportation facilities and networks in the LRGV. Identifies corridors that may be utilized to form a regional network. Highlights local attractions and evaluates existing tourism resources.



CHAPTER 3, ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM. Recommends a system of regional bicycle, pedestrian, and paddling networks that link LRGV communities and attractions. Prioritizes projects and provides design parameters.



CHAPTER 4, ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM. Outlines marketing and promotion strategies to develop the active tourist economy in the LRGV. Ties recommended strategies to existing resources and the proposed regional active transportation network.



CHAPTER 5, IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM. Provides the methodology for concurrent implementation of the active transportation and active tourism programs including: responsible parties, funding sources, program monitoring and administration, and short and long-term work programs.

Although already identified as both a transportation and economic development plan, the Active Plan approach is distinct. The Active Plan blends both topics into a single document in the following manner:

- **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM.** *The active transportation network recommendations contained in the Active Plan are focused on generating region-wide connections. The recommended bicycling, pedestrian, and paddling networks are designed to attract the active tourist by encouraging county-wide exploration. The general public benefits from access to transportation corridors between communities, and recreation corridors reaching into the rural fringes of Cameron County.*
- **ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM.** *The Active Plan's recommended tourism program is designed to leverage a specific segment of the travel and leisure market. Its structure is such that existing attractions and activities can be marketed to target audiences through the complimentary development of the network facilities recommended in this Plan.*



The active tourist craves authentic experiences that connect them to the places they are visiting. Local restaurants, accommodations, and services are often the selection of choice. The Active Plan's active tourism program provides strategies for local businesses to attract and cater to the needs of cyclists and other types of active tourists. Photos by Halff Associates

1.3 PLANNING PARTNERS AND PROCESS

The regional scope of the Active Plan results from the partnership of nine Cameron County municipalities. This type of “ad-hoc” local government partnership does not represent the typical model by which regional plans are led and influenced by an “umbrella” regional planning agency. Instead, in the case of the Active Plan, a regional coalition of municipalities recognized the significant benefits and potential for this type of plan, and came together to conceive and develop it. The ideas and recommendations contained in the Active Plan therefore represent an extraordinary level of initiative among the plan’s local government planning partners; with a shared focus on regional goals and mutual benefit.

PARTICIPATING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local government coordination of the Active Plan was led by the City of Brownsville. The City served as the primary agent for planning team selection and activities, data transfer, stakeholder identification and communications, plan activities and events, and the administration of project funds. City staff ensured that participating local government partners remained informed of plan progress, upcoming benchmarks, and input opportunities, to foster a transparent planning process.

Cameron County municipalities serving as partners in the Active Plan, through funding support and/or sustained participation are listed in **Figure 1-1: Active Plan Participating Municipalities**. Local government representatives principally included elected officials, administrative staff, and staff from planning departments and parks and recreation departments.

REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The geographic and topical scope of the Active Plan required the sustained participation of multiple organizations representing regional or local interests that aligned with Plan principles. Transportation agencies, economic development and tourism bureaus/commissions, public authorities, health organizations, and federal and state government partners, were invited to participate in the planning process. The participation of these stakeholders in the planning process influenced Plan research and recommendations. Of equal or greater significance, the collaboration of Active Plan stakeholders prepared them for their subsequent roles as Plan implementers, by providing context for Plan goals, objectives, strategies and actions. Stakeholder and public participation methods are described in more detail starting on page 1.9.

FIGURE 1-1: ACTIVE PLAN PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES

BROWNSVILLE	LOS INDIOS
COMBES	PORT ISABEL
HARLINGEN	RANCHO VIEJO
LAGUNA VISTA	SAN BENITO
LOS FRESNOS	SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONS

Representatives of Cameron County’s two (2) metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) (the Brownsville MPO and Harlingen-San Benito MPO), the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA), transit systems, and local cycling/running/walking clubs came together to participate in the Active Plan process. Their participation assisted in aligning the Plan’s active transportation network recommendations with existing facilities, planned transportation projects, and locally popular bicycling and walking routes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS

Representatives of convention and visitor’s bureaus, chambers of commerce, and economic development councils were involved in Plan development. Their participation provided direction to the development of the Plan’s active tourism program. Representatives of local museums and other attractions, historic organizations, and vendors that support active tourism (outfitters, bicycle rentals, etc.) contributed local knowledge and perspective in active transportation needs and promotional opportunities for active tourism development.



PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

Representatives of the Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation and University of Texas School of Public Health guided active transportation network development by ensuring that recommended facility types and priority locations provided the greatest possible accessibility to Cameron County residents. This linkage is a critical Plan consideration as final network recommendations include segments within population centers that can serve as transportation corridors; and, because much of the funding for Active Plan development was for the development of infrastructure that could be used to improve public health.

STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) representatives participated in active transportation network and active tourism program development due to their ownership of key corridors and destinations. The National Park Service (NPS) and United States Department of Fish and Wildlife (USFW) provided critical information on policies related to potential active transportation network access to national parks and wildlife refuges, as well as suitable activities and facility types that might be permitted on the properties which they own and maintain.

PUBLIC PARTNERS

Large portions of Cameron County are partitioned among four (4) drainage districts, and seven (7) irrigation districts, created in accordance with Chapters 56 and 58 of the Texas Water Code, respectively. The drainage ditches and irrigation canals owned and maintained by these authorities provide significant active transportation network opportunities extending throughout the County.

Likewise, many segments of the proposed LRGV regional active transportation network originate from or bisect state and federal properties - including parks and wildlife management areas.



Photo by Halff Associates



Photo by Halff Associates

Federal, state, and other public partners were actively engaged in the development of active transportation network routes. All were consulted regarding the feasibility of incorporating bicycle and pedestrian trails within specific segments of their property holdings - including drainage/irrigation corridors. Further discussion of federal and state partners, including Texas drainage districts and irrigation districts is found in Chapter 3, Active Transportation Program.

ACTIVE PLANNING FOR HEALTH

VALLEY BAPTIST LEGACY FOUNDATION

Major funding for the Active Plan was provided by the Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation. The Active Plan's emphasis on "active transportation" is consistent with the Legacy Foundation's mission of supporting initiatives that improve the health and quality of life of residents in south Texas.

In awarding funding for the preparation of the Active Plan, the Legacy Foundation recognized the correlation between the project's intended outcomes and its own mission stating:

"The progressiveness and collaborative nature of this particular project fits very well with The Legacy Foundation's health-care related mission. It's refreshing to see communities thinking beyond their city limits to promote recreational fitness and health."

Judy Quisenberry, Director of Grant Programs, Legacy Foundation; City of Brownsville, Feb. 13, 2015.

The Legacy Foundation will work with other organizations to measurably improve the health of those living in the lower Rio Grande Valley by promoting healthy lifestyles and providing increased access to healthcare for all.

Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation Vision Statement

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH (BROWNSVILLE)

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health, Brownsville Regional Campus (UT Health) has implemented an evidence-based community-wide campaign (CWC) throughout Cameron County, also known as Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta! (TSSC). Ethnic minorities and low-income populations experience disproportionate rates of obesity and chronic diseases associated with obesity, including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, and stroke. The CWC program is based on the Stanford 5 community-based project and serves the predominantly Hispanic population along the US-Mexico border, which has been found to be affected by chronic diseases, particularly related to lack of physical activity and food choices. The two (2) main objectives of the CWC are:

- **To implement innovative evidence-based CWC activities with fidelity to the recommended program elements in selected municipalities of the Rio Grande Valley; and,**
- **To address the lack of physical activity and healthful food choices in RHP5 so as to reduce risks for chronic disease, particularly hypertension.**

As part of the CWC, UT Health subcontracts cities throughout Cameron County to implement environmental changes focused on improving the physical environment of their communities to benefit and support healthier lifestyles, including access to physical activity and healthy food vending options. For the campaign, goals include increasing access to community locations for physical activity, organizing community events aimed towards nutritional awareness and healthy living, increasing green spaces and parks, creating hike and bike paths, creating interconnected routes, creating community gardens, creating farmers markets, and installing hydration stations.



Active Plan multi-use trail recommendations support the UT School of Public Health's efforts to provide citizens with safe and accessible places to exercise. Source: UT School of Public Health, Community Advisory Board



ACTIVE PLAN PROCESS



Active Plan Advisory Committee members identify important tourist destinations and preferred bicycle and pedestrian connections during the September 17, 2015, stakeholder workshop. Photos by Halff Associates

The Active Plan was developed between August 2015, and May 2016, by a consultant team of regional and national partners chosen by a local selection committee organized by the City of Brownsville. The Active Plan process was originally designed to allow participating local governments to exercise continual oversight of Plan development, and to provide initial feedback regarding interim recommendations and deliverables. Other regional stakeholders (see pages 1.6 and 1.7) were to provide insight at key points in the planning process.

It became clear early in the planning process that the sustained participation of all stakeholders was necessary. Because successful Active Plan implementation requires the coordinated efforts of multiple parties, full knowledge of how the Plan developed – and how recommended implementation roles and partnerships between parties should be distributed – was necessary to increase local buy-in. As a result, all parties were integrated into a single Active Plan Advisory Committee.

ACTIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An advisory committee representing the participating local governments and regional stakeholders identified on pages 1.6 and 1.7 supervised the preparation of the Active Plan. (A full list of organizations that were invited to send representatives to advisory committee meetings is located in **Appendix A**). The Active Plan Advisory Committee (the “APAC”) was responsible for guiding the activities of the planning team by: **A**) Generating an overall plan vision and goals; **B**) Identifying opportunities and constraints in relation to active transportation/tourism development; **C**) Evaluating key destinations and routes; **D**) Prioritizing Plan recommendations; and, **E**) Providing a final recommendation for the consideration of elected boards, councils, and commissions.

APAC meetings and activities included:

- **APAC MEETING #1 (KICK-OFF MEETING). AUGUST 11, 2015. UT RIO GRANDE VALLEY (BROWNSVILLE CAMPUS), REGIONAL ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER.** The planning team provided APAC participants with a project overview, discussed upcoming activities, and facilitated discussion regarding perceptions of “active transportation,” and “active tourism.” This meeting included a limited list of initial committee members (a broader list of regional stakeholders was invited to all subsequent meetings).

- **APAC MEETING #2 (STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP). SEPTEMBER 17, 2015. PORT ISABEL EVENT AND CULTURAL CENTER.** The planning team conducted a three (3) hour workshop with local government and other regional stakeholder representatives. Participants identified key regional tourist destinations that should be linked by a County-wide active transportation network, and suggested some initial routes. The defining parameters of an active tourist were discussed, and workshop participants defined the attributes of the ideal LRGV active tourist.
- **APAC MEETING #3. NOVEMBER 12, 2015. SAN BENITO CITY HALL.** Initial route maps were presented by the planning team to determine stakeholder preferences, and inform subsequent revisions to the route selection methodology and route recommendations.
- **APAC MEETING #4. DECEMBER 10, 2015. HARLINGEN CITY HALL.** Refined active transportation network recommendations were presented to stakeholders, as was the preliminary framework for a complimentary active tourism program.
- **APAC MEETING #5. AUGUST 12, 2016. RANCHO VIEJO CITY HALL.** Review of the draft plan and its recommendations was presented to stakeholders for discussion and feedback prior to completion of the plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Residents of Cameron County will be the long-term beneficiaries of any regional bicycle routes, multi-use trail and paddling trail networks that are constructed in accordance with the recommendations of the Active Plan. As a result, public feedback on the active transportation facilities and routes proposed in the plan was sought following the original direction provided by the APAC. Public input was solicited by survey, and through open houses.

Public Survey

A brief public survey was prepared for Cameron County residents to express their preferences on walking and biking destinations, distances, and facility types. The survey was prepared on-line, and notification of survey availability was distributed by City of Brownsville staff through Active Plan stakeholders beginning in December 2015. The survey received 279 total responses. Survey results were used to refine regional active transportation facility and route recommendations and included the following key findings:

- **Principal destinations for walking and bicycling were comprised of parks and trails, and other destinations of natural or cultural significance. A smaller proportion of respondents indicated that they walk or bike for utilitarian purposes such as commuting to work or shopping areas.**
- **Two-thirds of respondents indicated that their average walking distances (regardless of purpose) ranged between 1 and 5 miles. Bicycling distances were much more widely dispersed between short, medium, and long distance travel.**
- **Almost 50 percent of respondents indicated that a lack of sidewalk or trail connections keeps them from walking or bicycling more. Much smaller percentages of respondents indicated that environmental factors such as distances or weather inhibited walking or bicycling activity.**

Full survey results are available in **Appendix B**.

BROWNSVILLE
On the Border, By the Sea

**LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION
AND TOURISM PLAN**
"The Active Plan"

PUBLIC SURVEY

Cameron County communities, transportation organizations, and economic development agencies are developing a plan to link the cities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) to the County's natural, cultural, and historic resources via a region-wide network of bicycling and walking facilities. While such facilities can position Cameron County as a destination for active tourism (bicycle touring, hiking trails, etc.), a long-term objective of this effort is to promote healthy lifestyles in the LRGV by providing more places for Cameron County residents to walk and bike.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Your input will help guide the focus and recommendations of this plan. Thank you for your participation.

1. Within or to which destinations do you like to walk, run, or bicycle for recreation, fitness or transportation
 Parks Trails Wildlife Refuges Historic Sites Schools
 Workplace Shopping Areas Downtown
2. To what other destinations in Cameron County would you like to be able to walk, run, or bike?
3. When you walk or run for recreation, fitness or transportation, how far do you typically go?
 N/A 0-1 mile 1-5 miles More than 5 miles
4. When you ride a bike for recreation, fitness or transportation, how far do you typically go?
 N/A 0-5 miles 5-10 miles 10-20 miles More than 20 miles
5. Which factors listed below prevent you from walking, running or riding a bike further than you do?
 (Please check all that apply)
 I do not feel safe
 There are no sidewalks or trails / not connected
 It takes too long
 Destinations are too far
 Existing sidewalks or trails are uncomfortable or in poor condition
 Weather is too hot
 Prefer not to walk, run or ride a bike
 I am not physically able
6. Some LRGV communities have begun developing networks of bicycle paths and bicycle lanes to link neighborhoods with area attractions (ex. Arroyo Colorado Trail, Battlefield Trail, Gulf Boulevard, Heavin Trail, etc.) Would you be inclined to ride a bicycle on these types of facilities if there were bicycle rental options for you, a family member, or friend?
 Yes Yes, but only on paths separated from the street No
7. What is your age? Less than 18 years 18-25 years 26-45 years 46-60 years 60+ years
8. What is your zip code where you live?

Further Comments:

Toole Design Group HALFF Adventure Cycling

A brief public survey was utilized to gauge citizen interest in extending local bicycle and walking facilities into a regional network. Brownsville City staff administered the survey at key public events, and existing multi-use trail locations.

Public Open Houses

Two public (2) open houses were conducted on February 2 and 3, 2016 in Harlingen and Brownsville to introduce Cameron County residents to the complete regional active transportation network, and recommended implementation program. Verbal and written feedback was collected and appropriate adjustments to the Plan document were made. All members of the Active Plan Advisory Committee were invited to the open houses, and many attended on either one (1) or both nights. APAC member attendance at the open houses was used as an opportunity to confirm stakeholder endorsement of proposed LRGV active transportation network routes.

PLAN ADOPTION/ENDORSEMENT

The final Active Plan document was presented to key stakeholders that had provided project funding, or would be expected to bear a significant share of Plan implementation responsibility. These include:

- **BROWNSVILLE, HARLINGEN, AND OTHER PARTICIPATING CITY COMMISSIONS**
- **BROWNSVILLE MPO TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE**
- **HARLINGEN-SAN BENITO MPO TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE**
- **UT SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**
- **VALLEY BAPTIST LEGACY FOUNDATION**
- **CAMERON COUNTY JUDGE AND COMMISSIONERS**
- **AREA STATE REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING CONGRESSMAN FILEMON VELA AND STATE REPRESENTATIVE EDDIE LUCIO III**

The Plan's implementation program identifies multiple communities and many area agencies as principal implementing partners – with support from many of the other stakeholders that participated in the planning process. Ideally, all Active Plan stakeholders will eventually take action – through resolution or other formal statement of endorsement – to commit themselves to making the plan become a reality.



RESOURCES

As previously discussed, the Active Plan is an initiative which simultaneously addresses three (3) distinct but overlapping topics: health, tourism, and transportation. Many previous plans and studies have been completed by various LRGV institutions, organizations, and local governments, regarding these topics individually. Where applicable, the findings of these documents have been used to influence Active Plan recommendations. This section lists some of the principal plans and studies, and other associated resources, which were utilized during Plan preparation.

Health

Active Plan recommendations are intended to align with corresponding objectives of the UT School of Public Health's community-wide campaign, *Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta! (Your Health Matters)*. As a result, the School's on-line resources were reviewed to better understand health measures in the LRGV, and ongoing activities designed to improve public health. Further context was provided through the use of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.

Tourism

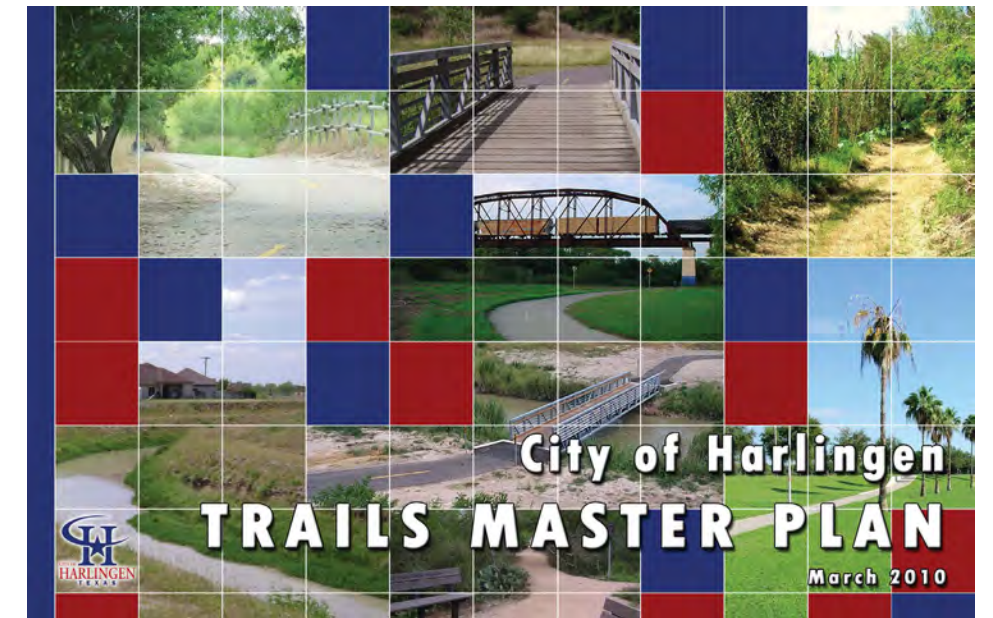
Active tourism program recommendations have been generated following an extensive series of interviews with convention and visitor's bureau, chambers of commerce, and economic development council representatives. Supporting information and vital statistics was also compiled from a variety of national and state sources. Particularly relevant information framing the regional tourism market was provided from reports produced by the State of Texas, Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism Division.

Transportation

The Active Plan's recommended active transportation networks provide linkages between communities and destinations over long distances. Where possible, recommended network linkages within cities and public lands utilize established or proposed routes identified by the applicable authority. These locally identified routes are referenced in the comprehensive, management, recreation and/or transportation plans of local governments, as well as state and federal authorities. Key local plans reviewed during Active Plan preparation include: *City of Harlingen Trails Master Plan (2010)*; *Connecting Brownsville: The 2013 Bicycle and Trail Master Plan (2013)*; and the *City of South Padre Island Parks & Open Space Master Plan (2013)*.

Other important resources that aided in the development of recommended active transportation networks include the transportation plans of the Brownsville MPO and Harlingen-San Benito MPO, as well as the *Laguna Atascosa NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan (2010)* and the Palo Alto National Historical Park's *Superintendent Compendium (2013)*. An evaluation of the CCRMA's projects and programs influenced the on-street US Bicycle Route proposed within the Plan (see page 3.11.)

Existing bicycle and pedestrian plans were reviewed to ensure that recommended Active Plan trail routes compliment and extend from local bicycle and pedestrian networks.
 Source: Halff Associates





CHAPTER 2

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND RESOURCES

LAGUNA MADRE, LAGUNA ATASCOSA NWR

Interest in active transportation is growing rapidly in the lower Rio Grande Valley, and in fact communities such as Brownsville and South Padre Island are leaders in Texas in promoting and investing in facilities to walk and ride. Marketing efforts of area convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, tourism providers and other economic interests now commonly include information on activities and destinations that promote physical activity and exploration of the region. Area health care providers, universities and foundations are actively promoting the benefits of active lifestyles and supporting active transportation initiatives. Even so, the area's natural features and rich culture creates enormous potential for active transportation and tourism that has barely begun to be realized.

This chapter provides a snapshot of the existing transportation facilities and tourism assets that are found throughout the various jurisdictions of the LRGV. It also reviews the initiatives that LRGV local governments and other stakeholders have already undertaken to provide bicycle and pedestrian mobility options and to enhance the local tourism economy. The evaluation of these existing resources helps develop the framework for the Active Plan's proposed region-wide active transportation network.

Common characteristics and recurring themes among the LRGV's many existing (and potential) tourism destinations are also identified. These help inform the development of unified marketing and promotion strategies that are built into the Active Plan's active tourism program.

IN CHAPTER 2:

- 1 Community Context
- 2 LRGV Routes, Networks, and Nodes
- 3 The Active Tourist
- 4 Cameron County Tourism and Active Tourism



Events such as Brownsville's highly successful CycloBia's demonstrate the high level of interest in active transportation and its benefits to LRGV residents of all ages. Photo by Halff Associates



THE
ACTIVE
PLAN

2.1 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

For LRGV residents and visitors alike, the Active Plan initiative is about getting people out, and getting them moving.

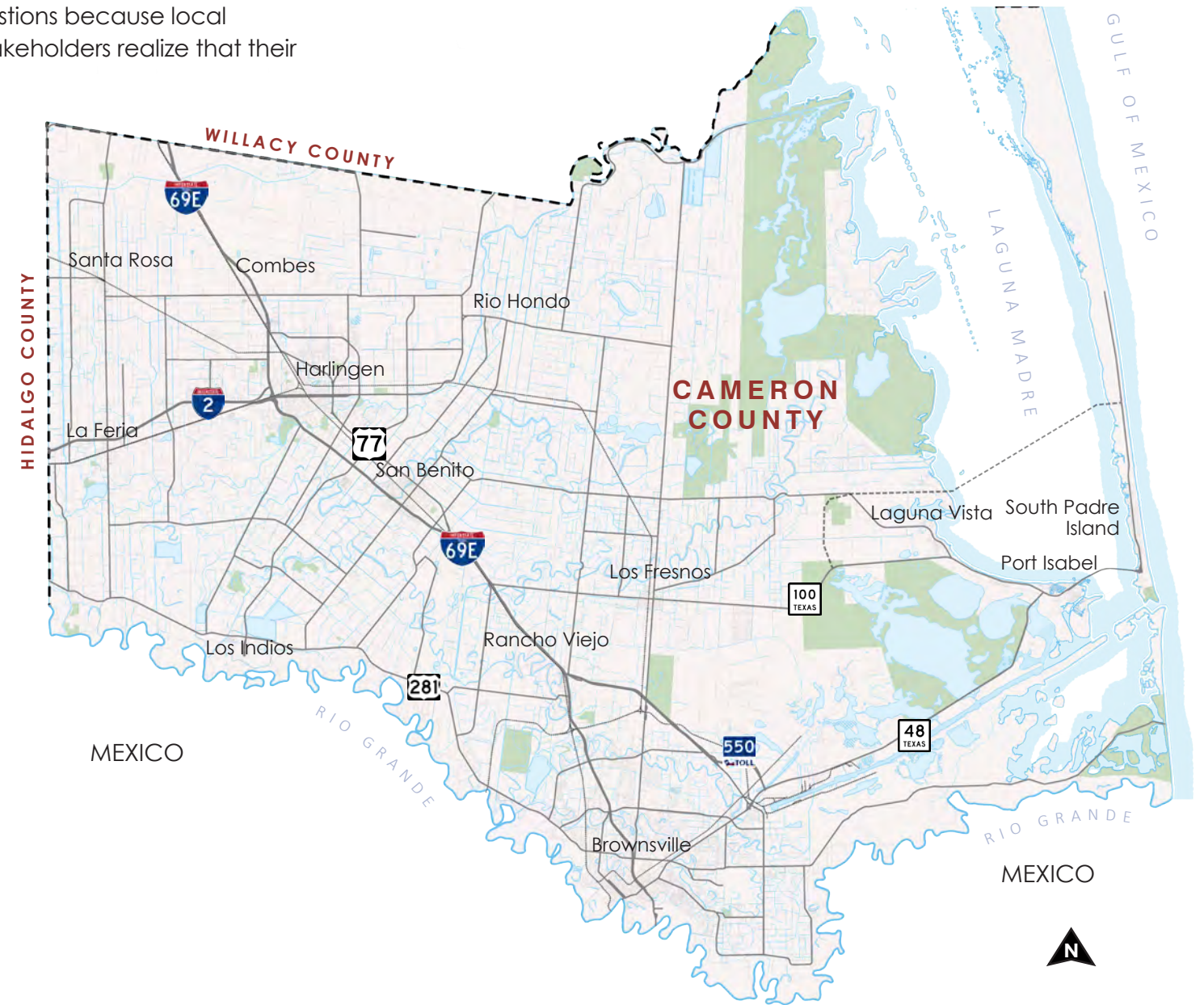
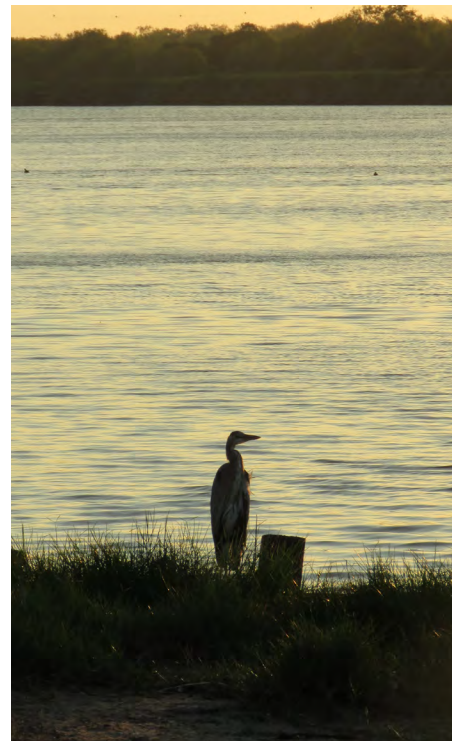
Texans wishing to experience the State's finest beaches, or visitors representing niche tourist markets such as birding, have long recognized the appeal of the area's subtropical climate and beneficial access to water and waves. But have they really experienced all that the LRGV has to offer?

Locally, there is a movement to improve community-wide health and provide transportation alternatives. Area municipalities are continuing to build recreation and transportation amenities that encourage residents to engage in healthy activities. But few of these facilities currently take residents beyond their neighborhoods. What are the spectacular attractions that lie in local residents' own back yards that they have rarely experienced?



Many visitors coming to Cameron County are unaware of the unique cultural events and historical activities which take place on an annual basis such as Brownsville's Charro Days (above left) while many local residents rarely experience the natural beauty of local waterways such as the Arroyo Colorado (above right). Photos by City of Brownsville (left) and Halff Associates (right)

The Active Plan considers these questions because local government representatives and stakeholders realize that their communities contain a wealth of amenities and attributes which are undiscovered or not fully promoted, and consequently have not reached their full economic or social potential. The Active Plan promoting greatly improved access, therefore creating new routes and ways to discover the region's natural and cultural jewels.



The LRGV area encompasses 17 named communities in a geographic area that is almost 1,300 square miles in size.



STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

As illustrated in the images on this page, the LRGV's population is dynamic and diverse. Encompassing 17 communities, both large and small, and covering almost 1,300 square miles, LRGV residents are relatively young with a high potential interest in an active lifestyle. Understanding the demographic characteristics of a community's population is an essential component of any public planning process. The statistics provided in this section of the Active Plan focus on current community conditions and needs, and provide a snapshot of Cameron County's general demographic characteristics, the transportation choices of residents, and community-wide health measures.



These statistics provide a foundation for quantitative evidence of the active transportation and active recreation needs in the area. The public input received from Active Plan open house events and survey activities indicate that opportunities exist to help facilitate a shift in community transportation and recreation patterns and health behaviors.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Cameron County's estimated 2015 population was 422,156 persons – an increase of almost 26 percent since 2000. As with many American communities, this rapid population influx has also generated significant growth in total motor vehicle miles traveled on Cameron County roads.

FIGURE 2-1: CAMERON COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS (2015)

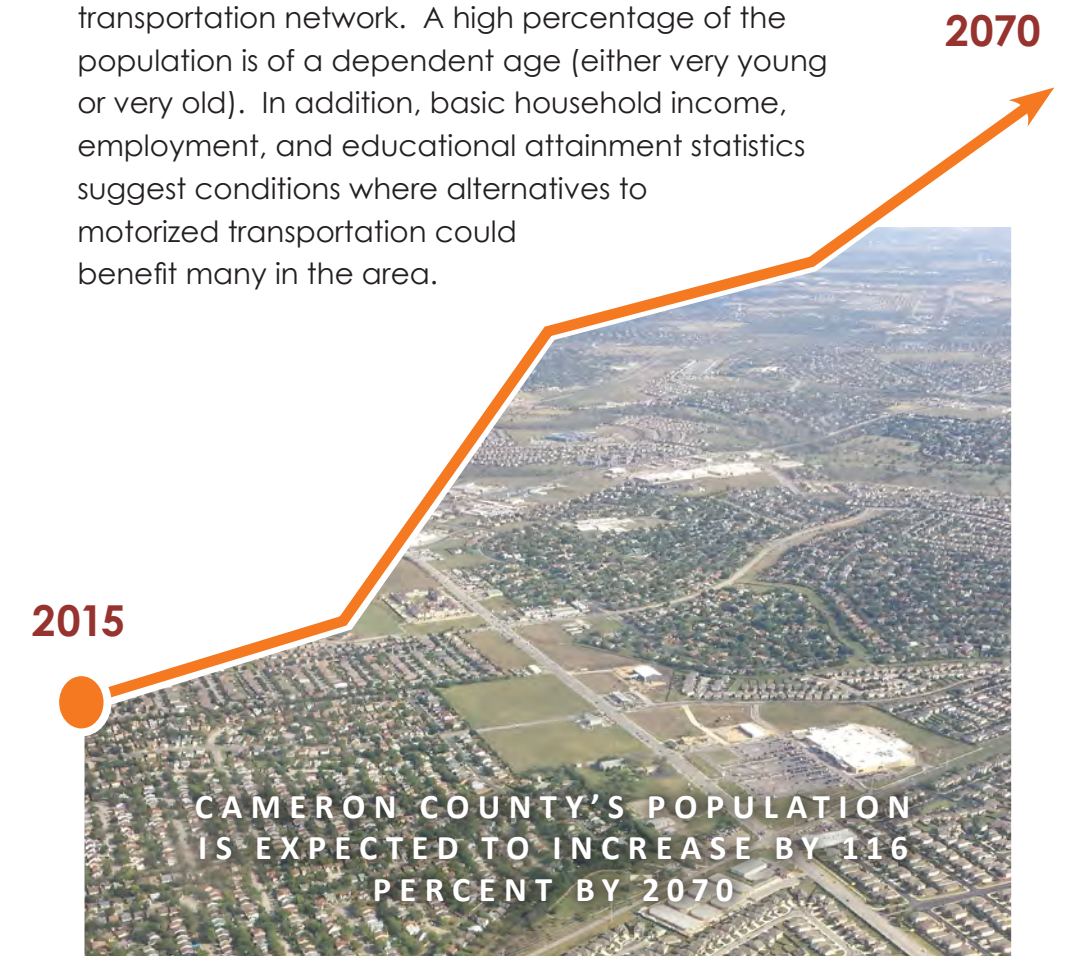
	CAMERON COUNTY	STATE OF TEXAS	UNITED STATES
PERCENT POPULATION CHANGE (2000-2015)	127	25	228
HISPANIC OR LATINO (PERCENT)	88.8	38.2	16.8
POPULATION AGE 19 OR UNDER (PERCENT)	35.5	29.7	26.3
POPULATION AGE 60 OR OVER (PERCENT)	15.8	15.8	19.4
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (IN DOLLARS, 2014)	33,390	52,576	53,482
FAMILIES AT OR BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (PERCENT OF TOTAL)	30.0	13.7	11.5
PERCENT UNEMPLOYED (2015)	5.7	4.9	5.8
AGE 25 OR OVER, NO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (PERCENT OF TOTAL)	35.9	18.5	13.6

Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2015).

Figure 2-1 Cameron County Characteristics, illustrates a series of county-wide characteristics as they relate to the State of Texas, and the nation as a whole.

Population projections prepared by the Texas Water Development Board suggest that by 2070, Cameron County's population may grow by more than double the current population.

The statistics shown in **Figure 2-1** indicate a significant local population that might be served by an expanded active transportation network. A high percentage of the population is of a dependent age (either very young or very old). In addition, basic household income, employment, and educational attainment statistics suggest conditions where alternatives to motorized transportation could benefit many in the area.



Source: Texas Water Development Board. Photo by: Halff Associates

TRANSPORTATION CHOICE

Figure 2-2: Transportation Mode, Means of Transportation to Work, illustrates county-wide commuting patterns as compared to the state of Texas, and the United States. As a whole Cameron County commuting patterns are reflective of state-wide statistics. The transportation mode by which Cameron County significantly deviates from other comparison geographies is in the lower local use of public transit. This should be seen as an opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to extend existing transit trips (bridging the 'first and last mile' to destinations), and for providing a non-motorized transportation alternative in areas where transit is not an option.



Harlingen's 25th Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail is one of many active transportation projects that area communities are implementing to increase bicycle and pedestrian travel as a percentage of the LRGV's transportation mode share. Photo by Halff Associates

Evaluating a population's predominant mode of transportation presents only a partial picture of transportation choices within the community. Although **Figure 2-2** indicates that a significantly high percentage of Cameron County workers commute by automobile alone (consistent with nation-wide trends) this is not necessarily a reflection of local choice or preference. Lack of connectivity in the built environment (insufficient inventory/condition of sidewalks, trails, bikeways) and limitations in public transit service areas results in local conditions where the individual use of automobiles is a necessity.

Figure 2-3: Access to Transportation Choice, illustrates community characteristics which suggest real potential for shifting local transportation mode share statistics toward biking and walking. The figure indicates that Cameron County has a large proportion of households with access to no more than one (1) vehicle, larger household sizes, and a larger percentage of the population below driving age. This combination of factors suggests a significant regional population that might consider travel by bicycle or foot if suitable facilities existed.

FIGURE 2-2: TRANSPORTATION MODES, MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK								
JURISDICTION	PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS BY AUTOMOBILE			PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS BY OTHER MODE				
	AUTOMOBILE (TOTAL)	AUTOMOBILE (ALONE)	AUTOMOBILE (CARPOOL)	PUBLIC TRANSIT	WALK	BICYCLE	MOTORCYCLE, OTHER	WORK AT HOME
CAMERON CTY.	92.9	81.4	11.5	.7	1.9	.2	1.9	2.5
STATE OF TEXAS	91	80	11	1.6	1.6	.3	1.5	4.1
UNITED STATES	86	76.4	9.6	5.1	5.1	.6	1.2	4.4

Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2014)

FIGURE 2-3: ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION CHOICE						
JURISDICTION	COMMUTE TIME (MINUTES)	PERCENT OF COMMUTES LESS THAN 20 MINUTES	HOUSEHOLDS: NO ACCESS TO A MOTOR VEHICLE (PERCENT)	HOUSEHOLDS: ACCESS TO ONE (1) MOTOR VEHICLE (PERCENT)	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE	PERCENT OF POPULATION NOT OF DRIVING AGE
CAMERON CTY.	19.8	54.5	2.8	24.4	3.4	26.9
STATE OF TEXAS	25.2	43	2.4	22.0	2.83	22.4
UNITED STATES	25.7	43.5	4.5	21.4	2.63	19.5

Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2014)



COMMUNITY HEALTH

There is a correlation between transportation mode share and overall community health. **Figure 2-4: Cameron County Health Rankings (2016)**, summarizes county health factors in relation to other Texas counts (on a scale of 1 to 254) based on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings and Roadmaps statistics compiled in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Public Health Institute. These annual rankings are an examination of health outcomes which include: length and quality of life; and health factors which include: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. Among the "physical environment" statistics are measures of "driving alone to work," and "long commute – driving alone." Unsurprisingly, with 81 percent of Cameron County's workers driving alone to work, the County does not perform well in "physical environment" factors measured by the Foundation. **Figure 2-4** suggests that although the length of life of Cameron County residents is favorable compared to other Texas counties, the county does not score well in quality

of life or most other measures. In fact, Cameron County ranks among the bottom 10 percent of Texas counties in terms of overall health factors (and within the bottom 20 percent of physical environment measures).

The recognition of how the built environment contributes to (or detracts from) public health is a source of motivation in the UT Health's community-wide campaign strategy of, "Environmental/ Infrastructure Changes to support physical activity and healthy food choices." This is also the most direct way in which the Active Plan's proposed regional active transportation network can positively impact public health.

The work of UT Health has either revealed or confirmed findings similar to those represented in **Figure 2-4**. Significant findings of UT Health's community-wide campaign are presented in **Figure 2-5, Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta!: Community-wide Campaign Findings**.

FIGURE 2-4: CAMERON COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS AMONG 241 TEXAS COUNTIES (2016)¹

	HEALTH OUTCOMES			HEALTH FACTORS				
	OVERALL RANK	LENGTH OF LIFE (50%)	QUALITY OF LIFE (50%)	OVERALL RANK	HEALTH BEHAVIORS (30%)	CLINICAL CARE (20%)	SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS (40%)	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (10%)
CAMERON COUNTY RANKING¹	127	25	228	233	184	171	234	213

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.
¹ As compared to 241 of 254 Texas counties for which rankings were compiled.



TU SALUD ¡SI CUENTA!: COMMUNITY-WIDE CAMPAIGN FINDINGS

The work of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health, Brownsville Regional Campus (UT Health) has revealed or confirmed environmental and lifestyle conditions in the LRGV that must be addressed to improve the quality of life of area residents.

Figure 2-5, Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta!: Community-wide Campaign Findings

Statistic (%)	Description
70	Percent of the adult population in RHP5 (Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, Starr Counties) having at least one chronic condition , many correlated to high rates of overweight and obesity.
58.4	Percent of RHP5 adult population who report no physical activity for at least a week.
21.8	Percent of RHP5 adult population who report not having consumed any fruits and vegetables in 24 hours
71.3	Percent of RHP5 adult population who do not meet either physical activity guidelines or guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption .
35.4	Percent of people in Cameron County with an educational attainment level equivalent to or less than 8 years.
77.4	Percent of people in Cameron County who speak Spanish as language of choice.
68.2	Percent of Cameron County population lacking health insurance .
26.1	Percent of Cameron County population diagnosed with diabetes .

Source: Reiningger, B.M., et. al. 2015. "Tu Salud, ¡Si Cuenta!: Exposure to a Community-wide Campaign... Individuals of Mexican Descent." *Social Science and Medicine* 143:98-106. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26347959>

The combined factors listed above illustrate the need to provide Cameron County residents with access to trails, bikeways, and other facilities that promote healthy lifestyles.

2.2 LRGV ROUTES, NETWORKS, AND NODES

ACTIVE NETWORKS

Many Cameron County communities are already investing in active transportation and recreation infrastructure. Brownsville, Harlingen, Rio Hondo, and South Padre Island have already begun incorporating bicycle or shared use facilities into the public street right-of-way. Brownsville, Harlingen, and San Benito are also developing complimentary off-street multi-use trail networks which, although used principally for recreational purposes, are forming critical active transportation links to destinations within their respective jurisdictions.

This section provides an overview of existing street and trail networks in Cameron County which provide a framework upon which subsequent LRGV active transportation network recommendations are made. In evaluating existing bicycling, walking, and paddling trail networks and route preferences, a distinction is made between active **networks** which provide (or have the potential to provide) linkages between LRGV attractions and destinations, and active **nodes** which are contained within a specific destination of significance.

COMMUNITY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS

Cameron County communities are already in the process of developing on and off-street bicycling and shared-use facilities. Much of this development has occurred in the last few years and, with the exception of Brownsville's Historic Battlefield Trail, is contained within applicable LRGV jurisdictions. Where possible, the proposed LRGV regional active transportation network seeks to connect to or extend from existing intra-community networks.

BROWNSVILLE

Brownsville's bicycle and shared use network includes a mix of on-street and off-street facilities including shared-use paths, side paths, bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, and cycle tracks.



RIO HONDO

Rio Hondo has constructed a hybrid two-way cycle track extending for .4 miles on N. Reynolds Street. This facility is intended to link to a broader City network of shared use facilities.



SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

Wide shoulders on Padre Blvd. have been converted into bicycle lanes while a cycle track and pedestrian path – buffered by on-street parking – has been constructed on portions of Gulf Blvd.



HARLINGEN

Harlingen's Arroyo Colorado shared use path stretches for two miles. Facilities in the public street right-of-way include the Highway 499 loop shoulder which has been converted into a bike lane, the 2.9 mile long 25th Street Trail (side path), and short segment of bike lane on Treasure Hills Blvd.



SAN BENITO

San Benito's Heavin Resaca shared-use path forms a 1.3 mile path in the downtown area connecting the central business district with center city neighborhoods and green space. On-street facilities consist of a single bike lane extending for .4 miles on S. Sam Houston Blvd. (SH 2520).



LOS FRESNOS

Los Fresnos is developing shared use paths that will span the eastern side of the City, connecting south Los Fresnos with the local high school.

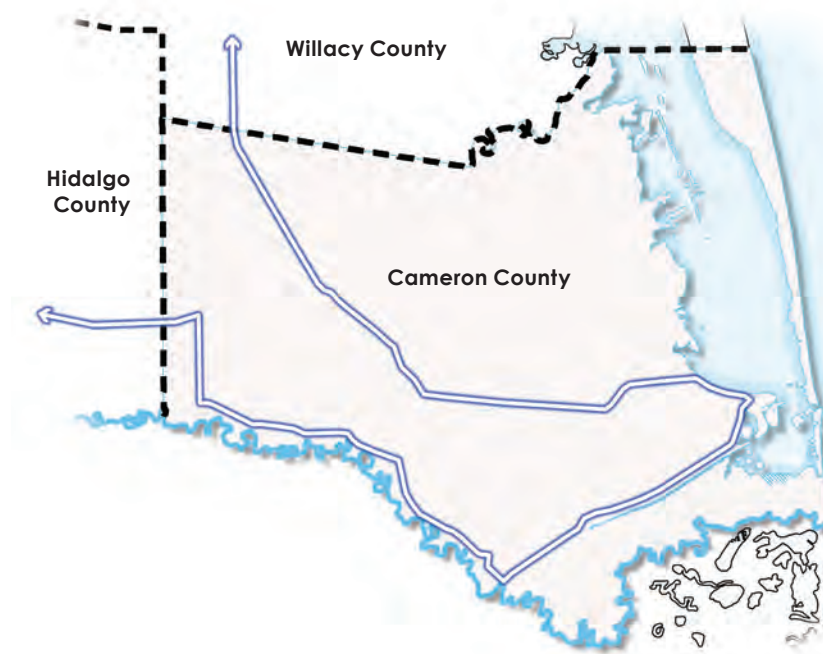


Please note: This section does not include recreational trails contained within parks or other destinations. For more information, please see the Section on Active Nodes (page 2.9). Photos by Halff Associates



TEXAS TROPICAL TRAIL

The Texas Tropical Trail By-Way is part of the Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) administered by the Texas Historical Commission. The Texas Tropical Trail is one (1) of 10 scenic driving by-ways created in 1968. Per 1997 legislative act, the program was refined to serve as a state heritage tourism program. In the LRGV, the Texas Tropical Trail traverses over 100 miles of federal and state highways, and directly connects Brownsville, Harlingen, Los Fresnos, Port Isabel, and San Benito to other heritage tourism destinations throughout the state.



The Texas Tropical Trail (above) is a scenic by-way connecting drivers to heritage sites across the LRGV. It extends over 101 miles of state and county highway in Cameron County.



Although the trail is part of a state-wide network of driving trails, the linkages that it provides to many of the heritage tourism attractions in Cameron County are destinations that should also be marketed to adventure tourists. Further, the existing Texas Tropical Trail route in Cameron County is almost exclusively located on TxDOT highways – many of which are designed with wide shoulders that can accommodate bicycle travel (and are already popular with local cycling enthusiasts). These factors suggest relative suitability for much of the Texas Tropical Trail route in Cameron County to be further enhanced to encourage use by experienced cyclists, improve cyclist level of comfort, and to increase driver awareness of cycling activity.

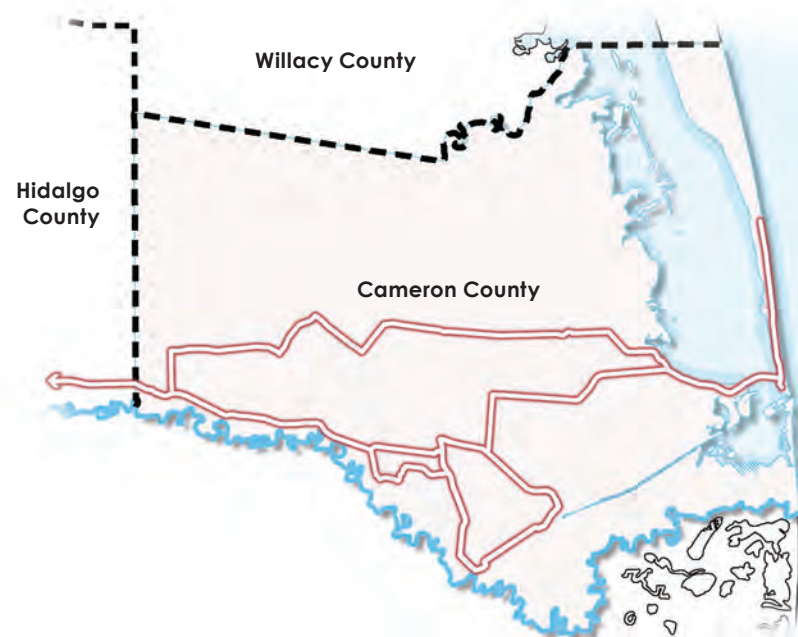


Even though not officially designated bikeways, many highways on the Texas Tropical Trail routes (left and above) include wide shoulders that are popular long-distance routes for local cycling enthusiasts. Photos by Halff Associates

POPULAR CYCLING ROUTES

Local road cycling enthusiasts are among a community's most confident group of cyclists. They may therefore ride on roads that carry higher and faster traffic volumes, or that otherwise lack the type of cycling-specific facilities that most of the general public would find necessary to utilize a highway for recreational or practical cycling. Regardless, these same local enthusiasts are aware of the best routes on local roads that would attract touring adventure cyclists.

One local cyclist has mapped a series of popular local rides that traverse Cameron County and neighboring Hidalgo County (shown below left). The map illustrates unofficial routes that are commonly utilized by area cyclists for long recreational, fitness, and/or training rides but is not exclusive of other personal route preferences. Although "unofficial" (not designated by



a government entity), these popular routes provide clues as to where bicycle tourists may be directed by local residents if considering a ride through the area. Popular cycling events are held annually, including the Pedal to Padre across the Queen Isabella Causeway and the Jalapeño 100 hosted by the City of Harlingen.



Local cycling enthusiasts have mapped over 127 miles of popular cycling routes on Cameron County highways (above left). Frequent group rides and annual events such as the popular Pedal to Padre and the Jalapeño 100 provide opportunities to ride along area roadways. Source: City of Brownsville (above), City of Harlingen (below)

PADDLING TRAILS

Cameron County's South Bay Paddling Trail is part of the Texas Paddling Trail network, a program administered by the TPWD. This 8 mile coastal trail begins and ends at Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island and forms a circuitous route around the fringes of the South Bay estuary. The South Bay Paddling Trail is Cameron County's only formal trail catering to canoeists and kayakers, in spite of miles of additional lagoons and tidal waterways. An extension of this system could easily link South Padre Island with the bay side communities of Port Isabel, Laguna Heights, and Laguna Vista. Additional trail segments could link cities and settlements on the Arroyo Colorado. While the concept of an extended paddling trail network on the waters of Cameron County may not directly address the Active Plan guiding principle related to active transportation, it does support other plan principles promoting regional economic development and healthy lifestyles.



Paddling in the Laguna Madre. Source: Brownsville Convention and Visitors Bureau



ACTIVE NODES

Many of the Cameron County tourism destinations illustrated on **Map 2.1: Cameron County Tourism Destinations and Themes** (page 2.24), contain internal trail networks that cater to one (1) or more user groups such as walkers/hikers, bicyclists and horseback riders. The internal trail networks within these destinations are discussed in more detail in this section due to their significance to the local tourism industry, and their potential role as key linkages within the Active Plan active transportation networks.

Consistent with the scope of this Plan, the internal network overview in this section is limited to those facilities that support non-motorized activity and travel. An inventory of official off-road vehicle (ORV) trails was not compiled, but the presence of ORV trails within destinations listed in this section was considered to anticipate and avoid conflict among different trail users and enthusiasts.

LAGUNA ATASCOSA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, a national system of lands and waters administered by the USFW Service and set aside for wildlife protection. The Laguna Atascosa NWR was established in 1946 to provide critical habitat for wintering waterfowl. The Refuge remains home to the most diverse population of bird species in the United States. Laguna Atascosa NWR is comprised of three (3) units including the main unit located on the western shores of the Laguna Madre, the Bahia Grade Unit, and the South Padre Island Unit.



Active Facilities

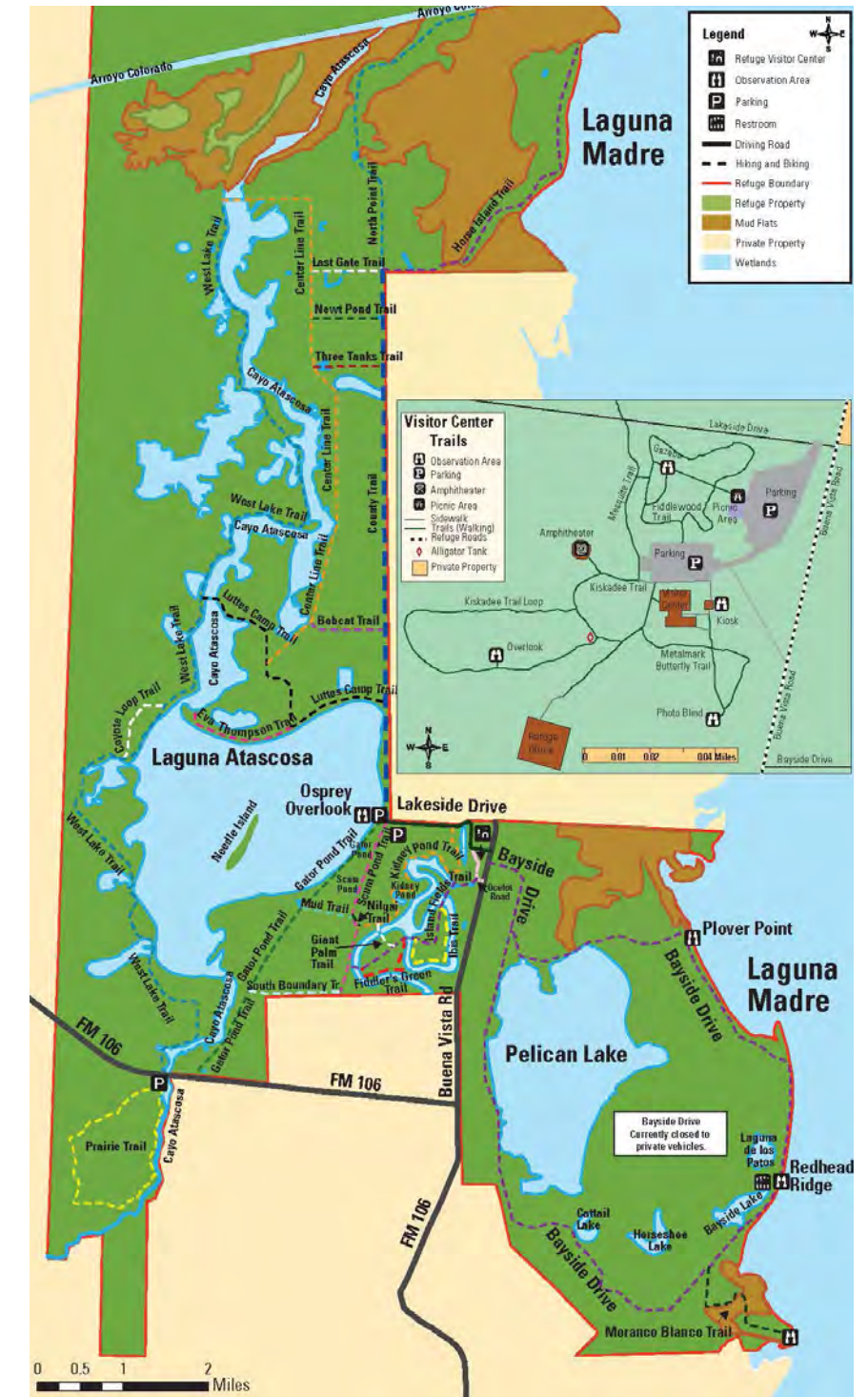
Publicly accessible trails are currently confined to the main unit of the NWR (although methods to provide increased access to the Bahia Grande Unit are currently being considered). Within the main unit however, over 76 miles of primarily gravel and dirt trails are available for hiking, walking, and bicycling. Some trail segments are paved for tram tours, while others interpretive trails around the main refuge office are ADA-compliant. The proposed LRGV multi-use trail network (chapter 3) includes a direct link to the Laguna Atascosa NWR via a trail extending from the southwest and terminating at the Prairie Trail parking area at FM 106.

FIGURE 2-6: LAGUNA ATASCOSA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TRAIL NETWORK

LOCATION (ALL MAIN UNIT)	FACILITY	DESCRIPTION	SUITABLE ACTIVITIES ¹
VISITOR CENTER AREA	Interpretive/nature trails	Four trails; paved, gravel, dirt	Walking
LAKESIDE DRIVE	Nature trails	1.5 mile trail; paved and gravel	Walking; Bicycling; Motor Vehicles
S. OF LAKESIDE DRIVE	Nature trails	Ten trails; 14 miles (Gravel and dirt)	Walking; Bicycling
N. OF LAKESIDE DRIVE	Nature trails	Ten trails; 26.3 miles (Gravel and dirt)	Walking; Bicycling
FM 106 AREA	Nature trails	Two trails; 16.4 miles (Gravel and dirt)	Walking; Bicycling
BAYSIDE DRIVE	Nature trails	Two trails; 15.9 miles (13.2 miles paved, 2.7 gravel or dirt)	Walking; Bicycling; Tram (Private vehicles in late 2016)

Source: United States Fish and Wildlife Service, http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Laguna_Atascosa/visit/visitor_activities/wildlife_watching.html

¹ All trail facilities are designed to provide access for wildlife watching. Trails also provide access for seasonal hunting.



Laguna Atascosa NWR trail map (Right). Source: USFW Service, <http://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/LA%20NWR%202015%20Tear%20Booklet.pdf#a>

PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park (NHP) is operated by the National Park Service in commemoration of the first clash of United States and Mexican troops in the US-Mexican War. The main battlefield unit is located along SR 1847 between Brownsville and Los Fresnos. A smaller unit containing a portion of the Resaca de la Palma battlefield was recently added to the NHP, and is located further south of the Palo Alto unit within the urbanized area of Brownsville. Efforts are currently underway to stabilize surviving earthworks at the associated Fort Brown site to protect the fort and interpret it as an additional unit of the park

Active Facilities

The Palo Alto Battlefield site contains short paved interpretative trails leading visitors to key battlefield positions or vistas. The trails may alternatively be used for walking, bicycling or wildlife viewing. The Resaca de la Palma unit also includes paved interpretive trails suitable for walking. The Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma battlefield sites are linked to the City of Brownsville's Mitte Cultural District by the eight (8) mile Historic Battlefield Trail.

FIGURE 2-7: PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD NHP TRAIL NETWORK

LOCATION	FACILITY	DESCRIPTION	SUITABLE ACTIVITIES ¹
PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK (MAIN UNIT)	Interpretive Trails	Paved (Asphalt); Width varies (8-10 feet);	Historical interpretation; Walking; Bicycling; Wildlife Viewing
PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK (RESACA DE LA PALMA UNIT)	Interpretive Trails	Paved (Concrete); 6 foot width;	Historical interpretation; Walking; Wildlife Viewing

Source: National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/paal/index.htm>

RESACA DE LA PALMA STATE PARK

Resaca de la Palma State Park is owned and operated by the TPWD, and is part of the World Birding Center network. As with the entire LRGV, the park boasts a rich birding environment that is largely unrivaled throughout the country. The park is located between US Highway 281 and FM 1732, and is situated northwest of the urbanized portions of Brownsville, and due south of Rancho Viejo – both communities being in close proximity.

Active Facilities

Resaca de la Palma State Park contains over 11 miles of nature trails that are accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists. Most trails are natural surface and rated as easy to medium difficulty. The 3.2 mile tram loop is paved and provides easy access to multiple other trail heads. The park also contains just over half a mile of handicapped accessible trails on which bicycling is prohibited.

FIGURE 2-8: RESACA DE LA PALMA STATE PARK TRAIL NETWORK

LOCATION	FACILITY	DESCRIPTION	SUITABLE ACTIVITIES ¹
RESACA DE LA PALMA STATE PARK	Nature Trails	Natural Surface; Width varies; 11.5 miles total length	Walking; Bicycling; Wildlife Viewing
RESACA DE LA PALMA STATE PARK	Accessible Trails	Paved tram road and other ADA-compliant surfaces; 3.7 miles	Walking; Bicycling; Wildlife Viewing; Motorized tram; ADA-compliant segments



The interpretive trails at Palo Alto Battlefield NHP (left) are limited to pedestrians. Nonetheless, the park connects to the regional active transportation network via the Battlefield Hike and Bike Trail. Photos by Halff Associates



MUNICIPAL PARKS

Many Cameron County municipalities have incorporated recreational trails within the parks that they own and maintain. Some of the recreational trail networks that are located within public park properties are short circuitous loops exclusively for walking. Others extend for miles and accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians. These facilities provide residents within accessible distances with the health and recreational benefits that are inherent with facilities of this type, but they are often accessed by users via motor vehicle and do not serve a transportation function. Nonetheless, the presence of these facilities within LRGV municipal parks makes many of these properties key destinations to and from which segments of the proposed LRGV active transportation network routes should connect.

MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES

Many Cameron County municipalities require sidewalks as a condition of development approval. No municipal ordinances reviewed require the provision of bicycle or shared-use facilities as new development occurs. Local land development ordinances should be modified to require multi-use trail easement dedication and/or facility construction as part of subdivision or site plan approval. Required walkway connections from existing development will also increase trail accessibility.

NETWORK OPTIONS

The existing active transportation networks (including popular cycling routes) identified in this section are located almost exclusively with City or TxDOT owned and maintained rights-of-way. City owned and maintained corridors include some abandoned railroad rights-of-way.

An expanded active tourism and transportation network may include other linear routes along drainage and irrigation canals, existing railroad rights-of-way, or other corridor requiring special considerations before design, permitting, and construction may be permitted. Key network authorities are identified in **Chapter 3, Active Transportation Network** (page 3.32) from whom additional permission will be required to allow for network access to and through the properties for which they are responsible.



Parks in Laguna Vista (top right) and La Feria (bottom right) offer a system of circuitous and interconnected trails for everyday recreational use.

Photo by Halff Associates (top) and City of La Feria (bottom)

2.3 THE ACTIVE TOURIST

Active tourists are leisure travelers who participate in a human-powered activity—like bicycling, hiking, or paddling—during their trip. The activity may be the sole reason for the trip, part of a diverse itinerary, or a spontaneous decision based on easily available opportunities. Active tourists, commonly referred to as adventure travelers, are interested in physical activity, cultural exchange, and interaction with the environment.¹ They are attracted to low-impact, ecological, socially compatible and high quality experiences. The active tourist is looking for experiences that feel authentic.



Adventure tourists often travel to, and/or through, the region by human-powered means, such as a touring cyclist. The category includes those interested in doing niche recreational activities, such as rock climbing, kite boarding, or caving. These visitors are often thrill seekers, looking for unique and new destinations to engage in their favorite activity.



These visitors choose destinations based solely on the physical activity that is available there or upon a set of active recreational activities available. They are driven by the character of the destination. These visitors benefit from having itineraries that they can choose from and/or tour operators that cater to their interests.



This tourist books their trip based upon an event that is taking place, such as CycloBia in Brownsville, the Jalapeno 100 bike ride in Harlingen, or the first ever open water swimming event at South Padre Island in 2016. Events can be signature draws that build participation over time, or can be more frequent marathons or half-marathons. Events can also build interest in the activity at the local level.



This tourist may not visit the region for the express purpose of participating in physical activity, but does so because it is appealing, easily accessible, and well-marketed locally. This tourist takes part in the activity at the entry level. Infrastructure, rentals and tour operators are important ingredients in converting a casual visitor to an active tourist.

ACTIVE TOURIST MARKETS

Understanding the various types of active tourists will enable Cameron County to market existing attractions and create new tourism products and services that cater to these types of tourists. Though there are many possible ways to define active tourists, this plan uses the following four categories, which are based on industry research and tailored to Cameron County:²

There are many types of Active tourism activities. Common examples include:

- Walking
- Hiking
- Bicycling
- Kayaking
- Canoeing
- Kite-boarding
- Caving
- Horseback riding
- Animal and bird watching

TYPES OF ACTIVE TOURISTS

The Outdoor Industry reports that wildlife viewing is the highest recreational activity in the United States, with 66 million participants annually followed closely by cycling with 60 million. Other popular recreation includes trail use, camping, fishing, and paddling. The popularity of these activities builds the case for an active tourism network that involves birding, cycling, trails, and paddling.³ The following section describes the types of active tourists Cameron County can attract and cater to.

BICYCLISTS

On-road: Road bicyclists seek hard, paved surfaces with ample room beyond the traffic lane or low traffic roads. Most of the existing highways in Cameron County provide good shoulders and suit the adventure tourist. However, high traffic volumes and speeds deter casual riders. Roads are suitable for events when traffic is controlled or cyclists are riding in groups, providing safety in numbers.

Off-Road: Mountain bike riders and gravel riders look for non-paved surfaces, away from motorized vehicles or on low traffic dirt roads. Mountain and gravel biking are well suited to the adventure and destination based visitor. The Laguna Atascosa National

¹ George Washington University and the Adventure Travel Trade Association, Adventure Tourism Market Study 2013, <http://files.adventuretravel.biz/docs/research/adventure-tourism-market-study-2013-web.pdf>

² The Active Tourist Markets model was developed by the Adventure Cycling Association. It was informed by existing research, such as the Adventure Travel Trade Association's "Attracting and Serving the U.S. Adventure Traveler," July 2015.

³ The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy by the Outdoor Industry, Fall 2006



Wildlife Refuge lends itself well to this increasingly popular activity. Canal routes may be good targets for development of off-road bicycling routes.

Trail & Beach: Entry level visitors enjoy riding hybrid bikes and beach cruisers on paved trails. These types of bikes are easy to maintain, are adaptable to fit a variety of sizes and can be used on pavement or hard packed trails. They are not meant for significant distances.

Fat Tire: Fat tired bikes or Fat Bikes, are a growing beach-based activity. Like beach cruisers, these bikes are suitable for riding on sand, but this type of activity is more geared to the adventure and destination based tourist. Rentals would facilitate the growth of Fat Tire riding in Cameron County.



*A family enjoys a fun run at Viva Street Harlingen on Saturday, April 23, 2016.
Source: Photographie by Evan Estrada*

FOOT-BASED RECREATION

Walkers & Hikers: Visitors who wish to walk or hike need easily accessible trails that are connected to the multi-modal transportation network or have “trail heads” for parking. Trails can be natural or paved surfaces that provide a level of physical activity suitable to the targeted tourist type. Many people in Cameron County walk or hike as part of birdwatching, nature watching, or hunting activities.

Runners: Runners also like trails but are willing to run on low-traffic roads with ample shoulder or wide sidewalks. For visitors and locals alike, having a safe place to run is key.

WATER SEEKERS:

With public beaches accessible, Cameron County could benefit from developing a marketing strategy that plays to this strength and develops businesses and services that cater to these groups.

Paddlers: Kayaking and canoeing are a popular activity in the U.S. and Cameron County is primed for the development of water trails which include trail heads for parking and water access points for putting boats in/out of resacas, arroyos, and the Laguna Madre. Paddling is also an important means of accessing fishing and bird viewing areas. Rentals are important.

Kite, Surfing & Paddle Boarding: All ocean-based activities that cater to the adventure, destination and casual tourist. These activities rely on the right businesses being in place—rentals, lessons and access points.

Recreational and Open Water Swimming: Both recreational swimming as well as open water swimming events can draw all types of active tourists. While common in other areas of the country, open water events are new to the LRGV, but can become an important attraction.

Fishing: Already popular, the fishing access and business infrastructure is already good, however it isn't highly marketed and the fishing access points need support from the agencies that manage them, specifically garbage removal and maintenance.

EQUESTRIAN:

With the rural nature of much of Cameron County, opportunities for trail development via irrigation canals and drainage ditches and public beaches all lend themselves to the development of an equestrian-based active tourism market. This type of tourism would be heavily dependent on having tour operators and permits for the federal and state-owned land.

ACTIVE TOURIST DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of adventure travelers are male, though there is a shift toward more gender diversity in some recreational activities. Adventure travelers are typically highly educated with discretionary incomes that allow them to travel. According to a study done by the University of Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) on cyclists touring through the state of Montana, adventure cyclists have a median age of 53 years old. Fifty-six percent of cyclists have a median household income of \$75,000-150,000, with 10 percent earning over \$200,000. This trend is consistent with other types of adventure travel and tourism. For example, a survey conducted for the Chattahoochee Valley Blueway, a water trail in Georgia and Alabama, found 75 percent of the respondents were male and over half were between ages 35 and 54. Respondents were overwhelmingly well-educated with 76 percent having at least a college education.⁴

⁴ The Economic Impact of the Proposed Chattahoochee Valley Blueway Project June 28, 2012. Prepared by Benjamin F. Blair for The Trust for Public Land.

2.4 CAMERON COUNTY TOURISM AND ACTIVE TOURISM

The objective of this section is to analyze existing marketing and programming activities for tourism and active tourism by agencies and organizations in the region. The findings support the recommendations in the Goals, Strategies, and Actions in chapter 4.

Methodology: To ascertain the existing conditions for active tourism in the region, the team conducted the following activities:

- Site visits across Cameron County
- Initial stakeholder workshop to develop list of attractions
- Interviews with tourism and economic development professionals
- Review of economic and tourism data and research
- Active tourism workshop and in-person meetings

This section will:

- Provide an overview of the existing visitor and economic impact data for the state and county,
- Describe the existing active tourism market in the county: Beach, Birds, and Bicycling,
- Summarize the existing efforts to promote tourism in Cameron County,
- List and map the existing active tourism destinations,
- Analyze the support services available, and
- Conclude with a discussion of the county's assets and opportunities

TOURISM IN TEXAS AND CAMERON COUNTY

Tourism is big business in Texas and an important part of the economy in Cameron County. Overall, travelers in Texas spent \$70.6 billion in 2014, an increase of 4.7 percent over the year before. The six billion dollars raised in state and local tax revenue represent 5.3 percent of all local and state tax revenue in the state. The Texas travel industry has outperformed the country as a whole since 2000. Active tourism directly supports the two largest categories of visitor spending that led to job creation: "accommodation & food service" (387,600 jobs) and "arts, entertainment, and recreation," (156,000 jobs).⁵



Nature tourists at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Flickr user jaste1

⁵ The Economic Impact of Travel on Texas, 1990-2014p, Prepared for Texas Tourism Office of the Governor Texas Economic Development & Tourism, June 2015



Little Graceland in Los Fresnos. Photo by Toole Design Group.



Of the 254 counties in Texas, Cameron County is one of the most significant beneficiaries of travel spending. The 13th largest county in Texas by population, Cameron County received the 11th most visitor spending in 2014. Ten percent (10.7%) of the \$181.5 million in tax revenue in Cameron County for 2014 was generated by visitor spending. Four and a half percent of employment in Cameron County is supported by traveler spending.

FIGURE 2-10: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRAVEL ON TEXAS COUNTIES, TOP 11

TEXAS COUNTY RANK	COUNTY	2014 SPENDING (\$ MILLIONS)
1	Harris	11,864.80
2	Dallas	8,225.30
3	Bexar	6,973.70
4	Tarrant	5,209.30
5	Travis	4,688.60
6	El Paso	1,478.60
7	Hidalgo	1,309.30
8	Collin	1,241.50
9	Nueces	1,092.70
10	Galveston	860.6
11	CAMERON	803.9

Source: The Office of the Governor; Economic Development and Tourism

WHO IS THE CAMERON COUNTY TOURIST?

According to a visitor profile developed for the Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism Divisions, in 2014 there were an estimated 3.88 million tourist visits (“person-stays”) to the Brownsville-Harlingen Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which is located in Cameron County. Tourists spent 11.09 million days (“person-days”) in the region. Out of 26 Texas MSAs, the Brownsville-Harlingen MSA’s share of total person-days ranked 7th.⁶

Sixty-seven percent (66.9%) of visitors to the region came from within Texas. The most common in-state origins were Harlingen-Weslaco-Brownsville-McAllen (31.7%), Houston (11%), San Antonio (9.7%), Dallas-Fort Worth (8.2%), Austin (5%), and Corpus Christi, Waco, and Laredo (less than 1% each).

The most common cities of origin outside of Texas were Denver, CO (8%), Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN (6.1%), Nashville, TN (5.2%), Detroit, MI (2.5%), Kansas City, MO (2.4%), Albuquerque-Santa Fe, NM (2.3%), Greensboro-Winston Salem, NC (1.7%), and La Crosse-Eau Claire, WI (0.9%).⁷ Based on conversations with Convention and Visitor Bureau staff, visitors from Mexico and Canada are also common, though not captured by this report.

Most visitors come to the region for leisure, rather than work. Leisure travel represented 94.0 percent of Person-Days; business travel represented 6.0 percent: meetings 3.8 percent, and transient (e.g., sales, etc.) 2.2 percent.

⁶ 2014 Texas Tourism Region and MSA Visitor Profile, Gulf Coast Region, prepared for The Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism Division by D.K Shifflet & Associates, Ltd, p. 53.

⁷ 2014 Texas Tourism Region and MSA Visitor Profile, Gulf Coast Region, prepared for The Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism Division by D.K Shifflet & Associates, Ltd, p. 54.

FIGURE 2-11: 2014 TRAVEL SPENDING IN BROWNSVILLE, HARLINGEN, AND SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

	2014 (PROJECTED)		
	BROWNSVILLE	HARLINGEN	SOUTH PADRE ISLAND
SPENDING (\$M)	259	134	360
EARNINGS (\$M)	48	25	91
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	2,100	1,110	4,240
LOCAL TAX REVENUE (\$M)	7	3.2	8.4
VISITOR	3.2	1.8	8.3
RESIDENT	3.8	1.4	0.1
STATE TAX REVENUE (\$M)	11.6	5.6	16.9
VISITOR	8.6	4.5	16.9
RESIDENT	3	1.1	0

Source: The Economic Impact of Travel on Texas, 1990-2014p, Prepared for Texas Tourism Office of the Governor Texas Economic Development & Tourism, June 2015

FIGURE 2-12: ACTIVITIES BY VISITORS TO THE BROWNSVILLE-HARLINGEN MSA

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY (STAYS)	
ACTIVITY:	PERCENT OF TOURISTS ENGAGED
ATTRACTIONS	22.4
CULTURE	31.0
FAMILY/LIFE EVENTS	31.3
CULINARY	22.6
NATURE	56.0
BEACH/WATERFRONT	55.9
PARKS (NATIONAL/STATE, ETC.)	12.1
WILDLIFE VIEWING (BIRDS, WHALES ETC.)	5.5
OUTDOOR SPORTS	23.6
FISHING	15.1
BIKING	5.1
BOATING/SAILING	3.9
GENERAL (SHOPPING, BUSINESS, RELIGION-BASED CONFERENCE)	41.5

Source: 2014 Texas Tourism Region and MSA Visitor Profile, Gulf Coast Region, prepared for The Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism Division by D.K Shifflet & Associates, Ltd, p. 56.

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO CAMERON COUNTY TOURISTS PARTICIPATE IN?

Some of the most common activity categories that visitors participated in are directly related to active tourism: Nature (56.0%), Culture (31.0%), and Outdoor Sports (23.6%). Five percent (5.1%) of visitors for the area participate in bicycling. With the emphasis on nature and outdoor sports, to a large extent, the Cameron County Tourist is already an active tourist.



Brownsville CycloBia. Source: www.cyclobiabrownsville.com

Cameron County tourists are active tourists. Fifty-six percent of visitors to the region participate in nature activities and 23 percent participate in outdoor sports.

WHO IS THE CAMERON COUNTY ACTIVE TOURIST?

At a September 17, 2015 stakeholder workshop, participants were asked to identify and describe who they perceived of as the current active tourist in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

FIGURE 2-13: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK: WHO IS OUR ACTIVE TOURIST? SEPTEMBER, 2015 ACTIVE PLAN WORKSHOP

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM PLAN

WHO ARE OUR ACTIVE TOURISTS?

People interested in...

- Birding
- Bicycling
- Kite boarding & wind surfing
- Running & bicycling events
- Fishing
- Kayaking
- Golfing

They are...

- Winter Texans (including RVs with bikes)
- Bi-national Tourists (e.g. from Matamoros, MX)
- On business tours from across the border

This profile of the Lower Rio Grande Valley active tourist—a visitor focused on birding, beach-going, bicycling, fishing and kayaking—is supported by tourism data and stakeholder interviews with tourism and economic development professionals in the Lower Valley.



CAMERON COUNTY ACTIVE TOURISM: BEACH, BIRDS, AND BICYCLING (AND HIKING AND PADDLING)

Active tourism in Cameron County already has two established “pillars”: the beach and birds. Visitors to South Padre Island and nature observers are important pillars of tourism to the region and good foundations for an active tourism strategy; they typically involve exploring the outdoors and some amount of physical activity. These two pillars are supplemented by a third burgeoning pillar: bicycling, hiking, and paddling.

BEACH

With over a million annual visitors, \$360 million in visitor spending, according to the Texas Tourism Office of the Governor Texas, and \$90 million in hotel spending, according to Texas hotel performance data, South Padre Island is a major driver of tourism in Cameron County. According to a 2012 economic impact study, the employment generated by South Padre Island tourism extends beyond the Island to the inland communities of Cameron County. South Padre Island contributes 3 percent to Cameron County’s total employment, including 3 percent to the City of Brownsville’s total employment. The study found that the Island contributed \$370 million of economic activity to the economies of Brownsville, Port Isabel, Laguna Vista, and Los Fresnos.⁸

According to an interview with the South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Director Keith Arnold, the peak season for tourism on the Island is summer and spring break. The CVB is crafting a strategy to encourage visitation during the remaining eight months of the year. Recent transportation investments on the Island indicate an understanding of the role walking and bicycling infrastructure can play in encouraging tourism. A Valley Morning

Star article reporting the announcement of new investments in sidewalks and bike lanes, noted: “Already one of the top Texas tourist destinations, South Padre Island could become even better. The Island has been granted about \$3.5 million to expand its infrastructure in an effort to add to its appeal to residents and tourists alike.”⁹

South Padre Island has opportunities to further develop its reputation for active tourism. For example, with the provision of rentals, van services, and proper promotion, the undeveloped area north of the City could become a well-known Fatbike destination. Fatbikes are off-road bicycles with oversized tires for riding on sand and snow and are growing in popularity.

In general, South Padre Island can play an important role in the county-wide active tourism program. It is already the highest-profile destination in the County and appeals to people interested in nature, bicycling and hiking, water sports, and adventure activities, like sky diving. A coordinated strategy of infrastructure and promotion can help connect Island tourists to inland communities and vice versa.

BIRDS

Bird observation is one of the top tourism draws in the Rio Grande Valley. There are many tropical bird species that cannot be found anywhere else in the United States. It serves as a major migration corridor for two major flyways, the Central and Mississippi, leading an estimated 500 bird species to make a stop in the region or call it home. Among birders, the Valley is known for species such as the Magnificent Frigatebird, the Bridled Tern, and Cory’s Shearwater.

⁸ Economic Impact of South Padre Island, Prepared by AEC, 2012 <http://southpadreislandedc.com/sites/default/files/files/Resources%20%26%20Studies/SPI%20Economic%20Impact%20Analysis%20Summary.pdf>

⁹ “SPI receives \$3.49 million to improve infrastructure, transportation methods,” Valley Morning Star, December 16, 2015 http://www.valleymorningstar.com/news/local_news/article_732c88c0-a477-11e5-87f8-af1728480c15.html

SPI receives \$3.49 million to improve infrastructure, transportation methods

Story Comments Print Font Size

Posted: Wednesday, December 16, 2015 10:34 pm
By KAYLEIGH SOMMER Staff Writer



SOUTH PADRE ISLAND — Already one of the top Texas tourist destinations, South Padre Island could become even better.

The Island has been granted about \$3.5 million to expand its infrastructure in an effort to add to its appeal to residents and tourists alike.

U.S. Representative Filemon Vela, D-Brownsville office announced the award of \$3,490,360 from the Transportation Alternatives Program grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation to Texas’ most famous island.

The funds will support the Padre Boulevard Connectivity Program, which in turn will increase transportation options for residents, construct new sidewalks with safety and landscaping barriers, and upgrade the city’s bike lanes and signage for the entire five and a half miles of Padre Boulevard.

“With these upgrades to our infrastructure, our city will be a more favorable destination to visit increasing tourism dollars for local small business,” said Mayor Barry Patel. “At the same time, through this project, our residents will be able to enjoy a safer, more accessible city.”

In 2011, the city council adopted a redevelopment plan for the 6-mile commercial corridor along Padre Boulevard.

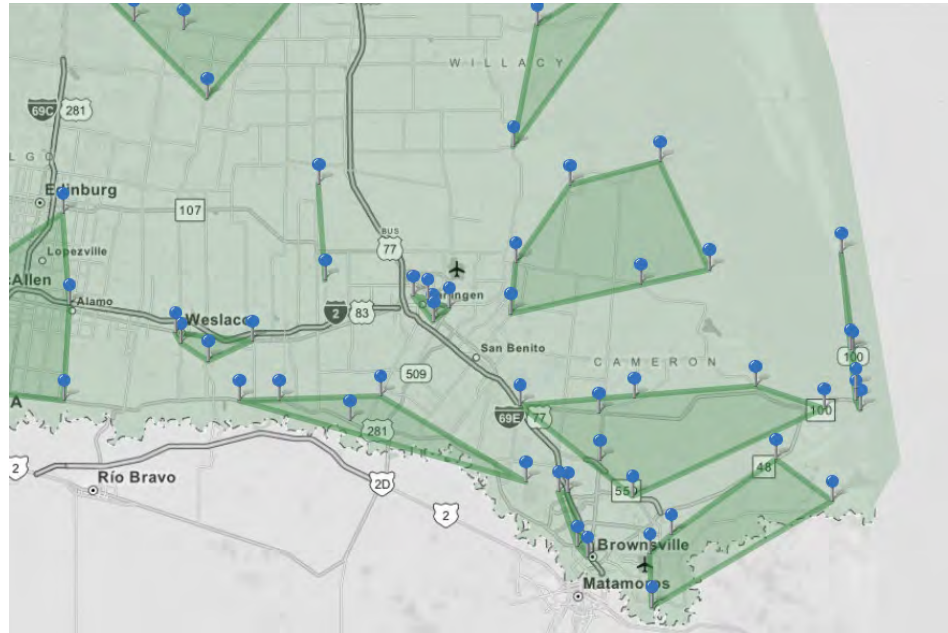
That included the island’s Entertainment District between the Boulevard and the Laguna Madre Bay.

Today, Padre Boulevard functions as a suburban auto-dominated roadway.

The plan includes a conceptual redesign of Padre Boulevard as a walkable street with parking, bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly intersections and replaces the existing conventional zoning for the core of the island.

At the time, former mayor Bob Pinkerton said the new master plan and code would set the course for the Island for the next several generations.

Source: “SPI receives \$3.49 million to improve infrastructure, transportation methods,” Valley Morning Star, December 16, 2015



Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail maps (above) identify areas where public properties are clustered for wildlife viewing opportunities. Source: TPWD, Lower Texas Coast—Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. Source: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wildlife/wildlife-trails/ltc>

Texas Parks & Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, and nine Valley communities, have collaborated to create the World Birding Center (<http://www.theworldbirdingcenter.com/>). The purpose of the World Birding Center is to promote the region collectively as a world-class birding tourism destination. Of the nine unique birding locations in the Rio Grande Valley, three are in Cameron County: South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, Resaca de la Palma State Park in Brownsville, and Harlingen Arroyo Colorado.

Cameron County is also located on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. The “trail” is actually a series of driving and hiking routes connecting birding sites. Cameron County contains the Resaca Loop, the Boca Chica Loop, the Laguna Madre Loop, the South Padre Island Loop, the Los Loros Loop, and the eastern part of the Las Palomas Loop. These existing loops provide opportunities for the Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan to build off of current marketing strategies.

All of this adds up to an important source of tourism dollars for the region. Like other active tourists, bird observers who visit the Valley are generally educated and affluent, and spend over a hundred dollars a day. According to a 2012 economic impact report on Nature Tourism in the Rio Grande Valley, three-quarters of visitors had an undergraduate or graduate degree and 59 percent had an annual household income above \$75,000. During the peak season (October, November, December), visitors spent an average of \$133 a day and \$128 a day in the off-season (May, June). Visitors who came to the Valley for the specific purpose of nature tourism spent an estimated \$207,052,400 in 2011.¹⁰

¹⁰ Woosnam, Kyle, et al. “Economic Impact of Nature Tourism on the Rio Grande Valley: Considering Peak and Off-Peak Visitation for 2011,” prepared for the South Texas Nature Marketing Coop by: Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences and Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University, April 2012

To successfully see birds and wildlife, visitors need to be able to enter their environment quietly. Bicycling, hiking, and paddling are discrete ways to access nature – without loud engines. For this reason perhaps, visitors to the Resaca de la Palma – a World Birding Center site – may rent bicycles (along with binoculars). Cameron County can expand on the attractiveness of the region to the sizable bird observation market, by expanding active tourism opportunities and through a coordinated marketing campaign that makes the connection between birding and bicycling, hiking, and paddling.

BICYCLING, HIKING, AND PADDLING

The region is building its reputation as a bicycling destination. There are many existing hiking and biking trails throughout the cities, towns, and natural areas in the county. The City of Brownsville has recently been designated as a League of American Bicyclists Bronze-Bicycle Friendly Community. It was named the Bicycle Capital of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and is known for its CycloBia open streets events. Other communities in the Valley are joining in. Harlingen's bicycling and running events draw visitors from outside the state and the City is undertaking bicycling transportation planning. South Padre Island is investing in bicycling and walking improvements to create attractive environments for tourists. The South Bay Paddling Trail near Port Isabel and South Padre Island offers kayakers and canoes a beautiful natural setting to explore. The following section discusses how communities in Cameron County are currently promoting bicycling, walking, and paddling.



The Southern Pacific Linear Park in downtown Brownsville is the starting point of the Historic Battlefield Trail, which connects the Brownsville Fine Arts Museum with the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site. Photo by Toole Design Group.



ACTIVE TOURISM PROMOTION IN CAMERON COUNTY

Although the promotion strategies of the Convention and Tourism Bureaus and other tourism organizations in the Lower Valley do not generally use the term “active tourism” or explicitly organize their marketing around an “active tourist”-type, many of the attractions and activities they promote fit well within an active tourism model. This provides opportunities for the Active Tourism Program to build off of and grow the existing tourism promotion strategies.

The communities in Cameron County range in their capacity for tourism promotion and marketing to potential visitors. Based on interviews with staff members at Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVB), Economic Development Corporations (EDC), and Chambers of Commerce in the region and a review of marketing material and third party tourism writing, below are some of the ways communities in the Lower Valley currently market themselves and the tourism and economic development strategies they employ:

Statewide publications have praised **Los Fresnos** for its hiking and biking (along the Prairie Island Trail, the Alligator Pond Trail, the Lakeside Drive Trail, and the Bay side Drive Trail), kayaking on the Laguna Madre, and world-class birding opportunities. Los Fresnos also has off-beat attractions such as Bobz World entertainment center and the Little Graceland Elvis shrine that appeal to travelers looking for unique offerings.¹¹

Rio Hondo is one of the gateways to the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge and has the Adolph Thomae Jr. County Park and RV Park. As a smaller community in the region, the city would benefit from a regional marketing strategy.

Nydia Tapia-Gonzales, the tourism director for South Texas Tourism, helps coordinate regional tourism promotion. Her strategy focuses on two (2) markets: Nature and eco-tourism, and retirees. She says seniors do not want to stay in their RVs anymore and are looking for “soft-adventure” activities, interaction with the community, and trails for bike riding. Tapia-Gonzales attends trade shows and bird watching shows and festivals and has organized media trips for European journalists.

Laguna Vista is another gateway to Laguna Atascosa. It calls itself the “Gateway to the Bay.” Laguna Vista promotes its recreational options including golf, bay and deep-sea fishing, birding, wind surfing and kiteboarding.¹²

Rancho Viejo primarily promotes its shopping and movie theatre, high quality golfing and its proximity to South Padre Island and Mexico.¹³ The Rancho Viejo Resort and Country Club offers Stand Up Paddle Boarding (SUP) on the Resaca del Rancho Viejo to appeal to more active travelers.¹⁴

The smaller communities of **Combes** and **Los Indios** do not have active tourism programs, but they do have RV parks, such as Carefree Valley Resort for seniors in Combes and Angler’s Nest RV park in Los Indios, that could benefit from an increase in “soft-adventure” activities like bicycling and walking.

San Benito, “The Resaca City,” promotes San Benito Market Day on the second Saturday of each month and its proximity to Adolph Thomae, Jr. County Park.¹⁵ Like many of the communities in

the area, it is known as a popular destination for Winter Texans.¹⁶ The resacas, or old bends of the Rio Grande River, create recreational corridors adjacent to water that wind through the city.

Port Isabel boasts of “101 Things To Do” in town, including active attractions, such as the *Walk of The Generals* in the Lighthouse District, the 11-mile El Paseo trail, eight parks, windsurfing the Laguna Madre, fishing, boating, sailing, kayaking the channels, and camping.¹⁷ The Port Isabel Lighthouse is “undoubtedly the hallmark of Port Isabel,” says Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce President Betty Wells.

The Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce takes an active role in promoting tourism. The Chamber promotes tourism through major events, including some geared directly to active visitors. The Longest Causeway Run & Fitness Walk, in its 32nd year, and the Summer Longest Causeway Run & Fitness Walk, in its 2nd year, follow a 6.2 mile (10K) course starting at Schlitterbahn Beach Waterpark on South Padre Island, over the Queen Isabella Causeway and the Laguna Madre Bay, ending in front of the Port Isabel Event & Cultural Center. The long-running winter event draws up to 5,000 participants and the summer event attracted 1,100 in its inaugural year.

The Chamber puts together the Bay fishing tournament in the spring. The City of Port Isabel, the Port Isabel EDC, and the Chamber work together to publish annual visitor guides, host van tours for travel and sports writers, and provide “boot camps” for RV park directors.¹⁸

¹² Laguna Vista, TX, <http://lvtexas.com/>

¹³ Fun Things to See and Do, Rancho Viejo, <http://ranchoviejo.wpengine.com/about-rancho-viejo/fun-things-to-see-and-do/>

¹⁴ Rancho Viejo Stand Up Paddle Boarding, <http://www.rvrcc.com/rancho-viejo-stand-up-paddle-boarding.php>

¹⁵ San Benito, Places to Visit, <http://www.cityofsanbenito.com/333/Places-to-Visit>

¹¹ Trip Guide: Los Fresnos, TexasMonthly, <http://www.texasmonthly.com/texas-trip-guides/los-fresnos-trip-guide/>

¹⁶ San Benito, Texas, Winter Texans Online, http://www.wintertexasonline.com/san_benito.htm

¹⁷ <http://portisabel-texas.com/visitorsguide/pi-guidebook.pdf>

¹⁸ Interview with Betty Wells, President, Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce,



Locally owned business in Port Isabel with home made tortillas. Photo by Toole Design Group



Harlingen Mayor Chris Boswell and others gather for the Hike and Bike Trail ribbon cutting Monday, Nov. 23, 2015. Source: Raul Garcia, Valley Morning Star

Harlingen, with its slogan “Outdoors 365,” promotes its birding, hike and bike trails, hunting, fishing, sport facilities, golfing, and nature. The Harlingen Thicket is a 40-acre tract with hiking trails and the Arroyo Colorado/Hugh Ramsey Nature Park is one of the three World Birding Center locations in Cameron County. The CVB emphasizes the amenities of historic downtown, says the Bureau's Esmerelda Martinez. “It’s a nice atmosphere; we have a beautiful city,” she says. For example, visitors to downtown can enjoy a self-guided tour of 20 different urban murals. Martinez also mentioned that interest in bicycling is increasing rapidly. The city recently celebrated the opening of a new trail along 25th Street.

The Harlingen CVB focuses on events to draw active visitors. The “Jalapeno 100,” a 100-mile bike racing event held in February, draws 1,000 registered participants coming from all over the Rio Grande Valley, Mexico, and as far as Michigan. The 2014 Harlingen Half-Marathon drew 800 runners from Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and Houston, as well as North Carolina and Florida, and Matamoros and Monterrey, Mexico. The city is planning its first Cyclovia, drawing on the successful experiences in Brownsville, San Juan, Houston, and Austin.¹⁹ The CVB doesn't have a particular target market for its outreach, but recognizes the importance of “Winter Texans.”

The Harlingen EDC focuses on industrial recruitment and quality of life. The EDC developed 19 acres of retail space that brought in a Bass Pro Shop. Harlingen EDC CEO Raudel Garza emphasizes promoting the whole package of what the county has to offer: “Ninety percent of the time, we’re selling the region, not Harlingen alone.”²⁰

Tuesday, Dec 1, 2015

¹⁹ Interview with Esmerelda Martinez, Harlingen CVB, Monday, November 23, 2015

²⁰ Interview with Raudel Garza, Harlingen EDC CEO, Wednesday, November 11, 2015

Brownsville, which was named the Bicycling Capital of the Rio Grande Valley²¹ and a League of American Bicyclists Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2015,²² boasts 64 miles of bicycle trails and on-street bike lanes and a bicycle and trail master plan, “Connecting Brownsville.” The City has a growing reputation for its “CycloBia” Open Streets events. Brownsville's tourism promotion focuses, in large part, on trails, including the Brownsville Heritage Trail, Brownsville Historical Battlefield Trail, Monte Bella Mountain Bike Trail, Belden Trail, and biking along the undeveloped Boca Chica Beach. It also offers outdoor activities at the Palo Alto National Historical Battlefield Park, Resaca de la Palma State park, and Sabal Palm Sanctuary.²³

The Brownsville CVB helps groups and planners organize events in the city. Staff assist with press releases and press conferences, and with newspaper, television, and radio media placement, as well as distribute fliers, posters, and newsletters.²⁴

²¹ Brownsville Named Bicycling Capital of the RGV by Texas Legislature, 06/02/2015 <http://www.riosouthtexas.com/node/831>

²² “New Platinum, New Gold Bicycle Friendly Communities,” League of American Bicyclists, November 13, 2015 <http://www.bikeleague.org/content/new-platinum-new-gold-bicycle-friendly-communities>

²³ Brownsville, TX 2015 Visitor's Guide, <http://brownsville.org/request-a-guide/>

²⁴ About the Brownsville Convention & Visitors Bureau, <http://brownsville.org/about/>



South Padre Island is the largest tourism draw in the region, contributing significantly to the region's economy. Not surprising, South Padre Island focuses on the beach as a primary asset, but also promotes a full range of nature tourism activities, including fishing (hosting tournaments), birding, hunting, wildlife photography, eco boat tours, stand-up paddling and kayaking. Biking and walking are "an easy fit," says CVB Director Keith Arnold. "We are working on product development," he says, to generate "more things to do—that are family driven—when the beach is not accessible." In the northern part of South Padre Island there is unincorporated land that has opportunities for horseback riding and zip-lines.



Pedestrian access on South Padre Island. Photo by Toole Design Group.

South Padre Island's marketing focuses on: conventional and cooperative advertising with hotels and attractions; a digital strategy of social media, on line, and search engine optimization; trade shows; public relation marketing; hosting travel writers and organizing tours for sports and special events planners. With the coming of Space-X, Arnold say South Padre Island will be "actively looking for products to develop to watch launches." Arnold says his primary goal is drawing tourism during the eight month off-peak season. During the weekdays of off-peak seasons, the focus is on attracting business meetings and conventions, and amateur sports. On the weekends, the focus is on creating a new destination marketing campaign, and hosting festivals and events. Arnold is looking forward to developing a robust nature tourism program:

"We say nature tourism, not eco-tourism. It includes everything you can do on the water without a motor." Arnold calls biking and hiking "an easy fit" with the other outdoor activities on the Island: birding, hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, and kayaks.

When there are major events, the Chamber can send email announcements to its members. "Chamber members know their success hinges on tourism," says Roxanne Harris, President/CEO of the South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce.²⁵ The South Padre Island EDC typically focuses on economic development projects. The most significant project in recent years has been establishing the birding and nature center. Until recently, the EDC operated the site—the only World Birding Center to be run by an EDC. The EDC is currently working on building an aquarium next to the birding center. A feasibility study was recently completed for the aquarium and a marine access feasibility study is underway.²⁶

²⁵ Interview with Roxanne Harris, President/CEO of the SPI Chamber of Commerce, Wednesday, November 18, 2015

²⁶ Interview with Darla Lapeyre, South Padre Island Economic Development Corporation, Tuesday, Dec 1, 2015

LOW-INTEREST LOANS AND GRANTS

During interviews, staff at several different Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) described low-interest loan programs or grants available for businesses. In each case they indicated that businesses catering to active tourism, such as hotels, van services, and equipment rentals would be eligible and encouraged to apply. Some EDCs were also open to promoting a loan program specifically targeted to active tourism businesses.

San Benito: The EDC has a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) revolving loan program. Locally, the project started with \$311,000 in loans. Now there is \$500,000 to continue the program. Loans range from \$10,000 to \$150,000 for a start up business. The loan is flexible and any activity, improvements, or working capital is eligible.

The San Benito EDC also has an incentive grant that can be awarded based on job creation and performance standards. Businesses generally find out about it from events, on line and media.

South Padre Island: The EDC has a small USDA revolving loan at 4 percent interest. The original amount was \$114,000; \$79-80,000 has been paid back and is now available to re-lend. Interested parties can ask for an application.

The South Padre Island EDC also provides some small grants (around \$5,000) to non-profits.

Harlingen: The Harlingen EDC has done small business development in the past and would be receptive to small business loans in the future. Up to \$150,000 a year is available through local banks or other lending institutions; the EDC does not provide the loans directly.

Port Isabel: Because of the tourism nature of the community and region, in addition to workforce training and business incentives, the Port Isabel EDC has the flexibility to contribute funding to projects that enhance the aesthetic and cultural value of the City such as street and sidewalk beautification, festivals, museum enhancements, community events, and promotion.

TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN CAMERON COUNTY

An active tourism strategy for Cameron County will need to be implemented in coordination with the existing tourism and economic development efforts in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. They are primarily comprised of three elements: tourism promotion, including Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs), Economic Development Councils (EDCs), and Chambers of Commerce. The following describes the organizations working in Cameron County.

TOURISM PROMOTION ENTITIES

Convention & Visitor Bureaus (CVBs)—often called destination marketing organizations—promote leisure and business travel and awareness of a region as a tourism destination. Funding for CVBs generally comes from hotel “bed taxes.” There are three CVBs in Cameron County. Additionally, one city in the county has a marketing director and there is a regional tourism cooperative for the Rio Grande Valley. The tourism organizations in Cameron County are:

Harlingen Convention & Visitors Bureau
(<http://www.visitharlingentexas.com/>)

Brownsville Convention & Visitors Bureau
(<http://brownsville.org/about/>)

South Padre Island Convention & Visitors Bureau
(<http://www.sopadre.com/about/>)

City of Port Isabel Marketing
(<http://portisabel-texas.com/cityhall/departments/marketing-director/>)

Rio Grande Valley Tourism Cooperative
(www.southtexasnature.org)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (EDCS)

Economic development corporations (or councils) promote economic development within a specific geographical area. Funding for Cameron County EDCs comes from local sales tax—the EDCs in Cameron County are in the range of 3/8 to 1/2 of 1 percent. The EDCs in the county are:

Harlingen Economic Development Corporation
(<http://www.harlingenedc.com/>)

Brownsville Economic Development Council
(<http://www.bedc.com/>)

San Benito Economic Development Corporation
(<http://www.sanbenitobusiness.com/>)

South Padre Island Economic Development Corporation
(<http://southpadreislandedc.com/>)

Port Isabel Economic Development Corporation
(<http://portisabel-texas.com/edc/>)

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
(<http://www.lrgvdc.org/>)

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Chambers of Commerce are organizations with the mission of promoting the interests of businesses in the region. Chambers are made up of local business members and funding generally comes from members. The Chambers in the county are:

Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce
(<http://www.harlingen.com/>)

Brownsville Chamber of Commerce
(<http://brownsvillichamber.com/>)

South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce
(<http://www.spichamber.com/>)

Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce
(<http://portisabelchamber.com/>)

San Benito Chamber of Commerce
(<http://www.chamberofsanbenito.com/>)

The Los Fresnos Area Chamber of Commerce
(<http://www.losfresnoschamber.com/currentmembers.html>)



TOURISM DESTINATIONS AND ATTRACTIONS



ACTIVE PLAN STAKEHOLDER MEETING IN PORT ISABEL, TX, SEPTEMBER 17, 2015.

Key Words Associated with Cameron County

- Gateway
- Beach/Water
- Hidden Gem
- Historic sites
- Culture
- Nature
- Bicycle Friendly Community!
- Green
- Activities & options
- Hispanic
- Warm
- Friendliness
- Weather
- Flat!
- Wind! (For kit-surfing)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STAKEHOLDER MEETING IN HARLINGEN, TX, JULY 1, 2015.

Where is your favorite place to take an out-of-town visitor?

- South Padre Island
- Mitte Cultural District
- Restaurants
- Sabal Palm Sanctuary
- Zoo & Sightseeing
- Fort Brown (original earthworks)
- Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge
- Laguna Madre
- South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center
- Downtown Brownsville
- Boca Chica Beach

* Cameron County sites only. Full list includes sites from a broader geographic area. Source: RGV Heritage, Cultural, Natural Tourism: Stakeholders Meeting Notes, July 1, 2015

From historic battlefields to three World Birding Centers to the Port Isabel Lighthouse and the beach on South Padre Island, Cameron County has numerous attractions for active tourists. The planning team has identified and mapped 81 destinations and attractions. Destinations were determined by:

- **IN-PERSON STAKEHOLDER INPUT**
- **INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH CAMERON COUNTY TOURISM PROFESSIONALS**
- **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH**

The destinations and attractions were then organized by broad category: nature and outdoors; trails; heritage, history & education; sports, adventure or golf facilities; business districts; and events, and are found on **Map 2.1: Cameron County Tourism Destinations** (page 2.24). The destinations have also been used to influence the location of the proposed LRGV regional active transportation network routes identified in **Chapter 3, Active Transportation Program**.

Port Isabel lighthouse. Photo by Flickr user quadrant6ix.

MAP 2.1: CAMERON COUNTY TOURISM DESTINATIONS

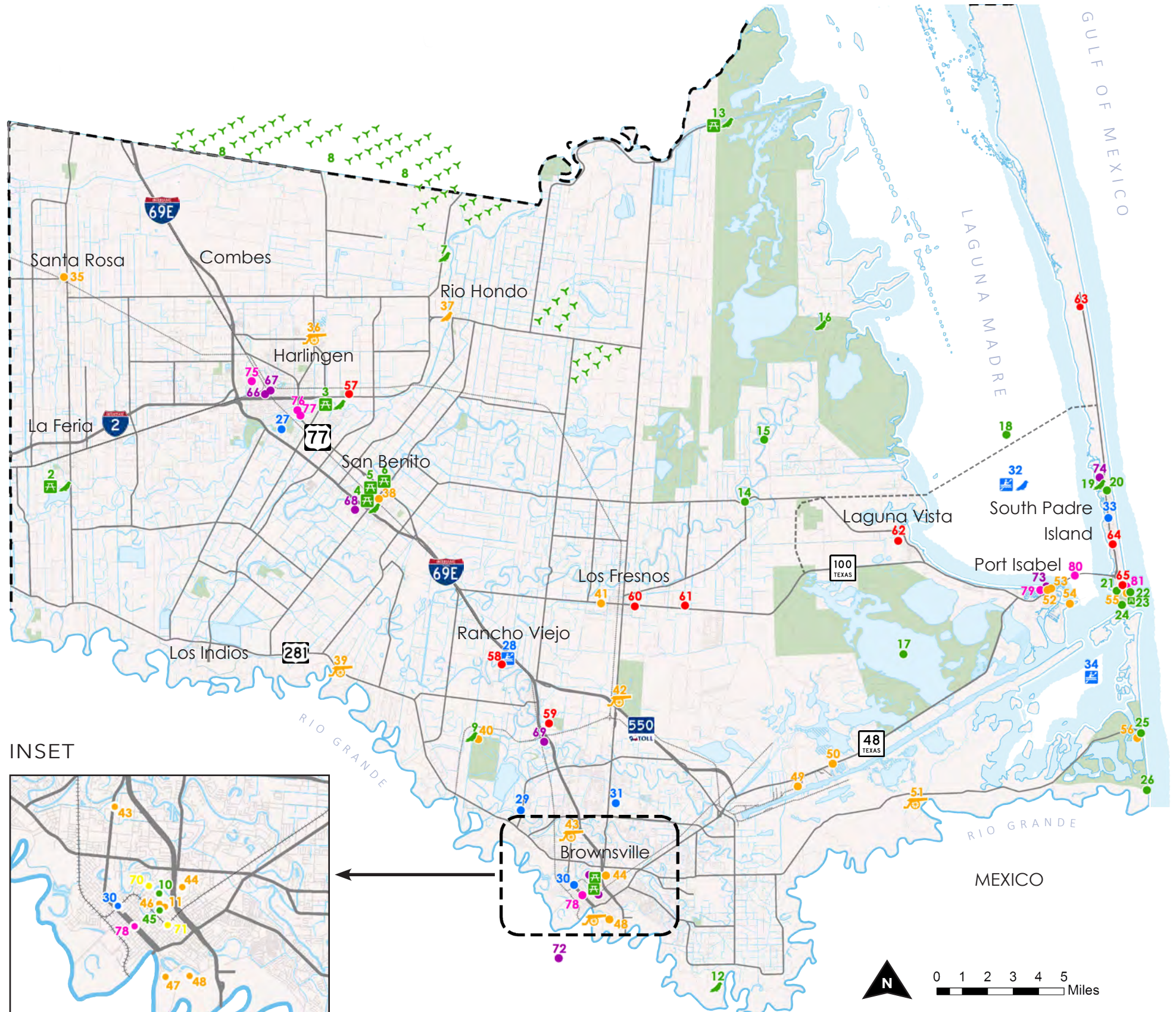
LEGEND

DESTINATIONS

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| NATURE/OUTDOORS | 1 | Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area |
| | 2 | La Feria Comm. Park - Nature Center |
| | 3 | Hugh Ramsey Park |
| | 4 | Arroyo Colorado State Park |
| | 5 | John F Kennedy Park and Pavilion |
| | 6 | Heaven Amphitheater and Park |
| | 7 | Rio Hondo - Boy Scout Camp Perry |
| | 8 | Windmills |
| | 9 | Brownsville Birding Center |
| | 10 | Dean Porter Park |
| | 11 | Linear Park |
| | 12 | Sabal Palms Sanctuary / Nature Trails |
| | 13 | Adolphe Thomae, Jr. County Park |
| TRAILS | 14 | Citrus Orchards |
| | 15 | Acacia Organic Farm |
| | 16 | Laguna Atascosa |
| | 17 | Bahia Grande |
| | 18 | Laguna Madre (and bayside parks) |
| | 19 | Birding Center |
| | 20 | Sea Turtle League |
| | 21 | Dolphin Watch |
| | 22 | The Beach @ SPI |
| | 23 | Isla Blanca Park |
| | 24 | Dolphin Cove |
| | 25 | Boca Chica Beach |
| | HERITAGE/EDUCATIONAL | 26 |
| 27 | | Arroyo - Colorado Bicycle Trail |
| 28 | | Paddle Boarding (Rancho Viejo) |
| 29 | | Monte Bella Min. Biking trials |
| 30 | | Belden Trail |
| 31 | | Paseo De La Resaca |
| 32 | | Laguna Madre Kayak Tours |
| 33 | | Sand Castle Trail |
| 34 | | South Bay Paddling Trail |
| 35 | | Sugar Refinery Tour |

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|---|
| HERITAGE/EDUCATION | 42 | Palo Alto/Historic Battlefield Trail |
| | 43 | Veterans Park |
| | 44 | Brownsville Cemetery |
| | 45 | Gladys Porter Zoo |
| | 46 | Brownsville Museum of Fine Art |
| | 47 | Fort Brown |
| | 48 | UTRGV-Brownsville |
| | 49 | Ship Breaking Tour |
| | 50 | Shrimp Basin |
| | 51 | Palmilo Hill |
| SPORTS | 52 | Historic Lighthouse |
| | 53 | Dolphin Research & Sealife Nature Cen. |
| | 54 | Long Island Old Causeway Platoon Bridge |
| | 55 | Coastal Studies lab |
| | 56 | Space X / Boca Chica Beach |
| | 57 | Harlingen Soccer Complex |
| | 58 | Rancho Viejo Golf Course |
| | 59 | Brownsville Sports Park |
| | 60 | PRCA Rodeo Grounds |
| | 61 | Bobz World Mini Golf & Laser Tag |
| | 62 | SPI Golf Course |
| | 63 | Island Adventure Park |
| | 64 | Sky Diving |
| | 65 | Schlitterbahn |
| | DISTRICTS | 66 |
| 67 | | Harlingen Downtown Murals |
| 68 | | Jackson St. Downtown |
| 69 | | Flea Market |
| 70 | | Mitte Cultural Dist. and Historical Dist. |
| 71 | | Downtown Brownsville |
| 72 | | Matamoras |
| 73 | | Port Isabel Downtown |
| 74 | | South Padre Island Convention Center |
| 75 | | Harlingen Half Marathon |
| EVENTS | 76 | Jalapeno 100 Bike Race |
| | 77 | Blues on the Hill (Harlingen) |
| | 78 | Charro Days |
| | 79 | Texas Int'l Fishing Tournament |
| | 80 | Causeway |
| | 81 | SPI Fireworks |

- | | | | | |
|---------|--|--------------|--|-------------------|
| SYMBOLS | | BATTLEFIELD | | PARK |
| | | BIRD VIEWING | | PUBLIC OPEN SPACE |
| | | PADDLING | | WINDMILLS |





LODGING

Analysis of hotel supply and hotel stays in Cameron County shows modest growth in the number of available rooms (0.6%), room revenue (8%), and occupancy (1.3 percentage points) between 2013 and 2014. It also shows room for future growth: nationally, the hotel occupancy rate for 2014 was 64.4 percent;²⁷ in Cameron County it was 55.2 percent. Enhancing active tourism promotion could help fill rooms in the existing hotel supply.

In general, hotels are concentrated in the population and tourism centers of the county: South Padre Island, Brownsville, and Harlingen. There are several areas that could benefit from additional lodging options. While Harlingen has several hotels along I69, there are currently no hotel options within walking distance of historic downtown Harlingen. According to 2014 data, there are no hotel rooms in Rio Hondo, a key gateway town to the proposed Arroyo Colorado paddling trail catalyst project.

Participants at stakeholder meetings regularly mentioned the need to promote rental by owner platforms, such as AirBnB, Vacation Rental By Owner (VRBO), and HomeAway, to increase the variety and location of accommodation options in the county. Stakeholders also mentioned the Inn at Chachalaca Bend as an example of the type of lodging option that active tourists seek. The county would benefit from more options like these.

RV Parks, Cabins, and Camping

Recreational Vehicle (RV) parks, cabins, and camping sites provide additional lodging options for active tourists. Cameron County has several such locations. See **Appendix C** for examples.

²⁷ Occupancy rate of the United States hotel industry from 2001 to 2015, <http://www.statista.com/statistics/200161/us-annual-accommodation-and-lodging-occupancy-rate/>

**FIGURE 2-14: CAMERON COUNTY HOTEL/MOTEL PERFORMANCE DATA
TEXAS HOTEL/MOTEL PERFORMANCE, ANNUAL DATA (2013 & 2014)**

CAMERON COUNTY HOTELS	ROOMS (NUMBER)		CHANGE (PERCENT)	ROOM REVENUE (\$ IN THOUSANDS)		CHANGE (PERCENT)	ESTIMATED NIGHTLY RATE (DOLLARS)		OCCUPANCY		OCCUPANCY CHANGE (PERCENT)
	2013	2014		2013	2014		2013	2014	2013	2014	
CAMERON COUNTY	6,843	6,884	0.6	126,216	136,359	8	93.77	98.38	53.9	55.2	1.3
BROWNSVILLE	1,863	1,868	0.3	23,342	25,092	7.5	58.50	62.42	58.7	59.0	0.3
HARLINGEN	1,084	1,058	-2.4	15,534	16,488	6	65.82	67.85	59.7	62.9	3
LA FERIA	40	40	0	268	283	5.6	38.29	35.38	47.9	54.8	6.8
LAGUNA HEIGHTS	28	41	46.4	147	252	71.4	36.75	36.00	39.7	46.6	6.9
LOS FRESNOS	46	45	-2.2	478	521	9	47.80	52.10	59.9	60.5	0.7
PORT ISABEL	90	96	6.7	1,061	1,267	19.4	70.73	70.39	45.8	51.2	5.5
RANCHO VIEJO	30	31	3.3	484	667	37.8	96.80	111.17	45.7	52.6	6.9
RIO HONDO	1	0		24	0		0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0	0
SAN BENITO	137	137	0	1,298	1,382	6.5	44.76	47.66	58.0	58.0	0
SOUTH PADRE ISLAND	3,525	3,566	1.2	83,581	90,406	8.2	130.39	136.56	49.8	50.9	1.0

Source: MARKET TEXAS TOURISM, Office of the Governor, Texas Economic Development & Tourism, <http://www.sourcestrategies.org/texas/reports/TXT14YTD4CNTY.pdf>



The Oaxacan Dragon, just one of 20 murals in downtown Harlingen that may be seen in a self-guided walking tour. Source: Downtown Harlingen



View from Port Isabel. Photo by Toole Design Group

SUPPORT SERVICES

All tourists require certain amenities, such as lodging and food. Active Tourists have additional needs specific to their activities. These include outfitters, tours and tour guides, bicycle maintenance facilities, and transportation. The following discussion provides a brief analysis of these services in Cameron County, based on stakeholder input and additional research. It is not an exhaustive list of existing services and the market should be expected to change.

Outfitters and bike rentals: Outfitters are businesses that provide equipment, supplies, or guide services for outdoor activities, such as hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. Cameron County has several businesses that serve all or part of this function. Bass Pro Shop recently opened in Harlingen and Brownsville has a Dick's Sporting Goods. On South Padre Island, there are surf shops like Island Native Surf House, On the Beach and Island Style that rent surf boards, as well as beach cruiser bicycles. Island Outfitters has professional full-time fishing guides that go out to the Lower Laguna Madre. There are several bike shops or places to rent bicycles. In general, Cameron County would benefit from additional options for active tourists to buy, rent, and maintain equipment, and find guides.

Tours: Guided tours offer visitors a view of a community or landscape through the eyes of an expert. Cameron County has several guided fishing guides (Crystal Flats Guide Service, Osprey Cruises, Chops Fishing Guide Service) and dolphin tours (SPI Dolphin Research & Sealife Nature Center). There are Segway tours available of South Padre Island, Port Isabel, and historic Harlingen and the downtown murals.²⁸ The county would benefit from organized bicycle trips and tours and additional nature tours in conjunction with rental facilities.

Transportation: Transportation plays an important part in promoting tourism. The majority of visitors arrive by car, but there are also three airports serving the region, and there is the potential to attract long distance bicyclists through the U.S. bicycle route system. South Padre Island is the most accessible destination from the airports, with a free shuttle from the Brownsville Airport, and a \$20 shuttle from the Harlingen Airport.²⁹ Once on the Island, there is a free fixed-route shuttle service called Island Metro, which connects to Port Isabel. Island Metro buses are equipped with front bike racks, which can hold two bicycles.³⁰ While taxis are available, they are relatively expensive. The County might benefit from ridesharing services such as Uber or Lyft. In addition, a van or shuttle service marketed toward active tourists and geared toward wildlife and heritage areas would help visitors access active tourism destinations.

²⁸ Segway Valley Tours, Segway Tours, <http://www.segvalleytours.com/harlingen-downtown.html>

²⁹ South Padre Island Airport Shuttles & Transportation Information, <http://www.enjoyspi.com/get-here/transportation/>

³⁰ Island Metro, bus schedule and information, http://www.myspi.org/egov/documents/1441917111_58618.pdf



ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is no single magic formula for becoming a successful active tourist destination, but as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there are common elements that active tourists are looking for. For a community to successfully market itself as an active tourism destination, it needs well-known destinations, tourist amenities, support services, and active transportation infrastructure. It also needs to have a reputation for charm and local character. Active tourists want to experience a place with unique culture and heritage, and restaurants with local flavor. And they want access to the outdoors with trails, guided tours, and nature and wildlife.

Cameron County has many ingredients that active tourists demand: world class-wildlife and bird watching, rich heritage and history, and a popular beach and bay.

BUSINESS DISTRICTS

To meet its potential, Cameron County needs to develop businesses and downtown districts that appeal to active tourists. This means fostering more local restaurants, independent accommodations, and support services that are tailored and marketed to active tourists. It means cultivating downtown areas that attract tourists who want to walk from their accommodations to shopping, dining, and trails.

NETWORK PROMOTION

Cameron County has a disconnected network of nature, paddling, and bike and hike trails that are promoted separately. Already, five (5) percent of visitors to the County choose to ride a bike during their stay. With a county-wide trail network - and a systematic effort to promote it - this number will grow as bicycling, walking, and hiking become one of the county's most significant drivers of tourism. That promotion effort requires regional coordination, a strong marketing plan, and a regional communications strategy.

There are many tourism promotion efforts in the county's towns and cities. There is currently at least one regional tourism entity. Tourism stakeholders currently recognize the value of working together to promote Cameron County. There will be value in expanding the coordination and cooperation among the communities and strengthen region-wide organizations.

TOURISM DATA

Tourism data for Cameron County is currently spread out among various sources, including hotel records, the Texas Tourism Office, and individual economic impact studies. The County would benefit from an ongoing, systematic effort to track active tourism, account



Like many business districts in Cameron County, Downtown Brownsville has great potential to welcome active tourists with welcoming "gateway" treatments and accessibly-located restaurants, lodging, outdoor outfitters, and transportation services marketed as "Active Destination" businesses. Photo by Toole Design Group

for the resulting economic impacts, and track its own efforts and progress towards implementing a comprehensive tourism program. The goals, strategies, and actions proposed in chapter 4 will build off of the existing strengths in the county and help fill the gaps by laying out an effective, coordinated plan to attract active tourists and enhance Cameron County's economy.

Cameron County has many ingredients that active tourists demand: world class-wildlife and bird watching, rich heritage and history, and a popular beach and bay. To meet its economic potential, Cameron County can further develop businesses and downtown districts to attract active tourists.



CHAPTER 3

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

ARROYO COLORADO TRAIL, HARLINGEN

The LRGV active transportation program is a combined network of on-street bicycle routes, multi-use trails, and paddling trails linking Cameron County residents and visitors to area-wide communities and attractions. These combined county-wide networks complement localized active transportation networks (both existing and planned) being developed by Cameron County municipalities. The resulting combination of “inter-destination” and “intra-community” active transportation routes results in an active transportation program that makes possible both: **A)** Long-range recreational bicycling, hiking, and paddling excursions; and, **B)** Short-distance linkages along major routes providing pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities with fitness and commuting options.

Region-wide implementation of the LRGV active transportation network extends beyond the design and construction of on-street enhancements, trails, and accessory facilities. Corresponding actions must be taken to align other local and regional bicycle and pedestrian plans, policy documents, and funding programs with the regional network priorities identified in the Plan. Many of the strategies contained within this chapter provide suggestions for aligning local and regional facilities and policy with the LRGV active transportation program.

The active transportation program's emphasis on infrastructure development places much of the facility construction and maintenance responsibility on local, regional, and state government. These governmental commitments should be augmented by other Active Plan stakeholder's efforts to entice facility usage. Active transportation network recommendations in this chapter are linked to complementary strategies and actions contained within the Active Plan's active tourism program (chapter 4).

IN CHAPTER 3:

- 1 Proposed Regional Active Transportation Network
- 2 Active Transportation Program Goals, Strategies and Actions
- 3 Active Transportation Network Types
- 4 Facility Design Recommendations
- 5 Catalyst Projects



THE
ACTIVE
PLAN

3.1 PROPOSED REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The LRGV regional active transportation network is a “three-legged stool” of on-street bicycle routes, bicycling and walking paths, and paddling trails. The network is a regional extension of existing and proposed active transportation corridors identified by participating Active Plan communities as part of their local planning efforts. The concurrent development of each network type forms the cornerstone of the active transportation program’s goals, strategies, and actions (pages 3.5 through 3.8).

Because the LRGV regional active transportation network is designed to link Cameron County communities with attractions over long distances - and in a manner that highlights area scenery - proposed routes are highly selective and do not extend along every potential corridor in the county. The LRGV regional active transportation network should not be viewed as a limiting factor for identifying other suitable bicycle and pedestrian corridors in the LRGV through future local and regional active transportation planning efforts; although, regional networks proposed in the Active Plan should be incorporated into local networks.

ROUTE SELECTION

The following criteria were considered when selecting the network types and routes that comprise the LRGV regional active transportation network:

- **ACCESS.** Routes were selected which extend to and from the population centers of Cameron County to ensure reasonable proximity to potential users. Consideration was also given to the most direct way to convey long-distance cycling enthusiasts to the LRGV’s population centers without compromising access to attractions or areas of scenic interest.
 - **COMMUNITY INPUT.** Results of public surveys and open houses were compiled to understand preferences for, or concerns about, particular network routes.
 - **CORRIDORS.** Regional active transportation network development can only be accomplished by leveraging potential opportunities within existing corridors. The proposed regional active transportation network utilizes the following corridor types: access roads, drainage ditches, highways, irrigation channels, railroads, and streams.
 - **LOCAL PLANS.** Existing bicycle, pedestrian, and trail plans prepared by the cities of Brownsville and Harlingen were reviewed to ensure alignment of potential Active Plan routes with locally identified corridors. Other planning documents were reviewed to ensure consistency with local active transportation initiatives.
 - **DESTINATIONS.** Network routes have been selected to provide pathways to major tourist destinations, and other cultural, historical, and natural resources throughout Cameron County. Active Plan routes were also selected to link all Cameron County communities that participated in the planning effort.
- **SCENIC QUALITY.** Significant consideration was given to linking LRGV communities and attractions via routes that offer the greatest possible scenic quality. Where possible, routes are proposed that remove bicyclists and pedestrians from highway corridors – instead utilizing overland routes that take advantage of other features.
 - **USER GROUPS.** LRGV regional active transportation network types and routes were developed to provide health, recreation, and transportation options for a variety of user groups. Multi-use trail and paddling trail location and design provides accessibility to children, the elderly, individuals with physical impairments; and, able-bodied alike. The United States Bicycle Route (USBR) provides accommodation to a more constrained user group of cycling enthusiasts and tourists.



FM 509 north of Los Indios is a popular riding route utilized by local cycling enthusiasts. It could serve as a key segment of a United States Bicycle Route in Cameron County. Photo by Halff Associates

MAP 3.1: LRGV REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



LRGV REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The LRGV regional active transportation network is an overlapping system of 428 cumulative miles of on-street bicycle routes, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and paddling trails.* Network types include:

- LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK.** A system of off-street multi-use trails suitable for bicycling, walking, hiking, and jogging. The network extends throughout Cameron County's urban and rural environments (including a proposed link to Matamoros, Mexico), and will provide health, recreation, and transportation opportunities to the greatest possible combination of residents and visitors.

THE ACTIVE PLAN PROPOSES OVER 230 MILES OF MULTI-USE TRAILS.**
- UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE (USBR).** An on-street bicycle route linking LRGV communities and attractions to a national bicycle route system. Intended for residents and visiting cyclists of advanced ability, the USBR will utilize existing roadways to convey persons between various points in Cameron County in the most direct and efficient manner possible.

THE ACTIVE PLAN PROPOSES A USBR IN CAMERON COUNTY OF OVER 120 MILES.
- LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM.** A series of paddling trails linking the tidal waters of the Laguna Madre with inland reaches of the Arroyo Colorado. Taking advantage of Cameron County's abundant water resources, the paddling trail system will offer access to novices and enthusiasts of varying ability.

THE ACTIVE PLAN PROPOSES OVER 78 MILES OF PADDLING TRAILS.

Map 3.1, *LRGV Regional Active Transportation Network*, illustrates the location of proposed active transportation network routes in Cameron County. More information about Active Plan network routes by type can be found on pages 3.9 through 3.12.



LEGEND

ACTIVE ROUTES

- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Alternate)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Existing)
- US Bicycle Route (Proposed)
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Existing)
- Brownsville Trails (Proposed)

* Includes 18 miles of existing multi-use trails, and 10 miles of existing paddling trails.
 ** Excludes 65 miles of alternate multi-use trails.

3.2 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The LRGV regional active transportation network reflects stakeholder preferences identified through the Active Plan's public engagement process (chapter 1), combined with an analysis of existing conditions (chapter 2). Development of the three-tiered network will require the coordinated and sustained efforts of participating local governments and regional stakeholders. The organizational structure by which this effort will be led is identified in detail within **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

With so many participating local governments and regional stakeholders however, local active transportation policy and project decisions can easily be made by individual jurisdictions which either conflict with or delay the network recommendations of the Active Plan. Furthermore, the successful development of a region-wide active transportation network requires that implementation is coordinated with the Active Plan's active tourism program.

The goals, strategies, and actions presented in this section identify key steps that must be taken by Active Plan participants to ensure they are moving in the same direction. They ensure that the proposed active transportation network development is: **1)** Consistent with local and MPO active transportation policies and projects; **2)** Aligned with the Plan's active tourism program; and, **3)** Complimentary to the interrelated economic, health, and transportation principles shared by planning participants.



The development of an active transportation network that expands the tourism market in Cameron County requires concurrent implementation of the Active Plan's active tourism program. The area's widely dispersed resacas (1, above left) provide green havens throughout much of Cameron County and can serve as interim destination points along the proposed LRGV multi-use trail network. Selective siting of trailheads can be coupled with facilities that increase birding, fishing, or other recreational opportunities (2, above right). Source: Halff Associates



TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1: DEVELOP A REGION-WIDE MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK.

Multi-use trails (shared use paths and side paths) are among the most accessible of active transportation facilities. Their separation from motor vehicles provides a feeling of safety that encourages use by all ages. Trails support a mix of activities such as walking, running, biking, and roller blading. Further, the ability to locate multi-use trails in a variety of built and natural environments makes them equally suitable for transportation, recreation, and fitness. These combined benefits should make the development of a region-wide multi-use trail network a shared regional active transportation and tourism priority.

STRATEGY 1.1 FORMALIZE LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL ROUTES.

Action 1.1.1 Work with local partners to formalize the alignments of proposed catalyst routes.

Meet with local, regional, state, and federal authorities upon whose property LRGV multi-use trail catalyst routes (pages 3.38 through 3.49) are proposed to be located. Verify the steps necessary to obtain formal endorsement of final trail plans from applicable authorities. Considerations include: design of trail segments, board/ commission approvals, environmental approvals, policy document amendment, easement agreements, liability, etc.

Action 1.1.2 Prepare preliminary engineering documents for catalyst routes.

Prepare preliminary engineering plans for portions of, or the full length of catalyst multi-use trail projects. These should confirm route alignments and include alignments, cross-sections, corridor and surface widths, surface specifications, intersection specifications, etc. Prepare detailed cost estimates for all preferred facilities so that facility design and construction can be incorporated into the capital budgets of local governments and other public authorities.

Action 1.1.3 Amend existing policy documents to support LRGV multi-use trail implementation.

Amend local comprehensive plans, park master plans, and other policy documents to support local investment (and state funding support) in multi-use trail infrastructure. Where necessary, work with federal and state authorities to amend policy documents to permit multi-use trail access and encroachments. For instance, trail access within the boundaries of the Laguna Atascosa NWR will require an "appropriate use and compatibility determination" from the USFW Service (and possible adjustments to the NWR's Visitor Services Plan), while encroachments within the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Park would require approval from the park superintendent - including possible adjustments to the Superintendent Compendium.

STRATEGY 1.2 SEEK TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.

Action 1.2.1 Identify or create an LRGV Multi-Use Trail advocacy association.

Establish an LRGV multi-use trail advocacy organization that can assist with trail development, long-term maintenance, and documentation (including trail usage). The organization's activities could support the maintenance and use of existing LRGV multi-use trails in Brownsville, Harlingen, and San Benito. To ensure that long-term LRGV multi-use trail development occurs in conjunction with the other network types recommended in this plan, advocacy and support may be assumed by a lead umbrella organization that supports all LRGV regional active transportation network efforts (chapter 5).

Action 1.2.2 Obtain easement agreements where necessary to ensure rights of public access along trail corridors.

Obtain necessary agreements (or commitments of support) from public and private property owners for public access easements on catalyst project routes prior to initiating final design and engineering, or seeking grants to support trail construction.

STRATEGY 1.3 FACILITATE FINAL TRAIL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION THROUGH MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES.

Action 1.3.1 Incorporate LRGV multi-use trail recommendations into capital budgets.

Work with applicable local government entities to amend capital budgets to include the construction of new multi-use trails and accessory facilities. Support local government initiatives by seeking funding support through MPO and State-administered competitive grant programs.

Action 1.3.2 Support multi-use trail design and construction through a mix of transportation and recreational funding sources.

Where suitable, divide catalyst routes into smaller segments where it is anticipated that the characteristics of prospective trail users will differ. For instance, urban trail segments in populated areas or along federal aid highways may serve a greater percentage of bicycle/pedestrian commuters and be suitable for transportation funding. Trail segments in remote areas away from highway rights-of-way may attract a greater percentage of recreational users and score better when submitted for recreational trail funding.

Action 1.3.3 Build private partnerships by leveraging active tourism program recommendations.

Build local business capacity to support multi-use trail usage starting with cycling and running vendors and businesses that are located in close proximity to multi-use trail investments. Work with key businesses to serve as pilots for recommended active tourism program strategies. Where possible, link the selection of pilot businesses to those vendors and locations that can also support (and benefit from) concurrent efforts to develop businesses that cater to other active tourism and active transportation types.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2: ESTABLISH A UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE IN CAMERON COUNTY.¹

The wide shoulders found on many TxDOT-maintained highways are an inviting amenity to local cycling enthusiasts. Although well-used, these shoulders are not necessarily designed for the purpose of accommodating cyclists. Enhancements to these highways that may otherwise encourage additional bicycle usage are therefore not high priorities - particularly in rural contexts.

Designation of a United States Bicycle Route (USBR) in Cameron County would assist in developing the community's bicycle-friendly image, and serve as a means to partner with TxDOT to apply highway rehabilitation practices that enable the continued use of state highways by cyclists. Cooperative development of a USBR with TxDOT may also yield a series of regionally-acceptable best design practices that can improve driver awareness of cycling activity on USBR corridors while providing local cyclists with a predictable inter-community route.

STRATEGY 2.1 SECURE LOCAL AGREEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR PREPARING A UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE (USBR) IN THE LRGV.

Action 2.1.1 Convene a working group to finalize the USBR.

Convene a group of local stakeholders led by the proposed Active Plan implementing organization (chapter 5) to formalize the Cameron County segment of USBR #55 as proposed in this plan. Schedule and delegate pre-application tasks necessary for USBR designation including: verifying support from authorities owning affected rights-of-way (TxDOT, CCRMA), confirming steps necessary to approve encroachments (i.e. signage), and designating the entity responsible for application preparation on behalf of TxDOT. Utilize pre-application efforts to solicit partnerships with communities in adjacent counties, and local elected officials, to consider expanded route feasibility and solicit letters of endorsement.

Action 2.1.2 Utilize volunteers from local cycling organizations to map proposed USBR corridor conditions.

Fine-tune the USBR route map with the assistance of local cycling volunteers. Inventory full route conditions (with GPS coordinates) including: pavement widths and conditions, segment lengths, turns, potential waysides or bicycle friendly business locations, hazardous intersections, etc. Work with TxDOT, the CCRMA, and other local authorities to determine the types of improvements which would be feasible along the length of the route, and determine the placement of accessory facilities that support route usage.

Action 2.1.3 Solicit TxDOT support for eventual USBR application preparation and submittal.

TxDOT representation is a key component of all proposed Goal 2 strategies. Furthermore, formal endorsement of a proposed USBR application submittal to AASHTO must have the support of TxDOT's chief executive or program supervisor. Formal support of an application prepared for LRGV communities may require that a longer route be identified (of which the LRGV segment would be an initial phase). Further coordination with other TxDOT regional bicycle and pedestrian coordinators may be required.

STRATEGY 2.2 PREPARE AND SUBMIT THE USBR APPLICATION.

Action 2.2.1 Prepare the USBR application for TxDOT submittal to AASHTO.

Obtain copies of successful USBR applications to review format, thoroughness of presentation, level of public and private support, etc. Prepare a draft application for review by all partnering agencies, and third-party consideration by an organization such as the Adventure Cycling Association. Produce a complete final application package for TxDOT consideration and submittal to AASHTO.

STRATEGY 2.3 IMPLEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS WHICH ENHANCE CORRIDOR SAFETY, COMFORT, AND VISIBILITY.

Action 2.3.1 Incorporate the USBR into local transportation improvement programs.

Work with the Brownsville MPO, and Harlingen-San Benito MPO, to incorporate a comprehensive set of USBR enhancements into the MPOs' Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) as part of grouped projects, or as special set-asides.

Action 2.3.2 Apply for Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) set-asides.

Submit applications to TxDOT during competitive grant cycles to fund USBR infrastructure enhancements in portions of Cameron County located outside of MPO boundaries. Work with the CCRMA to incorporate USBR enhancements into the authority's ongoing projects.

Action 2.3.3 Link accessory USBR facility development to recreational grant funding sources.

Assist partnering communities (where USBR accessory facilities such as hydration stations, fix-it station, etc., are proposed to be located) in applying for TPWD outdoor recreation grants. Incorporate USBR accessory facilities into each applicable community's project scope.

Action 2.3.4 Promote the LRGV's USBR.

Leverage the active tourism program recommendations contained in **Chapter 4, Active Tourism Program**, to promote the use and maintenance of USBR #55 in Cameron County and beyond.

¹ Many of the strategies and actions herein were adapted from Adventure Cycling Association, U.S. Bicycle Route System, Designation, <https://www.adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/us-bicycle-route-system/designation>, 2016.



TRANSPORTATION GOAL 3: DEVELOP A PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM FOR REGION-WIDE WATER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES.

Water recreation opportunities are abundant throughout Cameron County. Coupled with the pristine natural habitat of the Laguna Atascosa NWR, fishing on the Arroyo Colorado, and the open waters of the Laguna Madre, opportunities for half day, full day, or overnight paddling adventures in Cameron County abound.

Although canoing and kayaking may not come to mind for most people when considering active transportation, paddle sports attract many of the same active tourists who engage in cycling, running, and hiking adventures. Development of a paddling network supports overall efforts to brand Cameron County as an active destination, and can connect local residents with the area's water-based amenities.

STRATEGY 3.1 FORMALIZE LRGV PADDLING TRAIL ROUTES.

Action 3.1.1 Sponsor an LRGV Paddling Trail "Expedition."

Convene and outfit a group of local stakeholders to float and map the entire proposed LRGV paddling trail route over the course of multiple days. Include representatives of key stakeholder groups, including local experts in native wildlife and habitat, waterway navigation, and civil engineering. Utilize the "expedition" to identify and confirm possible locations for paddling trail launch sites, camping sites, signage, and other navigational aids.

The LRGV Paddling Trail expedition should be a highly publicized event during which time various participants present educational videos regarding local wildlife and ecology, significant natural features, community history, paddling etiquette, and paddling trail essentials. Partnerships with local media, and efforts to secure foundation mini-grants such as the ACA's Club Fostered Stewardship Program, will further increase exposure and excitement of full paddling trail potential.

Action 3.1.2 Prepare an LRGV Paddling Trail Plan.

Commission an LRGV Paddling Trail Plan which formalizes and details the trail routes recommended in this plan. Utilize the information gained from the LRGV Paddling Trail expedition to assist in determining the location of all preferred launch sites, launch types and facilities, on-water signage and markers, and off-water way-finding aids. Base launch facility selection and location - where possible - on confirmed interest expressed by public and private property owners. Prepare detailed cost estimates for all preferred facilities so that facility design and construction can be incorporated into the capital budgets of local governments and other public authorities.

Action 3.1.3 Amend existing policy documents to support paddling trail implementation.

Amend local comprehensive plans, parks master plans, and other policy documents to support local investment (and state funding support) in paddling trail infrastructure. Where necessary, work with federal and state authorities to amend policy documents to permit paddling trail access and encroachments. For instance, paddling activities within the Laguna Atascosa NWR will require adjustments to the USFW's Laguna Atascosa NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

STRATEGY 3.2 SEEK TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.

Action 3.2.1 Identify or create an LRGV Paddling Trail advocacy association.

Establish an LRGV Paddling Trail advocacy organization of local paddling enthusiasts and volunteers that can assist with trail development, long-term maintenance, and documenting trail usage. To ensure that long-term LRGV Paddling Trail development occurs in conjunction with the other network types recommended in this plan, advocacy and support may be assumed by a lead umbrella organization that supports all LRGV regional active transportation network efforts (chapter 5).

Action 3.2.2 Incorporate LRGV Paddling Trail recommendations into capital budgets.

Work with applicable local government entities to amend capital budgets to include the construction of new launch facilities, or conversion of existing facilities, to form a network of paddling trail access points. Support local government initiative by seeking funding support from the TPWD through the Boating Access Grant or other similar recreational grant programs.

Action 3.2.3 Participate in the Texas Paddling Trail Program.

Apply for participation in the Texas Paddling Trail Program (or modify existing arrangements with TPWD to extend program participation beyond the existing South Bay Paddling Trail) to receive support in marketing the trail, enhancing on-water and off-water signage, and other logistical support.

Action 3.2.4 Build private partnerships by leveraging active tourism program recommendations.

Build local business capacity to support paddling trail usage starting with existing water sports vendors and/or other businesses that are located in close proximity to paddling trail investments. Work with key businesses to serve as pilots for recommended active tourism program strategies. Where possible, link the selection of pilot businesses to those vendors and locations that can also support (and benefit from) concurrent efforts to develop businesses that cater to other active tourism and active transportation types.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 4: ESTABLISH THE ACTIVE PLAN AS INTEGRAL PART OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY.

Support of Active Plan recommendations by participating local governments does not guarantee successful plan implementation. Other local government policy documents may omit or conflict with Active Plan recommendations, while ordinances may be insufficient to leverage development opportunities in such a way that supports network development. Further, although representatives of many local governments and stakeholder groups participated in the planning process, this does not translate into plan awareness by current or future municipal elected officials or staff.

STRATEGY 4.1 RECEIVE FORMAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE ACTIVE PLAN.

Action 4.1.1 Solicit local government support of the Active Plan.

Working through the lead organization responsible for Active Plan implementation (chapter 5), prepare and disseminate a project presentation template and model adoption resolution for use at local government public meetings. Tailor adopting resolution templates to clarify applicable local government roles. Seek local government commitments for incorporating the Active Plan as part of their economic development, health, recreation, and/or transportation policies through resolutions of adoption.

Action 4.1.2 Solicit endorsements from other stakeholder groups.

Utilize the lead Active Plan implementation organization to present final plan recommendations to area economic development, health, and other relevant stakeholders, and to solicit commitments to assist in plan implementation. Tailor board resolutions or other statements of support to clarify the principal implementation roles of each organization as proposed in the implementation program portion of this plan (chapter 5).

Action 4.1.3 Seek formal plan acceptance by the TPWD.

Submit the Active Plan - including local government resolutions of adoption - to the TPWD for acceptance as a locally-endorsed parks, recreation, and open space master plan.

STRATEGY 4.2 ALIGN ACTIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS WITH OTHER LOCALLY OR REGIONALLY ADOPTED PLANS OR POLICY DOCUMENTS.

Action 4.2.1 Amend local planning documents to incorporate Active Plan recommendations.

Work with local governments who have endorsed the Active Plan through the approval of an adoption resolution to amend existing planning and policy documents to ensure consistency between local and regional policy.

Action 4.2.2 Amend local land development regulations to facilitate the provision of Active Plan corridors and facilities as part of new development.

Work with Cameron County local governments to evaluate land development ordinances and design guidelines to determine consistency with Active Plan recommendations. As necessary, amend land development and parkland dedication ordinances to prioritize easement dedication for LRGV multi-use trail corridors as part of new development. Ensure that land development ordinances allow local governments to require bicycle and pedestrian access from new development to multi-use trail corridors.

Provision of trail easements within strategically located development sites may be preferable (on a case-by-case basis) to developing within parallel utility corridors identified in this plan. Such trail easements offer greater flexibility in providing shade and constructing accessory fixtures, and could serve as bands of natural habitat.

Action 4.2.3 Update regional transportation planning documents.

Work with the Brownsville MPO and Harlingen-San Benito MPO to incorporate LRGV regional active transportation network recommendations into each organization's bicycle and pedestrian master planning documents and metropolitan transportation plans (MTP). Work with the MPO and local governments to incorporate eligible LRGV active transportation network infrastructure projects into each MPO's transportation improvement program (TIP) either through sponsored or grouped projects.

Action 4.2.4 Coordinate with public officials in Matamoros to provide a bi-national extension of the Active Plan network.

Consider an extension of the Active Plan network between Brownsville and Matamoros. Evaluate the feasibility of a multi-use trail connection between the communities via existing bridge structures.²

ADOPTION OF THE PLAN AND ITS ENDORSEMENT BY MANY IF NOT ALL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES, STAKEHOLDERS, AND PRIVATE REPRESENTATIVES CAN PLAY A HUGE ROLE IN GARNERING FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIVE PLAN. IMAGINE THE IMPACT OF A HUGE LIST OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY ALL ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTING THE PLAN.

² Arana, Ana. 2016, August 26. On the U.S.-Mexico border, Matamoros and Brownsville plan a binational bike trail. *Citiscopes*. From: http://citiscopes.org/story/2016/us-mexico-border-matamoros-and-brownsville-plan-binational-bike-trail?utm_source=Citiscopes&utm_campaign=2b758f6b4d-Mailchimp_2016_08_26&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ce992dbfef-2b758f6b4d-71034101

MAP 3.2: LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK

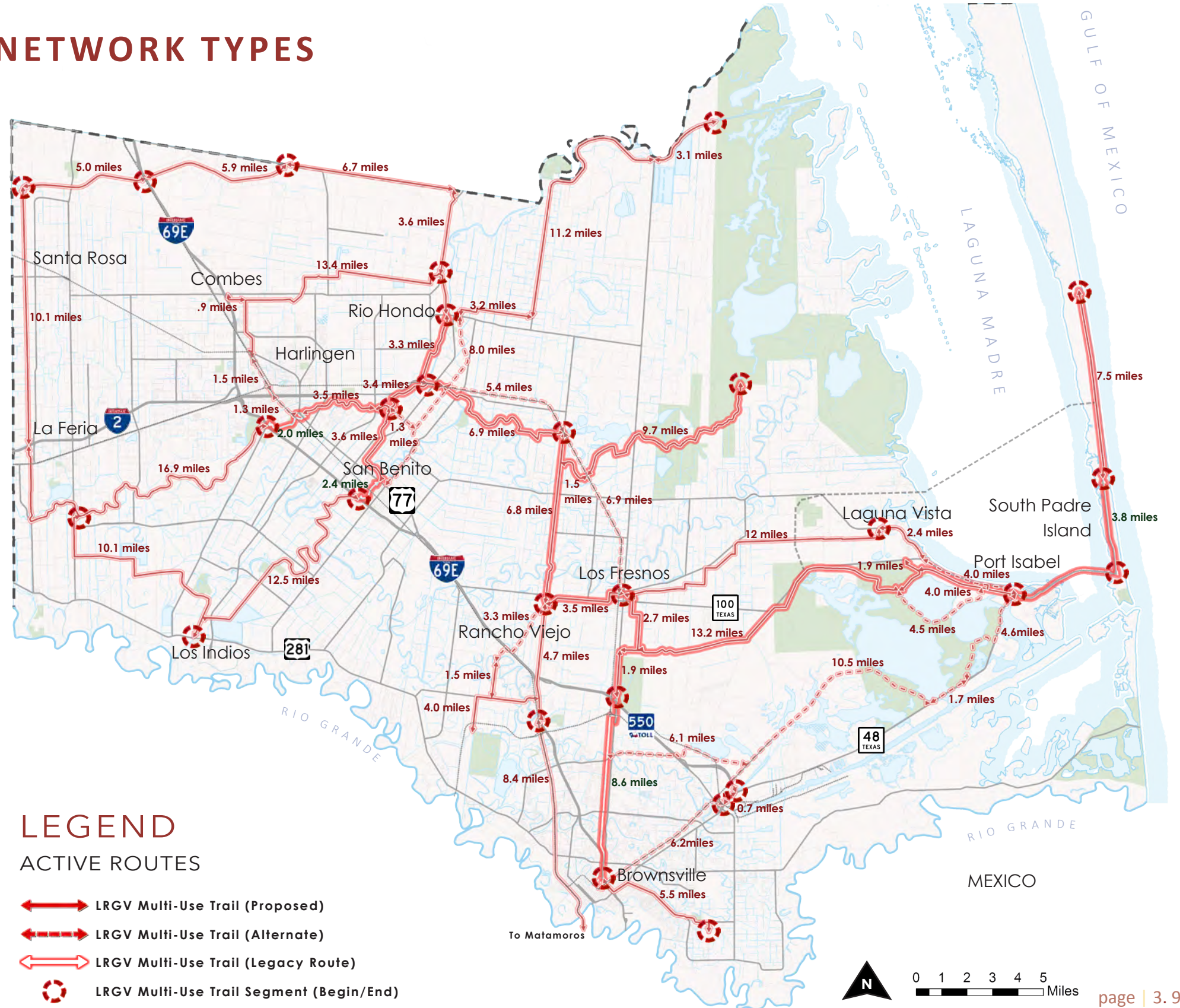


3.3 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TYPES

LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK

The proposed LRGV multi-use trail network consists of over 230 miles* of existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian shared-use paths extending throughout Cameron County along highways, irrigation canals, drainage channels, arroyos, levees, and more. The network of multi-use trails and side paths will offer short-distance recreation and transportation options for area residents, and the opportunity for multi-day biking and hiking tours of the region.

Map 3.2. LRGV Multi-Use Trail Network, illustrates general network location. Key design features and considerations related to the proposed LRGV Multi-Use Trail Network can be found beginning on page 3.18.



LEGEND

ACTIVE ROUTES

- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Alternate)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Legacy Route)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail Segment (Begin/End)

FIGURE 3-1: LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK¹

CORRIDOR TYPES	KEY FEATURES ²
A. Arroyos and Resacas	Over 60 miles of existing and proposed multi-use trails follow arroyos, resacas, or the boundaries of other water bodies. Many segments of these waterways are under private ownership.
B. Drainage Ditches	Multi-use trails are proposed along 54 miles of drainage ditches. Ditches often extend the boundaries of existing easements. Special consideration must be given to trail placement.
C. Highways	Side paths are proposed along 42 miles of highways where no alternate corridor exists.
D. Irrigation Canals	Multi-use trails are proposed along 7 miles of irrigation canals. These routes can pose challenges where there are steep embankments.
E. Railroads	Over 14 miles of multi-use trails are proposed to follow rail corridors. Proposed "rail-to-trail" or "rail-with-trail" options are limited to low volume spur lines or abandoned lines where possible.
F. Other	Proposed multi-use trails also traverse public properties and utilize wilderness roads where possible.

1 Design considerations discussed on pages 3-18 through 3-27.
2 Mileages exclude alternate routes; but, alternate routes utilize the same corridor types described in the figure.

* Total does not include 65 miles of alternate multi-use trails.

MAP 3.3: LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK (LEGACY ROUTES)

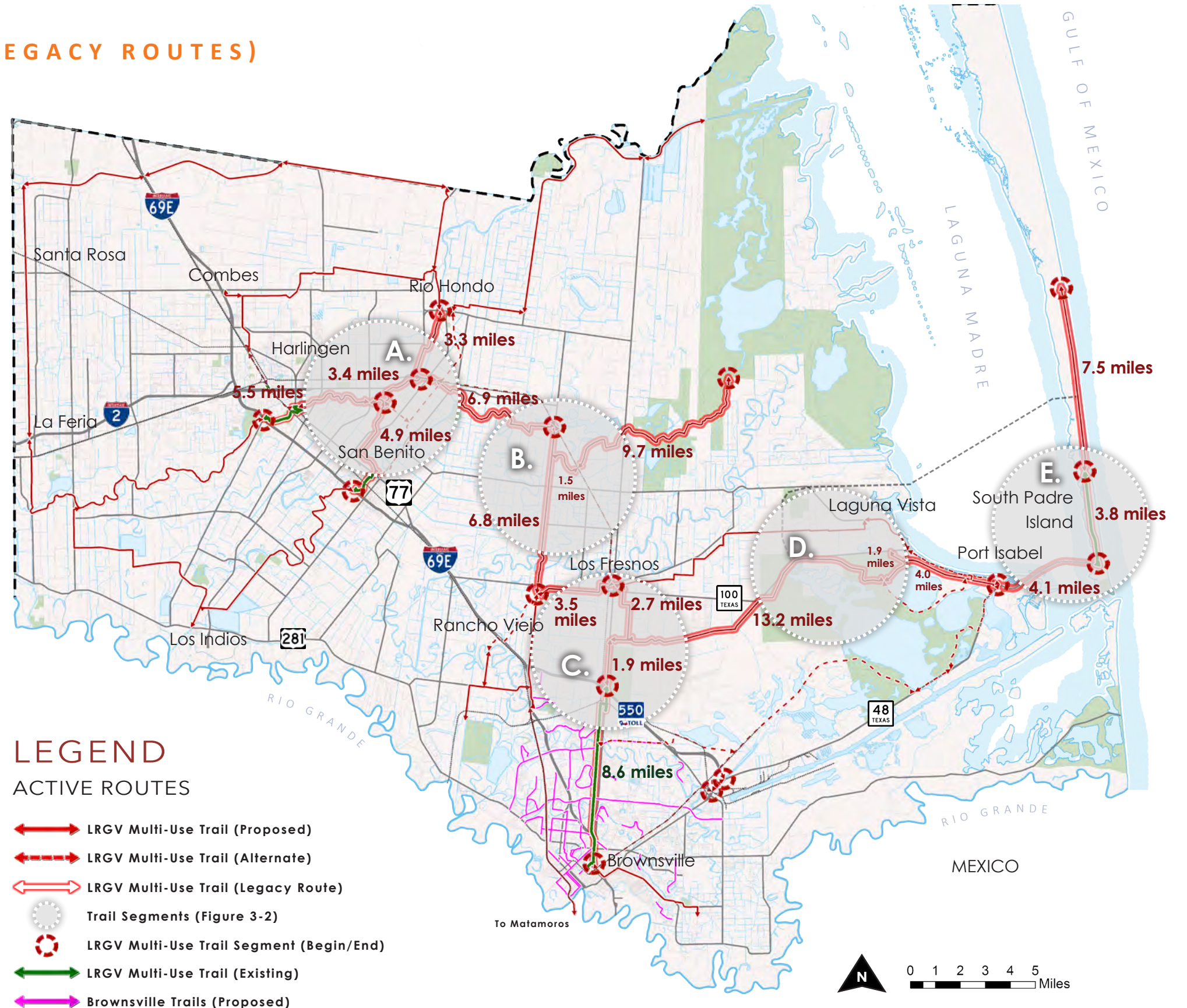
LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK (LEGACY ROUTES)

The proposed LRGV multi-use trail network includes over 93 miles of existing and proposed "Legacy" routes. Legacy routes are high-priority paths that form the spine of the network - connecting Cameron County's population centers with distinct natural habitats and rural features. Due to the cumulative length of the LRGV multi-use trail network, implementing partners should prioritize Legacy Route development to ensure a core network of shared-use paths that can be enjoyed by future generations of Cameron County residents.

Map 3.3, LRGV Multi-Use Trail Network (Legacy Routes), illustrates general network location. Key design features and considerations related to the proposed LRGV multi-use trail network can be found beginning on page 3.18.

FIGURE 3-2: LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK (LEGACY ROUTES)

TRAIL SEGMENTS	KEY FEATURES
A. Harlingen to Rio Hondo and San Benito	Shared-use paths along waterways, drainage ditches, and irrigation canals are proposed to connect three (3) municipalities, and link existing trail segments. Segment includes a high-priority catalyst project (pages 3.38 and 3.39).
B. Arroyo Colorado to Laguna Atascosa and Los Fresnos	Overland route utilizing man-made and natural waterways. High percentage of private property ownership but low population density. Ties the network to the Laguna Atascosa NWR, and bridges a gap between Cameron County metropolitan areas.
C. Los Fresnos to Brownsville	Extends Brownsville's Historic Battlefield Trail from Palo Alto Battlefield NHP to Los Fresnos. Segment includes a high-priority catalyst project (pages 3.42 and 3.43).
D. Palo Alto Battlefield NHP to Port Isabel	Route from Palo Alto Battlefield NHP to bay side municipalities via the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa NWR. Segment includes a high-priority catalyst project (pages 3.40 and 3.41).
E. Port Isabel and South Padre Island	Links bay side communities to South Padre Island and extends hike and bike facilities to undeveloped portions of the island. Requires the addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to the Queen Isabella Causeway. Segment includes a high-priority catalyst project (pages 3.44 and 3.45).



MAP 3.4: UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE #55



UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE #55

The Cameron County segment of the United States Bicycle Route (USBR) #55 (**Map 3.4, United States Bicycle Route #55**) will be located within 120 miles of state and county highway corridors. Through ingress and egress points in northwestern Cameron County, USBR 55 would form a circuitous route through the County originating from, and terminating at, Combes. Proposed USBR 55 would incorporate low-cost facility enhancements on locally-popular cycling routes to attract bicycle tourists to the region while further legitimizing local cyclists' rights to share the road.

FIGURE 3-3: UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE #55¹

USBR SEGMENT	GENERAL CONDITIONS
A. Hidalgo Co. - Combes (9.1 Miles)	SH 107 through Santa Rosa. Paved shoulders (8'-10' width).
B. Combes - San Benito (8.5 Miles)	SH 107 to US281 (via US Bus. 77). Diverts to E. Tyler and E. Harrison in downtown Harlingen via N. 6th/7th Streets. Paved shoulders (6'-10' width throughout), except N. 6th/7th Streets which have wide lanes.
C. San Benito - Los Indios (9.4 Miles)	US Bus. 77 to US281. Paved shoulders (8'-10' width).
D. Los Indios - Brownsville (19.9 Miles)	US281 to downtown Brownsville via Elizabeth Street. Paved shoulders (6'-8' width) to Ruben M. Torres Blvd. No bicycle accommodation between Ruben M. Torres and downtown Brownsville.
E. Brownsville - Port Isabel (21.5 Miles)	SH4 in downtown Brownsville to SH48. Paved shoulders (6'-12' width). Accommodates high speed and heavy vehicle traffic. Urban environment converting to median separated thoroughfare.
F. Port Isabel - SPI (4.1 Miles)	SH100 via the Queen Isabella Causeway. Paved shoulders in Port Isabel (8'-12' width) also used for on-street parking. No current bicycle accommodation on the causeway.
G. Port Isabel - Laguna Atascosa NWR (13.7 Miles)	SH100 and FM 510 through Laguna Heights and Laguna Vista to Buena Vista Blvd. Paved shoulders on SH100 and FM510 (6'-8' width). Buena Vista being repaved and widened to include 8' wide shoulders.
H. Laguna Atascosa NWR - Rio Hondo (14.8 Miles)	General Brant Road west to Rio Hondo. Converting to FM106 at FM1847. General Brant Road being repaved and widened to include 8' wide shoulders. Paved shoulders on FM106 (6'-8' width).
I. Rio Hondo - Combes (10.2 Miles)	FM106 to FM508. Variable paved shoulder width (2'-10') throughout the segment.
J. Combes - Willacy Co. (8.3 Miles)	US Bus. 77 - including interstate frontage road to Sebastian. Paved shoulders (6'-8' width). Some frontage road segments lacking shoulders.

¹ Design considerations discussed on pages 3.14 - 3.17.



LEGEND

ACTIVE ROUTES

←→ US Bicycle Route (Proposed)

MAP 3.5: LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM

LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM

The proposed LRGV Paddling Trail System consists of over 78 miles of water trails connecting the lagoons of Cameron County with the inland communities of Arroyo City, Rio Hondo, and Harlingen. The paddling trail system will cater to canoeists and kayakers interested in paddling adventures lasting from a few hours to multiple days. The system will traverse intra-coastal saltwater lagoons, channelized arroyo segments, and the low-flow upper reaches of the Arroyo Colorado.

Map 3.5, LRGV Paddling Trail System, illustrates general system location. Key design features and considerations related to the proposed LRGV Paddling Trail System can be found beginning on page 3.28.

FIGURE 3-4: LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM ¹	
TRAIL SEGMENT	KEY FEATURES
A. South Bay (Existing) (10 Miles)	Route: South Padre Island to South Bay estuary across the Brownsville Shipping Channel. Tidal. Potential Launches: Isla Blanca Park, South Padre Island
B. South Padre Island (6 Miles)	Route: Bayside of South Padre Island. Tidal. Potential Launches: Isla Blanca Park & SPI Convention Center, South Padre Island
C. Port Isabel Channel (6 Miles)	Route: South Bay Trail to Laguna Madre via the Port Isabel Side Channel. Tidal. Potential Launches: Isla Blanca Park, South Padre Island; Pompano Park, Port Isabel
D. Laguna Madre (Port Isabel - Laguna Vista) (6.3 Miles)	Route: Laguna Madre shoreline. Tidal. Potential Launches: Arturo Galvan Coastal Park, Pompano Park, Port Isabel; Sea Garden Park, Laguna Heights; Roloff Park, Laguna Vista
E. Laguna Madre (Laguna Vista - Arroyo Colorado) (23.9 Miles)	Route: Laguna Madre shoreline adjacent to the Laguna Atascosa NWR. Tidal. Potential Launches: Roloff Park, Laguna Vista; Holly Beach (subject to new causeway); Adolph Thomae Jr. Park, Arroyo City
F. Arroyo Colorado (Laguna Madre - Rio Hondo) (20.4 Miles)	Route: Arroyo Colorado channel. Inland. Potential Launches: Five (5) total, including: Adolph Thomae Jr. Park, Arroyo City; and, Rio Hondo City Hall, Rio Hondo
G. Arroyo Colorado (Rio Hondo - Harlingen) (5.7 Miles)	Route: Arroyo Colorado channel. Inland. Potential Launches: Rio Hondo City Hall, Rio Hondo; FM509 Bridge, Harlingen

¹ Design considerations discussed on pages 3.28 - 3.30.





3.4 FACILITY DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The scale of the Active Plan's regional active transportation network will require an implementation period that extends over multiple years. To ensure that network development is consistent during this time frame (and among partnering government organizations), this section proposes strategic considerations and facility guidelines for each recommended facility type.

Full network development will require the support of federal and state authorities to ensure that the permitting process for the design and construction of network facilities is seamless, and to retain reliable access to funding sources. To that end, Active Plan facility recommendations have been prepared with consideration to design guidelines that represent commonly held industry standards. Guidance in the active transportation facility design recommendations contained in the Active Plan include standards from the following sources (as applicable):

- **AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)**
- **FHWA (Federal Highway Administration)**
- **ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers)**
- **NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials)**
- **RMS (River Management Society)**
- **RTC (Rails to Trails Conservancy)**
- **TDLR (Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation)**
- **TPWD (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)**
- **TxDOT (Texas Department of Transportation)**

The guiding documents and policies produced by these organizations should be referenced as part of any facility design and construction process, and may require variation from the facility recommendations contained herein on a case-by-case basis.

USE OF THESE FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Active Plan facility recommendations are not absolute. When applying any of the recommendations of this plan, it should be noted that they are general in nature. More detailed design to adapt (and if necessary, adjust) them to specific site conditions is needed prior to actual construction. The facility recommendations provide initial benchmarks for Active Plan implementing authorities to consider when proposing a pathway or accessory facility type or design solution for a particular location.

As previously noted in this chapter, the Active Plan's proposed active transportation network is not intended to accommodate all users in all instances. Facility recommendations represent design solutions that balance accessibility with cost efficiency, and consider the comfort of the user groups for which each component of the active transportation network was intended. Therefore, the recommendations contained in this section should not be viewed as a comprehensive inventory of bicycling, pedestrian, and paddling facilities. For example, the recommended USBR is conceived to accommodate confident, fit, and experienced cyclists for long distances along thoroughfares which often carry high volumes of motor vehicle traffic at high speed. The user groups most likely to use thoroughfares of this type generally include bicyclists of higher technical competency, and would require minimal facility enhancement to meet their needs in a manner that increases awareness among all roadway users. In contrast, proposed LRGV multi-use trail network segments are designed to encourage facility usage by a wider range of users of varying abilities. Facility recommendations therefore seek to minimize instances of bicycle or pedestrian interaction with motor vehicles.



*Each segment of the proposed LRGV regional active transportation network will be built according to varying design criteria based on location, surrounding conditions, user type, and cost.
Photo by Halff Associates*

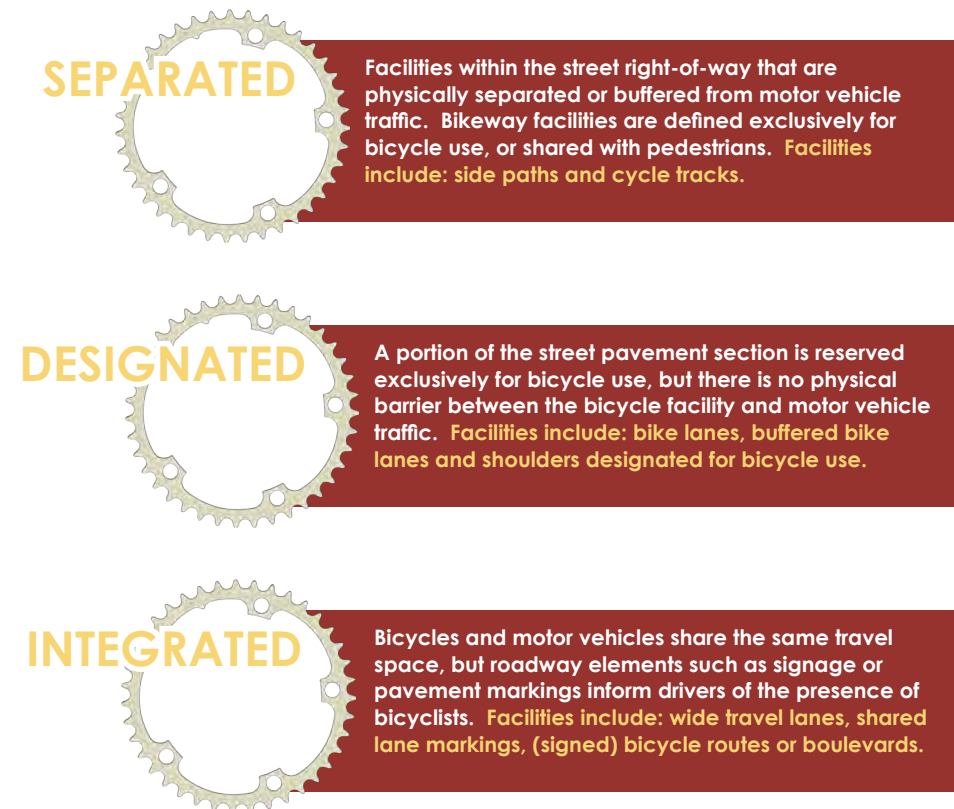
ON-STREET BIKEWAYS

Bikeways located within the public street right-of-way can incorporate a wide variety of bicycle facilities to increase bicycling level of comfort for a range of user groups. Separated or buffered facilities such as side paths or cycle tracks cater to users of many different abilities in part because of the perception of enhanced safety through physical separation from motor vehicle traffic. Other facilities such as bike lanes, shared use markings and bicycle boulevards exhibit increasing levels of bicyclist integration with motor vehicle traffic. The proper application of each of these facilities is largely determined by existing or anticipated conditions in the roadway, and by the surrounding built environment.

The LRGV regional active transportation network is designed to encourage participation in active transportation and recreation to the broadest audience possible. For that reason, the plan places significant emphasis on the development of multi-use trail and paddling networks. Planning participants recognize however, that the active tourist (and in particular, the adventure cyclist) will often be attracted to the most efficient route to travel between destinations – as will local cycling enthusiasts who are comfortable riding for long distances. Such routes are often defined by public highways and thoroughfares. To cater to the needs of these specialized user groups in a manner that draws attention to Cameron County as a destination of choice, the LRGV regional active transportation network proposes the designation of a series of local highways as part of the United States Bicycle Route System.

The United States Bicycle Route System (USBR) is a cooperative program of AASHTO, Adventure Cycling Association, and participating state departments of transportation. Designation of a segment of the USBR in Cameron County by AASHTO would occur through TxDOT sponsorship, and would signal to the national cycling community that applicable thoroughfares in the LRGV meet established criteria to encourage a positive regional bicycling environment. A designated segment in Cameron County would be part of USBR #55.

FIGURE 3-5: BIKEWAY FACILITY HIERARCHY



SCOPE OF DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

This section highlights key design considerations for Active Plan partners seeking to establish a USBR on the Cameron County highways identified on **Map 3.4** (page 3.11). Although Active Plan recommendations could be applied to other Cameron County thoroughfares, specific design solutions and implementation methods will vary on case-by-case basis. Investment in facilities to support USBR #55 should occur in conjunction with the branding, marketing, and business development strategies recommended in **Chapter 4, Active Tourism Program**, and will require the support of TxDOT.

DESIGN CONTEXT

Cameron County's USBR bikeways will be located on state and federal highway segments which transect urban and rural environments exhibiting highly variable development intensities. Applicable highway segments also convey a wide range of traffic volumes. Because highway segment characteristics can change dramatically along the length of the route, the specific bikeway facility type that is applied to any given segment of the USBR must be determined on a case-by-case basis. **Figure 3-5, Bikeway Facility Hierarchy** illustrates the range of bikeway facilities that may be utilized to accommodate bicycle travel based on level of comfort.



USBR FACILITY TYPES

Implementation of any of the bikeway facility types on proposed segments of USBR #55 should adhere to the standards provided in AASHTO's Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, or NACTO's Urban Bikeway Design Guide. Nonetheless, most of the recommended Cameron County USBR is proposed to be located on highways that either: **A)** Already include wide shoulders that can accommodate or encourage bicycle activity with minimal enhancement; and/or, **B)** Are located in rural contexts where the application of expensive facility treatments may not be fiscally prudent. Because either one (1) or both of these conditions characterizes the majority of the proposed USBR, this section focuses on facility treatments for wide shoulders.



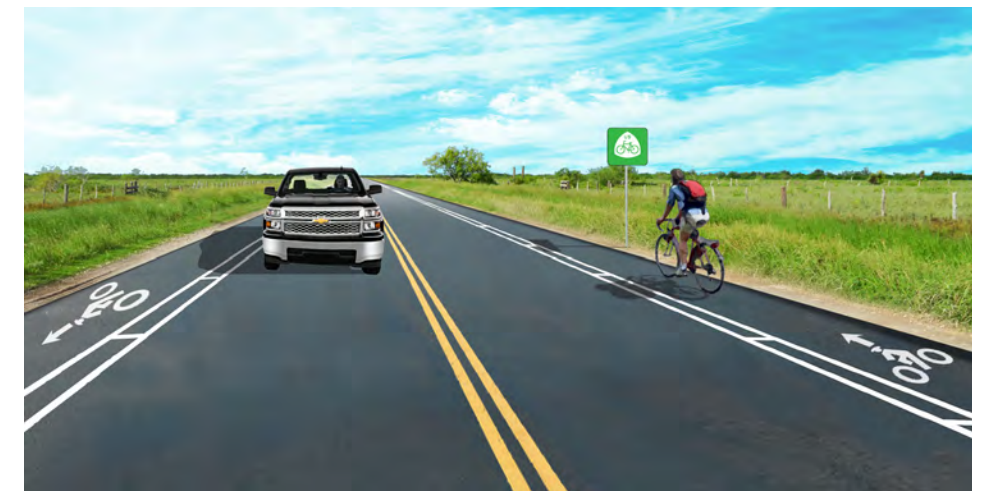
Some shoulders on TxDOT highways in Cameron County have been converted to designated bicycle lanes. Photo by Halff Associates

Wide Shoulders

Most proposed USBR segments are proposed on TxDOT owned or maintained highways that incorporate wide shoulders (typically 8' - 10' in width). This highway cross-section is fairly constant throughout Cameron County - both in urban and rural environments.

TxDOT highways do not include wide shoulders for the expressed purpose of accommodating bicycle or pedestrian travel. A department memorandum issued in 2011 (**Appendix D**) does not mention wide shoulders as a preferred design approach for supporting bicycle use - instead promoting the increased width of outside travel lanes, or the striping of five (5) foot wide bicycle lanes (the application of the latter design option is limited in Cameron County).

Because of the prevalence of wide shoulders on many TxDOT highways, district engineers have allowed for the conversion of some shoulders into designated bicycle lanes through a combination of pavement markings and signage (an example may be found on portions of Loop 499 in Harlingen). Even this minor facility treatment can increase bicyclist level of comfort on Cameron County highways by increasing driver awareness of bicyclists' rights to share the roadway. The targeted expansion of this facility treatment should be considered on proposed USBR segments - with alternative bikeway treatments on some rural sections or in urbanized areas where the shoulder is often used as a lane of on-street parking. Where wide shoulders are absent, designated USBR segments should incorporate designated bicycle lanes (5' wide minimum, 6' preferred) instead of integrating the bicycle facility into wide outside travel lanes.



Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) funds are being used to fix deteriorated road conditions on the Buena Vista Avenue approach to the Laguna Atascosa NWR (top). Pavement markings and signage should be incorporated into a final road section to support USBR designation efforts (bottom). Source: Halff Associates

Bicycle Routes

Some proposed USBR segments are located on low-volume county owned and maintained roads. In some instances, the roadway section does not have sufficient width to include a designated bikeway facility. Even if traffic volumes remain below 400 ADT, bicycle route signage should be used to promote driver awareness of bicycling activity on the thoroughfare.

PAVEMENT MARKINGS AND SIGNAGE

Pavement Markings

There is already precedent for the application of pavement markings and signage on the shoulders of TxDOT owned and maintained highways. Beyond simple signage, pavement markings legitimize the existing right of bicyclists to share the roadway with motorists. This simple application should be extended on additional segments of the proposed USBR. Application of pavement markings incorporating the bicyclist symbol could be applied in varying scenarios depending on cost and context:

- **MAXIMUM SPACING.** For shoulders serving as continuous designated bike lanes, pavement markings should be spaced no further than every 1000 feet, at intersection approaches, and after each major intersection.
- **SELECTIVE SPACING.** Pavement markings placed solely at intersection approaches and after every arterial intersection in rural areas.

Other pavement treatments - including markings for buffered bike lanes - could be applied at selective locations. The application of enhanced pavement treatments should be weighed with their ability to attract additional users beyond the confident riders for which the USBR is being proposed.

Signage

Signage is the simplest and most cost-effective way to designate a thoroughfare as a bikeway. Bicycle route signage must adhere to the MUTCD manual. The National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices has also designed and endorsed a new version of USBR signage that would be applied to USBR #55 in Cameron County if Active Plan partners are successful in obtaining designation. Even absent USBR designation, the route proposed in this plan should be signed as a designated bike route.



The newest version of USBR signage granted interim approval by the FHWA. Source: Halff Associates (Derived from MUTCD, 2009)

SURFACING

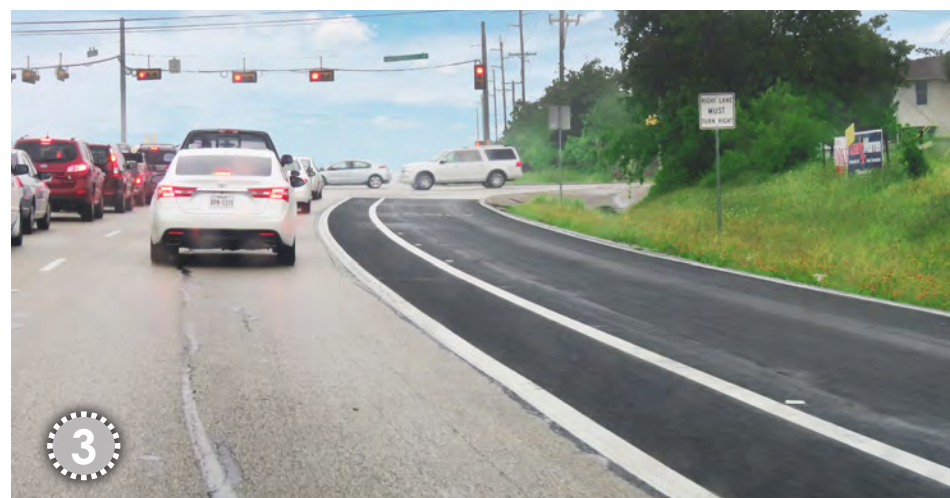
The quality of highway surface treatments can greatly influence the suitability of a route for bicycle travel. In spite of an abundance of highways in Cameron County with wide shoulders, cost-saving measures applied to resurfacing projects have gradually reduced the riding quality of many state and federal roads in the region. TxDOT guidance issued to district engineers in 2009 (**Appendix E**) provides flexibility at the district level on how surfacing treatments on highway shoulders will be addressed (while balancing bicycle accommodation with cost). Suitable surfacing treatments on highway shoulders to

accommodate comfortable bicyclist use should ideally meet the surfacing treatment applied to motor vehicle travel lanes. Chip seal is discouraged. Still, system-wide cost considerations cannot be ignored in relation to resurfacing projects. The Active Plan proposes that TxDOT and the CCRMA prioritize the application of suitable surfacing treatments on proposed USBR segments to support the creation of a singular premiere bikeway throughout the county.

INTERSECTIONS

Most crashes involving motor vehicles and bicycles occur in close proximity to highway intersections. On highways with wide shoulders, motorists will often use the outside shoulder as a right-hand turn lane (a ticket-able offense) thereby increasing the risk to bicyclists possibly occupying the space. Although pavement markings should be applied to wide shoulders throughout the length of the proposed USBR, bicycle route signage should at least be augmented with targeted pavement markings at key intersections in both urban **and** rural conditions.

As a short-term application, the Active Plan proposes the conversion of wide shoulders approaching intersecting streets to a combination of designated right-hand turn lanes for motorists, and defined bicycle lanes. Pavement treatments and signage would begin roughly 600' from intersecting streets (an example is shown on the facing page). Pavement markings would not extend through the intersection, instead allowing the space beyond the intersection to revert to a standard shoulder. As with many non-separated or buffered bicycle-facility treatments, enhancements to bicyclist safety would be qualitative - apparent benefits in the form of increased driver awareness.



FACILITY COSTS

General order of magnitude costs for some of the on-street bikeway treatments referenced in this section is provided in **Figure 3-6: Selected USBR Bikeway Treatments - Potential Cost Range**. Cost estimates are provided for the application of pavement markings and signage on a one (1) mile segment of highway (both sides), and for pavement markings, signage, and possible pavement section widening for targeted intersection conversions.

All costs also include additional allowance for surveying, design, and construction administration. Projections do not include costs for right-of-way acquisitions or surfacing treatments. Costs related to these construction elements will vary greatly - or be unnecessary - on a case-by-case basis.

FIGURE 3-6: SELECTED USBR BIKEWAY TREATMENTS - POTENTIAL COST RANGE ⁽¹⁾

ELEMENT	LENGTH OR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST PER UNIT	PROJECTED COST RANGE
Improvements to existing wide shoulders	Per 1 mile	Buffered striping and truncated domes (or similar separator) to delineate bicycle route along shoulders. Requires wide shoulder to be in place with smooth asphalt seal coat. Typically one-way on each shoulder, but can consider two-way on one side if shoulder width is adequate. Buffered striping/truncated domes/plastic separators or physical curb to emphasize separation strongly preferred.	\$25 per linear foot (includes both sides of the roadway)	\$130,000 per mile
Allowance for selective shoulder widening (where shoulder is not wide enough to accommodate bicycles)	Per 1 mile	Allowance to widen existing shoulder from 4' to 10' (both sides of roadway).	\$50 per square yard of added shoulder	\$370,000 per mile
General intersection improvements (major intersection)	Per each major intersection	May include through bike lane and added right-turn lane striping, some pavement widening if needed, signage, striping and pavement markings. Includes all directions.	\$20,000 to \$50,000 per intersection	\$40,000 to \$100,000 per mile (assumes 2 major intersections per mile)
General intersection improvements (minor intersection)	Per each minor intersection	May include through bike lane, signage, striping and pavement markings. Includes all directions.	\$10,000 to \$25,000 per intersection	\$30,000 to \$75,000 per mile (assumes up to 3 minor intersections per mile)
Bicycle Route Signage	Allowance for general advisory pole mounted signs	Allowance for average of 15 signs per mile (signs for both directions)	\$500 per sign	\$7,500 per mile
Projected Overall Cost (Per Mile)			\$0.21 million (no shoulder widening) to \$0.7 million (all shoulders need to be widened)	
Allowance for Design, Permitting, Administration and Contingency			\$0.04 to \$0.14 million	
Projected Overall Cost Range - no shoulder widening required			\$0.25 million (per mile)	
Projected Overall Cost Range - all shoulders require widening			\$0.82 million (per mile)	
<i>(1) Costs shown are in 2016 dollars and are at an order of magnitude, pre-design level. Allowance shown for design, permitting, and contingency will vary per item, location, and conditions. All costs are prior to specific site assessments and any design and require more detailed evaluations to determine specific costs for each specific segment. To be developed in conjunction with TxDOT and other applicable road authorities.</i>				

Much of the USBR is proposed on highway segments with wide shoulders similar to that pictured above (picture 1). Although highway shoulders may not be signed or marked throughout Cameron County as designated bicycle routes, targeted intersection improvements installing right-hand turn lanes for motor vehicles could also incorporate bicycle lanes, promoting through traffic (picture 2). The designated bicycle lanes could continue through the intersection (picture 3) where it may, or may not, revert to an unmarked shoulder. Photos by Half Associates

MULTI-USE TRAIL FACILITIES

Multi-use trails are the most diverse active transportation facility available to Cameron County communities for addressing the Active Plan's overall objectives. Trail facilities attract the greatest possible cross-section of users, in terms of age, interest, and ability. Trails are multi-purpose - serving a mix of health, recreation, and transportation needs. Multi-use trails can be constructed in conjunction with many types of natural and utility corridors; and, trails provide the greatest opportunity throughout Cameron County to access otherwise obscure, pristine, and scenic assets and locations.

This section recommends multi-use trail types and design features that best align with the regional focus of the Active Plan. The specific trail facilities recommended in this section have been highlighted due to their applicability to the conditions found in Cameron County - including rural versus urban conditions that will be found on different segments of the recommended network. Multiple variations in trail design exist beyond those facility types recommended in this Plan, but those highlighted herein should form the basic trail design assumptions from which final engineered plans are derived. **Active Plan trail recommendations should blend with local multi-use trail networks. They are not intended to replace local trails, but rather compliment them.**

Investment in LRGV multi-use trail network facilities should occur in conjunction with the branding, marketing, and business development strategies recommended in **Chapter 4, Active Tourism Program.**

TYPICAL TRAIL USERS

Community trail networks may incorporate many facility designs to accommodate different users. Trail design variations serve to attract or dissuade use of the facility by individuals of many ages and abilities.

Although the Active Plan has been prepared to provide access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities for the greatest possible range of users, it is important to reiterate that providing a transportation (or mobility) benefit to Cameron County communities is a key plan principle. As a result, this plan does not propose trail facilities that are geared to the recreational pursuits of niche interest groups (i.e. single-track mountain biking, horseback riding, etc.). Recommended LRGV multi-use trail network facilities have been selected to accommodate the following broad user groups (whether a Cameron County resident or visitor):

- **PEDESTRIANS OF ALL ABILITIES.** Many pedestrians seeking exercise and recreation are attracted to corridors that provide a relaxed or scenic experience. These users may include senior citizens, parents with children, or someone walking their dog. Walkers may occupy a significant portion of the trail width due to walking side-by-side. Other pedestrians may walk at a faster pace for fitness or as part of a cross-country hike. Segments of the network may accommodate commuting to school, work, shopping, or recreational areas for limited distances.
- **JOGGERS/RUNNERS.** Joggers and runners use trail corridors for exercise and activity. The higher speed of these users may conflict with slower users of the trails, but the inter-community nature of the LRGV multi-use trail network may provide opportunities for joggers and runners to reach lower volume segments of the network. Softer trail surfaces, such as decomposed granite, are preferred.

- **CYCLISTS (INEXPERIENCED FOR FITNESS/RECREATION).** Recreational and inexperienced cyclists use trails for exercise or outdoor activity. These users are interested in scenic appeal and connectivity of the trail system, and prefer more interesting trail alignments rather than trails that favor high speeds. This group may also include children going to school.
- **CYCLISTS (FOR TRANSPORTATION).** Experienced bicycle commuters are typically more interested in higher speeds. These riders often favor roadways over off-street trails for the speed and connectivity to employment centers. However, transportation-focused bicyclists of all experience levels should be welcomed, and trails should be designed to reasonably accommodate them. For off-street trails, alignments with shallower curves are favored by these users, and because of the higher speeds, increased trail widths are recommended to reduce conflicts with other trail users.

Brownsville's Historic Battlefield Trail accommodates many types of users for recreation, fitness, and transportation. Photo by Halff Associates





TRAIL CATEGORIES

Trail design is influenced by many factors including, but not limited to: the built environment, natural conditions, distances, user preferences and abilities, and underlying purpose. To address these considerations, multiple categories of multi-use trail facilities have been developed over time. One size does not fit all. Typical trail facilities can be categorized as provided in **Figure 3-7: Trail Categories**.

The LRGV multi-use trail network will incorporate a mix of community, neighborhood, parkway and greenway trails. All four (4) trail types presented in **Figure 3-7** fall into the category of shared use path, or side path, as defined by AASHTO. In addition to the guidance provided in **Figure 3-7**, LRGV multi-use trail facilities should follow the standards established by AASHTO's *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* and those of the other applicable permitting authorities cited on pages 3.32 through 3.35. Ultimately however, customized trail design standards that exceed minimum industry guidance should be jointly developed by regional and local government authorities, and incorporated into applicable ordinances and policy documents.

FIGURE 3-7: TRAIL CATEGORIES

TRAIL TYPE	RECOMMENDED WIDTH	SURFACE MATERIAL	MINIMUM CORRIDOR WIDTH
COMMUNITY TRAILS	10' - 14'	Concrete or asphalt (asphalt preferred)	30'
NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS	6' - 10' (8' min. preferred)	Concrete, asphalt, crushed granite	20'
PARKWAY TRAILS	10' - 14'	Concrete, crushed granite (concrete typical)	15'
GREENWAY TRAILS	10' - 14'	Crushed granite, natural surface	8' - 12'

COMMUNITY TRAILS

Community trails form the spine of the LRGV multi-use trail network within urbanized and other populated areas. They provide direct routes for immediate access between key community destinations. Wider width and improved hard surfaces accommodate the heaviest volume of use.



PARKWAY TRAILS

Parkway trails (commonly referred to as "side paths") are located within, or directly adjacent to, street rights-of-way. Like community trails, they are designed to accommodate higher volumes of bicyclists and pedestrians within urbanized or other populated areas.



NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS

Neighborhood trails provide short connections between principal community and greenway trails. They link neighborhoods to streets, parks, schools, and other locally-important community destinations. Neighborhood trails accommodate lower volumes of traffic and may support a higher ratio of pedestrians than other trail types.



GREENWAY TRAILS

Greenway trails are located in rural or natural resource areas where the impact to the natural environment can be minimized. The use of low-cost natural surfaces can mitigate the expense of trails that extend for long distances, and that may otherwise experience lower rates of usage. More formal treatment of greenway trails may be applied at intersections or where dictated by natural obstacles.



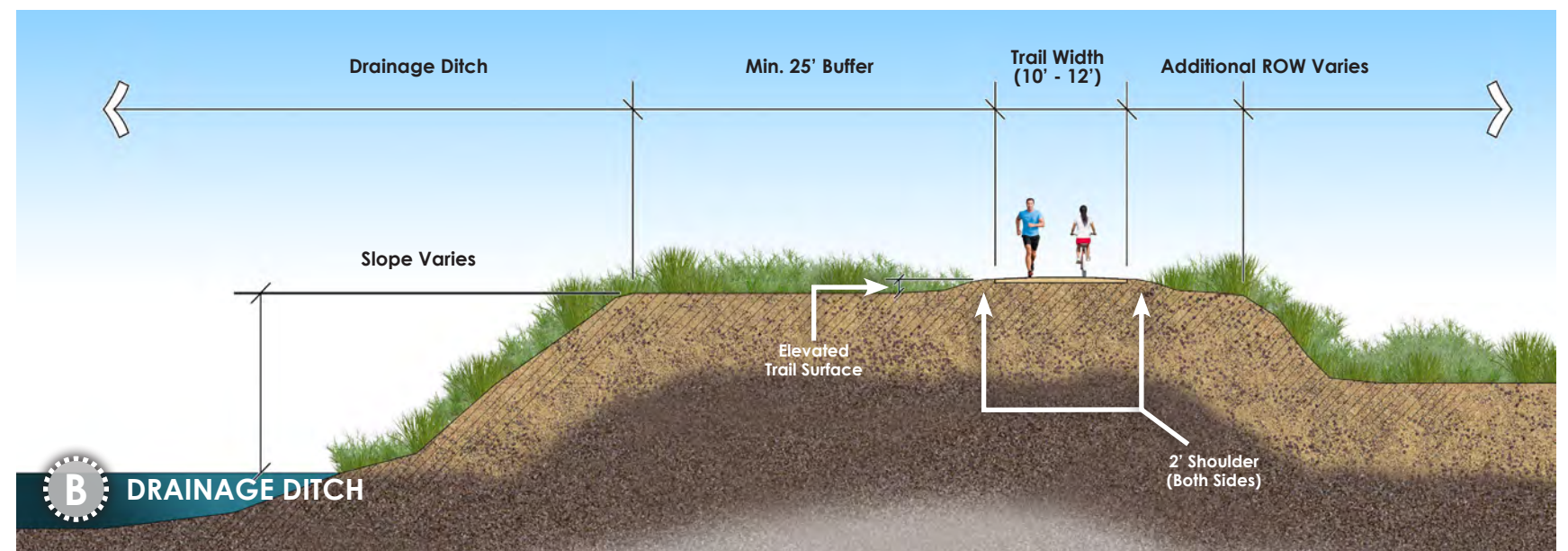
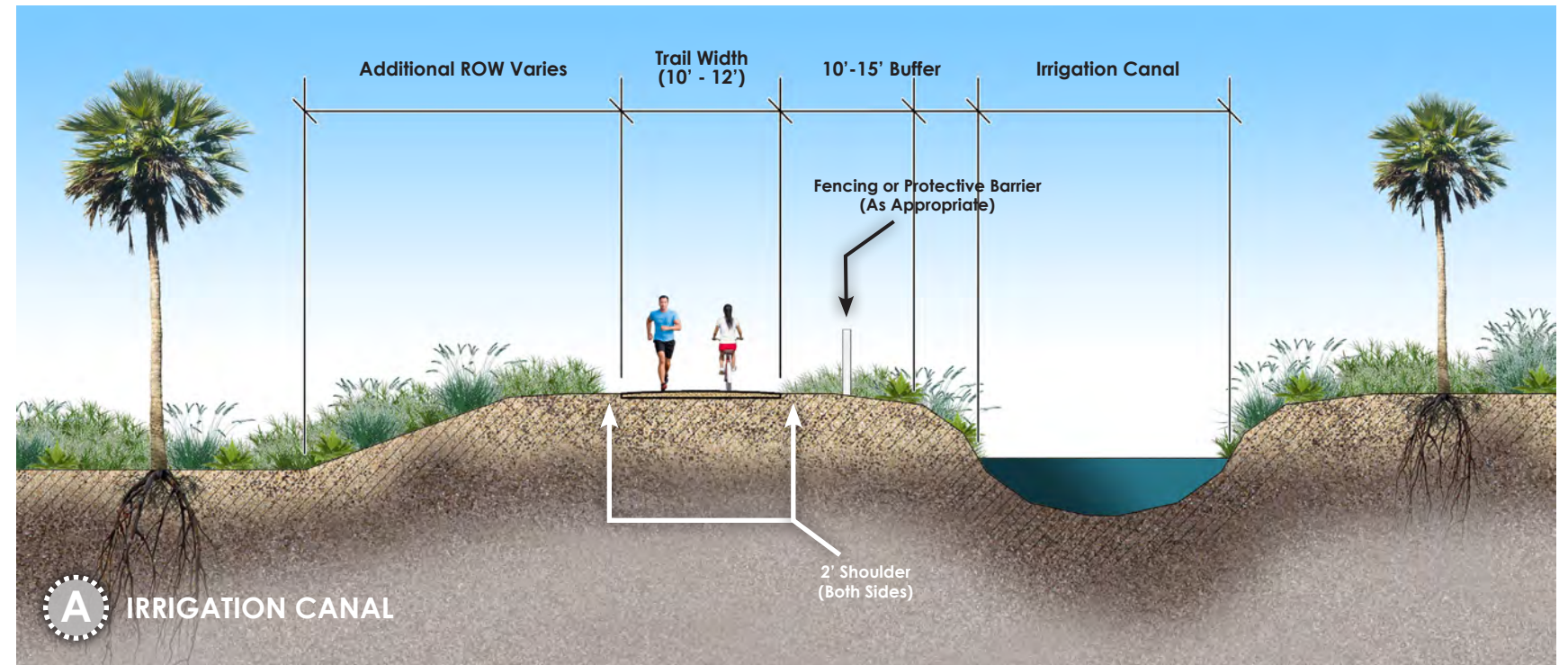
Photos by Halff Associates

DRAINAGE DITCHES AND IRRIGATION CANALS

Significant lengths of the proposed LRGV multi-use trail system follow drainage ditches and irrigation canals. As with highways, these corridors often provide direct routes between destinations, with the added benefit of having very few intersections with roadways. They also offer the inviting attraction of a water feature - instead of the stress or distraction of motor vehicle traffic. Nonetheless, safety is an issue along such corridors – as is the ongoing need to accommodate the activities of authorities responsible for maintaining drainage and irrigation infrastructure. Channel maintenance is particularly challenging for drainage districts because of the continual erosion of embankments due to stream flows that vary due to storm events.

The following measures should be taken to promote safety along drainage and irrigation corridors, and to enable suitable co-location with maintenance vehicles and activities:

- **BORDERS.** Where appropriate, provide appealing fencing that is similar to the characteristic of the community to limit access to irrigation canals. Similar fencing along drainage ditches should be used sparingly at key locations to maximize maintenance vehicle access to the ditch.
- **SETBACKS.** Where possible, maintain a safe distance (greater than 10' to 15') between the trail edge and irrigation canals. Along drainage ditches, provide a minimum of 25' between the trail and edge of embankment, where possible, to provide sufficient space for maintenance activities.





INTERSECTIONS, BRIDGES, AND UNDERPASSES

Beyond securing the rights to utilize multi-use trail corridors, the most significant consideration when creating an unimpeded multi-use trail network is how to cross intersecting roadways, railroads, utility easements, and stream corridors. Multiple at-grade and grade-separated design solutions exist to address the range of contexts in which proposed LRGV multi-use trail routes must cross natural and man-made barriers.

This section highlights general design considerations, and provides visual examples of trail crossing scenarios likely to unfold during construction of the LRGV multi-use trail network. These scenarios include trail crossings in urban and rural environments, and along high and low volume thoroughfares. With this variety, no single design solution can be applied in all cases. The recommendations in this section are, therefore, a starting point. Trail crossings will need to be designed by a registered engineer or experienced designer. Cost, design and environmental compatibility will dictate which solution is best for each at-grade and grade-separated intersection.

Intersections

Proposed LRGV multi-use trails intersect public streets, highways, and railroads in multiple locations. As much as possible, the network has been designed so that these crossings occur at intersections that are signed or signalized for motor vehicle traffic. Such intersections can be retrofitted to incorporate appropriate bicycle and pedestrian crossing measures as provided in the most recent version of AASHTO's *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities* or NACTO's *Urban Street Design Guide*.

Likewise, there exist a number of design options for mid-block bicycle and pedestrian crossings that can significantly increase driver awareness of, and minimize the risk to, multi-use trail users. The application and cost of mid-block crossing treatments will vary greatly between urban, suburban, and rural environments.

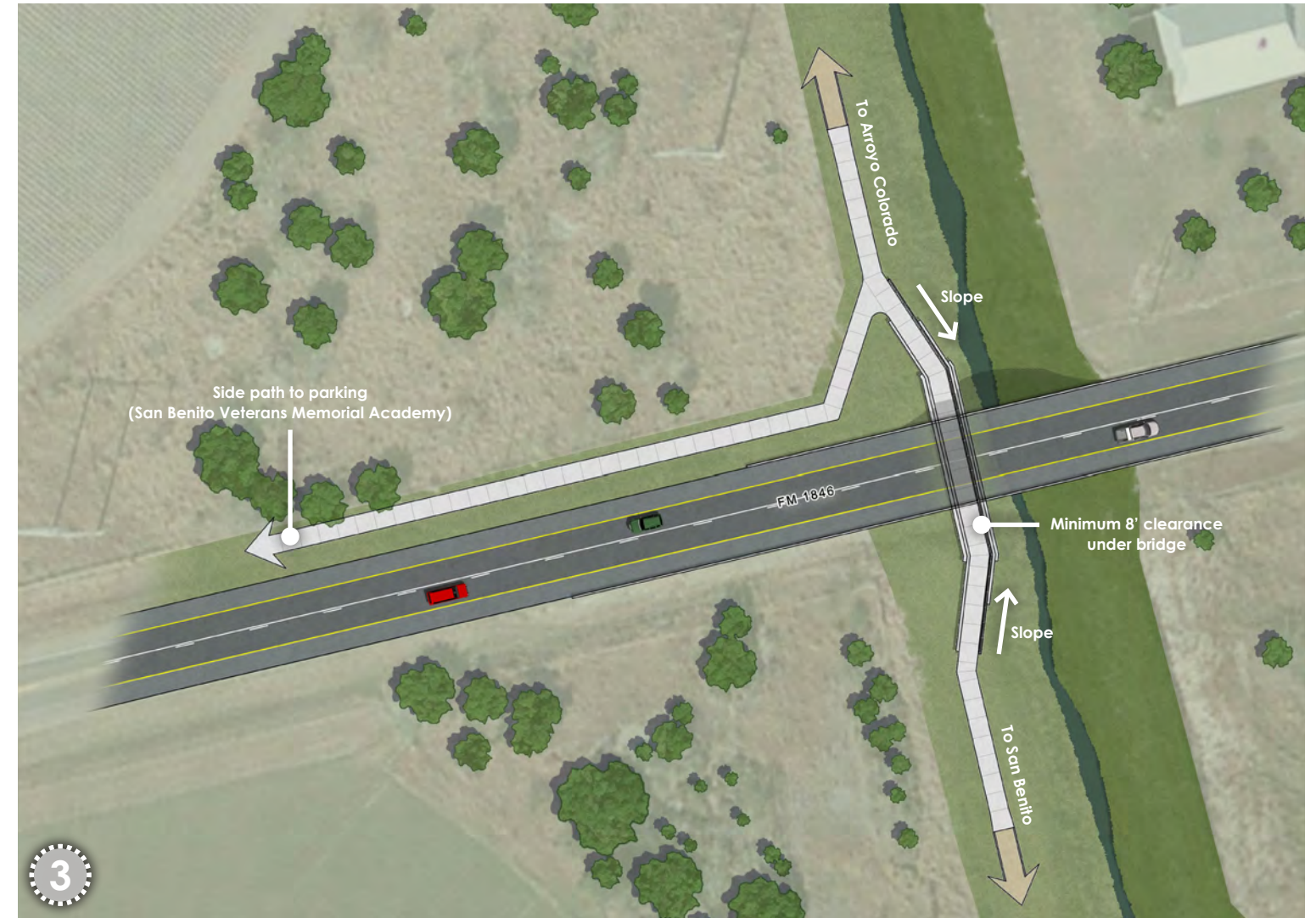
In urban environments, mid-block crossing treatments may include a combination of pavement markings, signage, refuge islands, lane narrowing, and even pedestrian activated signalization. In rural contexts, mid-block crossings may be limited to advanced yield pavement markings and signage, and in some case rumble strips. As travel speeds and volumes on rural highways increase, the benefits of these facilities declines, and the use of grade-separated crossings are highly encouraged where feasible.



Mid-block bicycle and pedestrian crossings in urban environments (top right) may warrant the use of pedestrian-activated signals or flashing beacons. Trail crossings in rural locations may simply require the installation of pavement markings and signage (bottom right), particularly where low traffic volumes are expected. Photos by Halff Associates (top); Danny McCullough (bottom)

Underpasses

Given the LRGV's flat terrain and prevalence of below-grade drainage channels, grade-separated multi-use trail crossings of existing highways will mostly require the construction of underpasses. The use of underpasses will allow the trail corridor to proceed in a direct route instead of potentially being diverted (possibly for miles) to a signalized or signed highway intersection. From the standpoint of a user, underpasses should be well lit and attractive, and project a sense of security. Where adequate clearance is available, 8' is allowed as a minimum, but 10' or more is preferred. Underpass trail segments should be designed to occasionally withstand drainage flow. All underpasses should be designed by a registered structural engineer.



The placement of multi-use trail underpasses along drainage ditches is increasingly common (picture 1). Retrofitting existing underpasses may require substantial grading and embankment stabilization (picture 2). The proposed Arroyo-Resaca Multi-use Trail Segment (page 3-38) would have to pass under FM1846 to connect San Benito and the Arroyo Colorado (picture 3). Source: Halff Associates



Bridges

Given the nature of the local topography, LRGV multi-use trail routes must also cross multiple waterways and saturated lowlands. Similar to highway intersections, these potential barriers will require bridging or the use of elevated trail segments.

Bicycle and pedestrian bridges are required in locations where typical drainage channel crossings spans anywhere from 50' to 200'. These bridges may be typical pre-fabricated designs, but should always strive to be a step above the customary steel bridge design.

From a user's perspective, bridges should be as wide as the trail (at a minimum); but preferably one to two feet wider on each side. This is so pedestrians can stop and view the adjacent scenery without obstructing the trail. Any bridge that is specifically designated for bicycle traffic must have appropriate railings for bicyclists. Texas has adopted the AASHTO *Bridge Design Specifications* requirement that bridge railings designated for bicycle traffic should be higher than pedestrian-specific facilities, but with the same restrictions on openings as for pedestrian railing.



*Pre-fabricated bicycle and pedestrian bridges generally span distances of between 50 and 200 feet
Photo by Halff Associates*

The decking material for pedestrian and bicycle bridges should be firm and stable. Bridge approaches and span should not exceed 5 percent slope for ADA access. Bridges should accommodate maintenance vehicles if necessary and should not constrict the floodway. Footings should be located on the outside of the stream channel at the top of the stream bank where possible.

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

Public locations supporting equestrian use are rare in Cameron County. Equestrian trails require accommodations that differ from the needs of most other trail user groups such as additional clearance and parking for trailers. Horseback riding is accommodated throughout Texas in many state parks and other public property as part of internal trail networks often shared with hikers and mountain bikers. These arrangements cater to the recreational needs of the various users, and are rare on multi-use corridors that are also intended to serve a transportation function.



Source: Flickr: Alexander Somma

The Active Plan does not promote equestrian use on the proposed LRGV multi-use trail network. Equestrian use may be promoted by state and federal authorities as part of the internal shared use networks within the properties they manage (i.e. Resaca de la Palma State Park; Laguna Atascosa NWR, South Padre Island Unit). Nonetheless, some segments of the trail network may be deemed suitable for horseback riding on a case-by-case basis. Where permitted within LRGV multi-use trail corridors, equestrian use should be accommodated on a separated bridle path parallel to the main trail (minimum 6' separation) to reduce potential wear and tear or inhibit the activities of the user groups targeted by this Plan.

NETWORK ACCESS AND AMENITIES

Use and enjoyment of the LRGV regional active transportation network is highly dependent on developing accessory facilities, amenities, and conveniences that appeal to a wide range of users. Many of these complimentary features are strategically incorporated into trailhead locations (both vehicular and non-vehicular), but the great distances which Active Plan routes are proposed to span will require equal investment in strategically placed wayside features that showcase scenic vistas or special features, while offering opportunities for general rest and relaxation.

The suggestions provided in this section are largely focused on facilities that support multi-use trail development, but many features can (and should) be clustered at locations that could also support users of the proposed USBR and LRGV paddling trail system. Development of facilities supporting network access and enjoyment should also be considered in conjunction with the active tourist needs and preferences, and active tourism business development recommendations provided in **Chapter 4, Active Tourism Program**.



The development of an active transportation network that expands the tourism market in Cameron County requires concurrent implementation of the Active Plan's active tourism program. The under-utilized building in Arroyo City (1, above left) provides a representative example of how a community can become an active destination. An existing boat ramp is refurbished to include a designated paddling launch (2, above right), and a new tackle shop that also serves as a canoe/kayak outfitter - all while gaining local exposure as a participant in an LRGV bicycle-friendly business program. Source: Halff Associates



MULTI-USE TRAIL AMENITIES

Multi-use trail amenities include those that may be grouped at trailheads or other access points, and those that are spaced along the trail corridor. Successful multi-use trail networks typically include varying combinations of the following (not in order of priority):

- **DRINKING FOUNTAINS.** For people, ...and sometimes pets.
- **BICYCLE RACKS.** Grouped at trailhead or wayside locations.
- **RESTROOMS.** Appropriate at major trailheads – particularly when located at other public facilities with high volumes of bicycle and pedestrian activity such as parks.
- **PEDESTRIAN-SCALE LIGHTING.** Improves safety and enables the trail network to be used year-round. Lighting is not encouraged for the majority of the LRGV multi-use trail network. Given the rural nature of most of the network (and restricted hours of many host entities), lighting should be limited to: A) Urbanized areas where some trail usage may be encouraged after daylight hours; and, B) In the vicinity of trailheads, at-grade crossings; grade-separated crossings, and other similar locations. Lighting fixtures should be consistent with others in the surrounding community; but, should also employ a full cut-off design to reduce ambient light and glare.
- **TRAIL FURNITURE AT KEY REST AREAS AND VIEWPOINTS.** Trail furniture such as benches and picnic tables can be simple (e.g. wood slats) or more ornate (e.g. stone, wrought iron, concrete).
- **INFORMATION KIOSKS AND MAPS.** Provide information so that users can navigate and know the rules of the network. Information kiosks with maps at trailheads and other pedestrian generators can provide enough information for someone to use the trail system with little introduction - perfect for areas with high out-of-area visitation rates, as well as local residents. (see “Way-finding Facilities,” page 3.31)
- **DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE.** A comprehensive signing system makes a trail system stand out. Directional signage should impart a unique theme so trail users know which trail they are following and where it goes. The theme can be conveyed in a variety of ways: engraved stone, medallions, bollards, and mile markers.

- **TRASH RECEPTACLES AND DOG WASTE PICK-UP STATIONS.** To keep the network maintained periodic containers and dog waste pick-up bag dispensers should be placed at trailheads and key access points along the route. Signs should be placed along the trail notifying dog owners to pick up after their dogs.
- **SHADE STRUCTURES OR FEATURES.** Tree cover is limited within most LRGV multi-use trail network corridors. Exposure to the heat and sun must be mitigated – either through the use of strategically spaced wayside shelters and/or groupings of shade trees. Combined with sources of potable water, these “oases” can also serve as mid-way points for trail users of different abilities. (see “wayside shelters,” page 3.27)
- **FIX-IT STATIONS.** A fixture incorporating a bicycle stand, air pump, and other various tools. Convenient for multi-use trail users, and for individuals utilizing the proposed USBR (when strategically located at combined trailhead/rest stop locations).

In addition to the functional elements listed above, trail networks can be enhanced by other features such as interpretive features and signs, and local art.

While multi-use trail amenities are intended to serve all users, it is clear that some of those listed above are also intended to entice additional users to the trail facility who do not live in close proximity to the facility or otherwise have reliable access. The length of the proposed LRGV multi-use trail network (and rural character of many sections) may also require that the spacing between amenities be greater than might be found in urbanized locations. In addition to trailhead locations, some amenities may be grouped at wayside locations strategically placed at key points along the trail corridor (see “wayside shelters,” page 3.27). Amenities specific to proposed LRGV paddling trails are discussed on page 3.28.



Signage amenities on, and in the vicinity of, the Brownsville Historic Battlefield Trail. See page 3.31 for additional information on way-finding facilities. Photos by Halff Associates

Trailhead Type

LRGV multi-use trail network trailheads can be grouped into two (2) categories:

- **GATEWAY TRAILHEADS.** Simple gateway trailheads should include features that indicate an entrance to the trail area, along with a map that shows where the trail goes. A gateway trailhead may also include benches and occasionally a small shade structure. They can be installed after the trail itself is built at access points where there is evidence of heavy local usage.
- **MAJOR TRAILHEADS.** At key locations throughout the proposed LRGV multi-use trail network, more elaborate trailheads are recommended. These should serve as destination points where residents and visitors can access trails from further away. In addition to gateway features, benches, information kiosks and maps, and shade structures, major trailheads should also include parking facilities for 10 to 20 trail users. Some major trailheads should also include restroom facilities – particularly those that can be combined with existing parks or other public facilities. All trailheads shown on the Active Plan maps depicting “catalyst routes” (pages 3.38 through 3.49) are major trailheads.

Planning level costs associated with major trailheads are incorporated into **Figures 3-8** through **3-13** beginning on page 3.38.

The conceptual trailhead pictured (above left) includes facilities that could be incorporated into gateway trailhead and major trailhead locations. Gateway trailhead treatments do not necessarily need to approach the same level of formality (right); but in contrast, major trailheads should specifically be designed to incorporate accessory parking. Source: Halff Associates



Access

To increase trail network accessibility (and community utility) within urban environments, trail access points are typically recommended between every 1/8 to 1/2 mile, depending on trail type and level of trailhead amenities provided. Spacing of major trailheads supporting regional trails that extend beyond population centers can be much greater than those in urbanized areas. Although any road intersection may essentially serve as an access point - and can be converted to a gateway trailhead type with the application of basic amenities - investment in major trailheads along regional trail networks is much more selective. Even on premiere trail networks such as the Great Allegheny Passage (MD, PA) or the Katy Trail (MO), it is not unusual for major trailheads to be spaced at distances exceeding ten (10) miles.



WAYSIDE SHELTERS

The attraction of the LRGV's wide open spaces, blue skies, and subtropical climate can also prove to be a challenge to user comfort – particularly during the summer months. The need to mitigate the effects of heat and exposure is recognized by local public and private recreation providers. The TPWD, NPS, and USFW Service all utilize shelters at key points along their internal trail networks to enhance the visitor experience and extend visits. Wayside shelters at key points along the USBR and LRGV multi-use trail network (incorporating potable water sources where feasible, and many of the other features of gateway trailheads) will enable LRGV communities to showcase important cultural, historical, and natural amenities; and, to extend access to obscure network locations in a safe manner.



Source: Halff Associates.

Note: For illustrative purposes only.

The USFW Service is considering ways to increase public access opportunities to the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa NWR - an area with very little natural tree cover (picture 1, above left). Strategically placed wayside shelters can meet many of the same needs as well-designed trailhead facilities (picture 2, above right) by providing a place to relax while offering interpretive materials that adhere to the USFW Service's objective of connecting people to wildlife. Source: Halff Associates

PADDLING TRAIL FACILITIES

Design of the LRGV paddling trail system is intended to accommodate the largest possible cross-section of users, covering a range of paddling interest, expertise, comfort, and ability. Regardless of the characteristics of individual users, LRGV paddling trail facilities must be consistent and uniform throughout to build paddling interest beyond a core group of paddling enthusiasts. Well-designed canoe/kayak launch facilities tell users, "You belong here." Complimentary and consistent signage and other amenities suggest that, "This is an important resource that should be protected and shared."

The basic facilities necessary to construct safe and enticing paddling trail networks can be divided into three (3) categories: launches, signage/markers, and amenities. Development of paddling trail facilities does not need to be cost prohibitive - particularly in a location such as the LRGV where existing boating facilities can be leveraged. Still, effort is required to develop the essential facilities necessary for the LRGV paddling trail system to be viewed as a "great" paddling trail, and which can build upon the local tourism economy by attracting national attention.

This section does not provide a comprehensive inventory of the design variations that may be applied in developing an interconnected paddling trail. The specific facilities recommended in this section have been highlighted due to their applicability to the conditions found in Cameron County. (Resources available through the River Management Association, the United States Access Board, and other governmental agencies and interest groups present paddling trail design solutions that address multiple conditions and environments.) As with the other

recommended facility types, investment in LRGV paddling trail facilities should occur in conjunction with the branding, marketing, and business development strategies recommended in **Chapter 4, Active Tourism Program.**

LAUNCHES

There exist multiple non-motorized boat launch variations to account for cost, topography, tidal influences, and expected volume of users. Many paddling trails include launch points that are unimproved - a cost effective method that allows the network to be built quickly. In contrast, the lack of formal facilities does little to emphasize the importance of the paddling trail as an amenity, and may have negative long-term environmental impacts due to an inability to meet the needs of visitors (e.g. parking, trash, restrooms) if the facility gains popularity. Formal treatment - particularly in areas where the paddling trail is shared with motorized boaters - provides a greater degree of comfort to novice and experienced boaters alike.

Proposed LRGV paddling trail system boat launches could also be located at existing boat ramp locations such as the TPWD boat ramp in Rio Hondo. Others could easily be added at locations such as Rio Hondo's City Hall (pictured right) which can provide visibility for the City. Co-location of canoe/kayak launch facilities at existing boat slips can reduce trail development costs due to the presence of pre-existing parking and other accessory facilities. The addition of a canoe/kayak launch facility in proximity to existing boat slips, or the conversion of an existing boat slip for canoe/kayak use, can dramatically increase the number of formal launch points in a relatively short period of time.



With access to the Arroyo Colorado channel, usage of Rio Hondo's City Hall Park could be increased with the addition of a paddling launch (framed). The slope of the existing embankment would require an elongated ramp to provide safe access. Source: Halff Associates

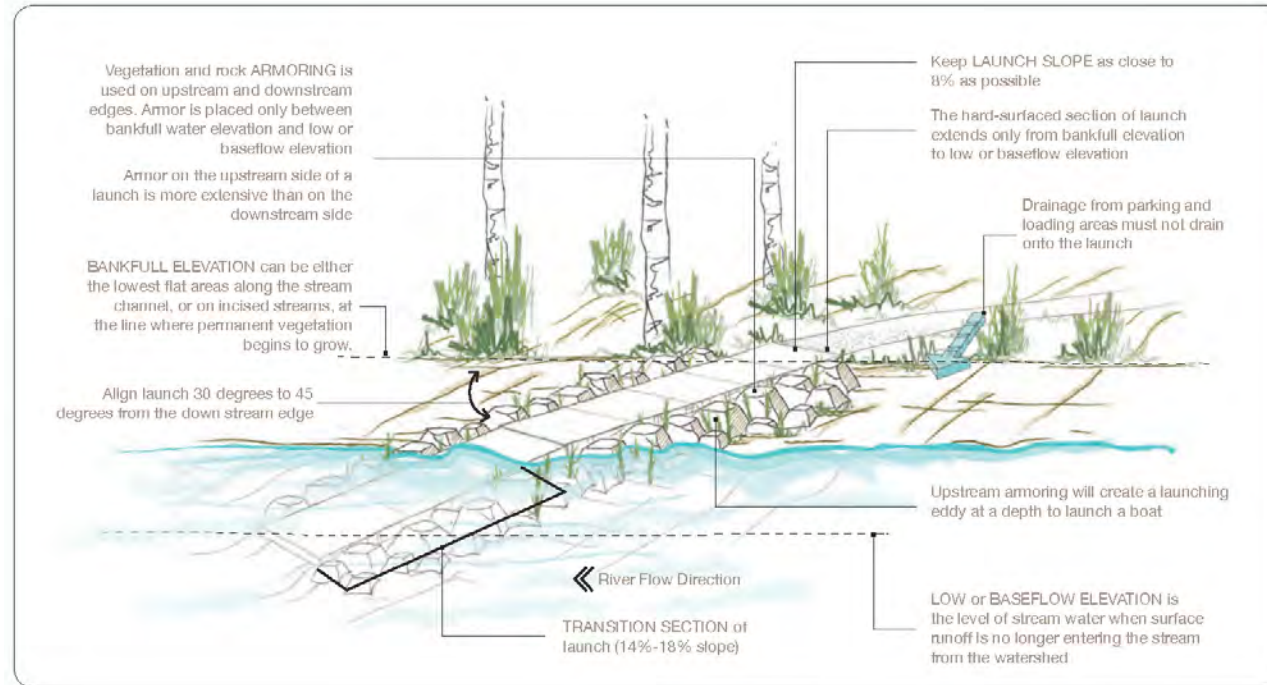


In spite of Cameron County's overall flat topography, some upper stretches of the Arroyo Colorado are flanked by steep embankments. Launches at these locations should utilize designs that include rails along the length of access stairs or ramps to assist users in transporting their boats between parking areas and put-in points. Efforts to incorporate the principles of universal design at launch locations will ensure maximum accessibility to users with physical disabilities.

SIGNAGE/MARKERS

Well-designed paddling trails incorporate signage associated with way-finding, navigation, hazards, and use. The application of signage addressing hazards and navigation will depend on specific conditions within each proposed segment of the LRGV Paddling Trail System. The application of way-finding signage may be much more subjective, but the Active Plan recommends two (2) distinct tiers of way-finding signage:

- **ON-LAND NAVIGATIONAL SIGNAGE.** Way-finding to paddling trail launch facilities. May include variable combinations of: paddling trail symbol/logo, access point identifiers, directional and distance identifiers.
- **ON-WATER NAVIGATIONAL SIGNAGE.** Way-finding on the paddling trail. May also include: paddling trail symbol/number, access point identifiers, directional and distance identifiers. On-water way-finding signage will be accompanied by hazard signage, and should be distinct from on-land navigational signage.



The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has produced illustrative guidance (above) that highlights boat launch principles and options that are transferable to many riverine environments. The TPWD can provide additional guidance on launch design in tidal environments. Source: *Developing Water Trails in Iowa*, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 2010.

Coastal paddling trails incorporate channel markers that correspond to GPS latitude/longitude coordinates. Such markers are already employed on the South Bay Paddling Trail. All paddling trail markers should adhere to the US Aids to Navigation System.

Branded informational signage found throughout many of the paddling trails that comprise the Texas Paddling Trail System. Photo by Halff Associates

AMENITIES

As with any well-managed and maintained trail networks, the user experience is enhanced by amenities that increase convenience and comfort – particularly at trailheads/launch locations. Inviting paddling trail users to the Arroyo Colorado and Laguna Madre will increase demands for sufficient parking, restrooms, garbage collection, and water. To minimize these considerations, the Active Plan proposes the use of existing parks and other public properties where possible. Only a handful of proposed launch locations are proposed at locations that are currently unimproved.

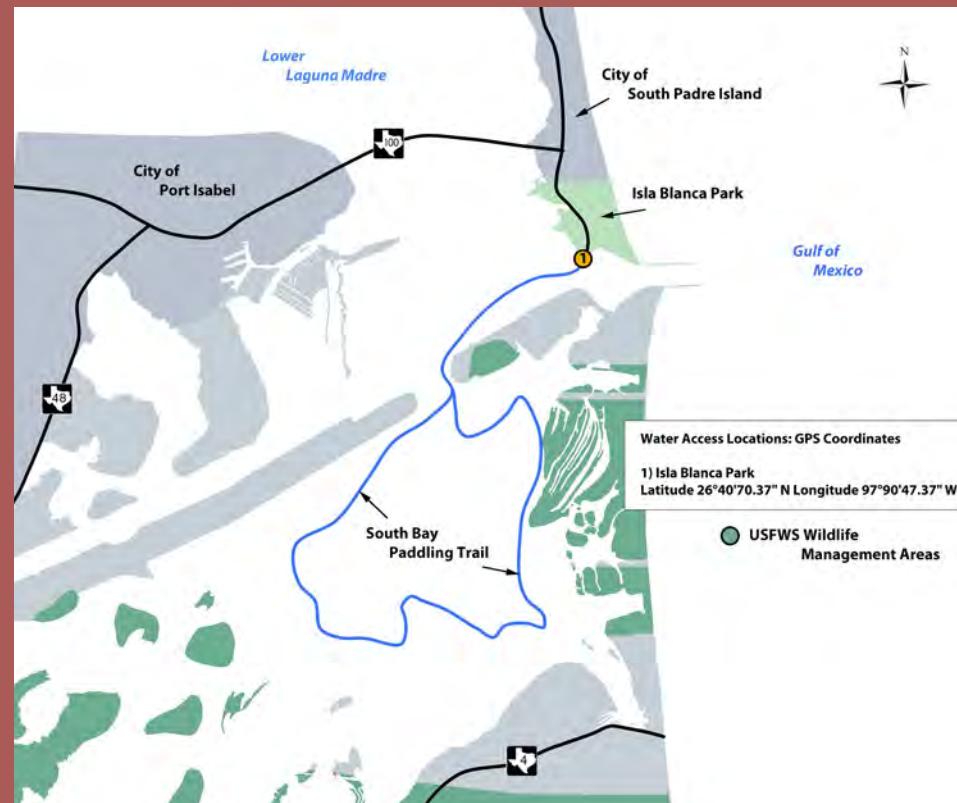


TEXAS PADDLING TRAILS PROGRAM

The TPWD's Texas Paddling Trails (TPT) program provides resources for the development of coastal and inland paddling trails throughout the state. The network currently consists of 70 trails which provide paddling access to the state's freshwater and saltwater resources. Communities may apply to partner with the TPWD to develop a paddling trail. TPWD assistance may include:

- Work with the local community partners
- Promote your paddling trail as part of the Texas Paddling Trails program (TPT)
- Provide TPT kiosk design options and estimated costs
- Develop trail map and local interpretive information for use in marketing materials (i.e., kiosk inserts, Web site)
- Provide river conservation and river ethics information for use in marketing materials
- Provide official TPT marker signage for roadways and put-in/take-out locations
- Provide interpretive vinyl insert for approved community to use in kiosks

Cameron County's South Bay Paddling Trail is part of the Texas Paddling Trail network. This 8 mile coastal trail provides a circuitous route around South Bay beginning and ending at Isla Blanca Park in South Padre Island. More information on the Texas Paddling Trails Program may be found at: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails/>.



Source: TPWD, http://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails/coastal/south_bay/

Paddling trail segment E (see **Map 3.5**, page 3.12) is proposed to extend along the Laguna Madre shoreline adjacent to the Laguna Atascosa NWR. The length of, and accessibility to, this particular segment may inhibit usage for all but the most adventurous paddling enthusiasts. To accommodate overnight trips connecting the proposed coastal paddling trails with the Arroyo Colorado, the Active Plan proposes a potential camp

site along the shore of the Laguna Atascosa NWR. Access to this site would be subject to reservation and receipt of a permit by USFW. Approval of this accommodation would be subject to an appropriate use and compatibility determination by USFW.

FACILITY COSTS

Cost estimates for select paddling trail facilities are provided in **Figure 3-12** (page 3.46) in relation to the proposed Arroyo Colorado paddling trail segment, and including on-water navigational signage (inland segments), GPS markers (coastal segments), and two (2) types of launches:

- Motorized boat ramp conversion
- Boat launch on embankment

As previously acknowledged, there exist multiple boat launch variations, but those listed above have been selected to address specific existing conditions, and under the assumption that "improved" facilities will prove more attractive to potential trail users.



Water side camping in conjunction with area paddling trails attracts a specific segment of the active tourism market. Photo by American Trails



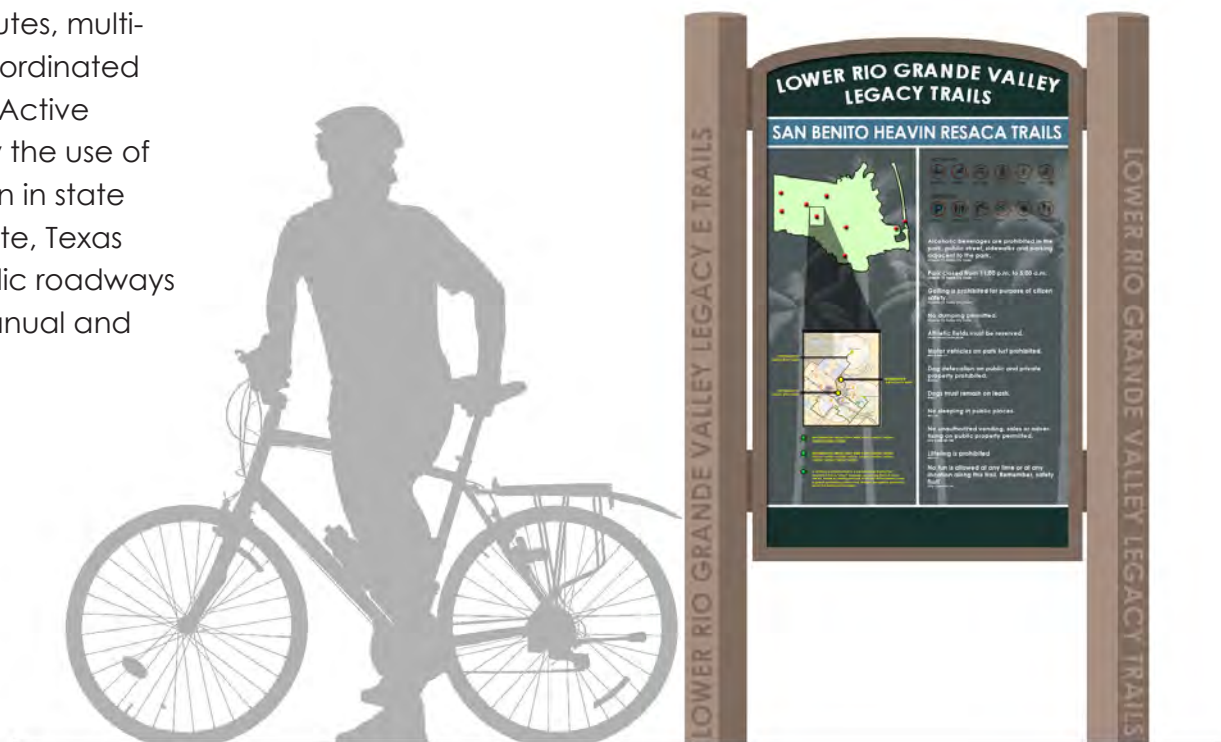
WAY-FINDING FACILITIES

Way-finding facilities are utilized to guide users among active transportation network routes and destinations while increasing the awareness of potential users to the availability of local bicycling, walking, or paddling opportunities. As part of the active transportation network, way-finding facilities typically consist of signage and pavement markings; however, way-finding also extends to maps and complimentary on line resources. The development of consistent way-finding features is also a principal component of a larger branding campaign which can be used to promote use of all three (3) components of the LRGV Regional Active Transportation Network.

The Active Plan's recommendation of a three-tiered facility network provides some opportunity for coordinated way-finding and branding features applied to on-street bicycle routes, multi-use trails, and paddling trails. The degree to which coordinated way-finding features is applied among differing LRGV Active Transportation Network route types will be dictated by the use of alternate branding features through local participation in state and national programs (e.g. United States Bicycle Route, Texas Paddling Trails), and regulatory considerations on public roadways and waters, including consistency with the MUTCD manual and U.S. Aids to Navigation System.



Working with state and federal partners, individual elements of the proposed LRGV active transportation network could be branded and marketed as a part of a unified and multi-tiered system of opportunities for region-wide exploration.



Source: Half Associates

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Development of the LRGV regional active transportation network will increase the long-term maintenance responsibilities of participating communities and public agencies. There will be constant maintenance demands (i.e. trash pick-up, mowing), and long-term demands (i.e. resurfacing, structural maintenance, etc.) In fulfilling their maintenance roles, the financial capacity of each LRGV community and public agency will differ – as may their perception of what constitutes a “suitable” level of daily and long-term facility maintenance.

The ability of Cameron County communities to attract visitors to a world-class system of county-wide trails and bikeways does not end with project construction and branding. Significant jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction variations to network maintenance risk long-term system viability. Even if only constituting a minor portion of the network, users groups can be deterred by trail or bikeway segments that suffer from deferred maintenance. To avoid this occurrence, Active Plan implementing partners should develop intergovernmental and inter-agency agreements that not only establish clear maintenance responsibilities, but also minimum maintenance standards. A template for such agreements can be prepared initially by those local governments who already own and maintain existing trail segments that have been identified as part of the larger LRGV multi-use trail network. Intergovernmental and inter-agency agreements are also a suitable tool for ensuring consistent trail construction standards, and system branding.

Assuming the creation of an Active Plan implementing organization (as recommended in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**), long-term maintenance needs may also be addressed through the establishment of an endowment fund.

NETWORK AUTHORITIES

Most existing and potential active routes are located within fee-simple lands and rights-of-way owned and maintained by federal, state, county, and municipal government, as well as other public authorities. Although it is possible that some future active route development or enhancement may require negotiation with private land owners, permission or support will be largely contingent on partnerships with public agencies.

The policies and procedures related to active route development within most state and federal lands (NPS, TWPD, USFW, etc.) will be fairly uniform and predictable. These entities oversee properties that are identified within this Plan as fixed “destinations” - and which may serve as active tourism nodes (see Section 2.2, page 2.6). Development of the active network along corridors extending between these and other destinations will require continuing coordination with public entities that oversee linear transportation and utility corridors.

This section summarizes the relationship between proposed active routes and the public entities with whom partnerships will be necessary to facilitate Active Plan implementation. **All entities referenced in this section are critically significant partners in helping to develop certain key Active Plan routes. Keeping their leadership informed of the goals and progress in implementing the Active Plan will be important to maintain support.**

HIGHWAYS: CAMERON COUNTY REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY

Regional Mobility Authorities (RMA) are Texas political subdivisions formed by one (1) or more counties or certain cities to finance, acquire, design, construct, operate, maintain, expand, or extend transportation projects. The creation, powers, and duties of RMA are established in Chapter 370 of the Texas Transportation Code (Chapter 360 prior to June 22, 2003).

The Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) was created in 2004 following approval by the Texas Transportation Commission. Since that time, the CCRMA has been actively engaged in designing and constructing new freeways and limited access highways, and railroad corridors. The CCRMA is studying the feasibility of additional projects such as the South Padre Island 2nd Access causeway.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. *No proposed active network multi-use trail or paddling routes utilize CCRMA corridors; but, many proposed routes are bisected by existing or proposed CCRMA funded or administered thoroughfares. USBR #55 is proposed to utilize sections of General Brant Road and Buena Vista Avenue (page 3.11, Map 3.4). The CCRMA is considering possible capacity enhancements to both roads as part of the Outer Loop project. The preliminary USBR #55 would also include the Queen Isabella Causeway to South Padre Island.*

HIGHWAYS: TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The majority of major thoroughfares within Cameron County are owned and maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Local TxDOT activities are administered by the district office based in Pharr, TX. Many Cameron County municipalities and MPOs are developing plans to expand local bicycle and pedestrian networks to include more segments of the state system and are working closely with TxDOT personnel to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations as part of highway capacity enhancements and standard maintenance projects. TxDOT guidelines related to bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are summarized in an agency memorandum distributed in 2011 (**Appendix D**) but may be adjusted over time.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. *The majority of the proposed USBR #55 would be located within rights-of-way owned and maintained by TxDOT. Many proposed multi-use trails would also parallel highways within the state system - potentially being located within the right-of-way, or on adjacent properties or easements. Some multi-use trail routes also intersect TxDOT highways and would need approval for at-grade, above-grade, or below-grade intersection treatments.*



RAILROADS: BROWNSVILLE AND RIO GRANDE INT. RAILWAY

The Brownsville and Rio Grande International Railway (BRG) is a subsidiary of OmniTrax which operates all common carrier rail transportation within the Port of Brownsville on behalf of the Brownsville Navigation District. The BRG operates roughly 45 miles of track that interchanges with UP holdings around Brownsville.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. BRG-owned rights-of-way are not currently identified as potential Active Plan multi-use trail corridors. However, a UP port lead extending between Ruben Torres Blvd. and Interstate 69E (upon which BRG has trackage rights) provides a potential multi-use trail linkage between Brownsville and Port Isabel. As an alternative to the port lead route, the Active Plan also suggests that the Brownsville to Port Isabel route may divert to Dr. Hugh Emerson Road from a point just west of the Bahia Grande – crossing OmniTrax and Port of Brownsville holdings designated for an industrial development (GeoTrac Industrial Hub) in the vicinity of Loma Alta Lake and UP's Palo Alto Yard.

RAILROADS: RIO VALLEY SWITCHING COMPANY

The Rio Valley Switching Company (RVSC) is a subsidiary of Iron Horse Resources that owns and operates short line rail routes in Cameron County and Hidalgo County (the "Valley Railroad.") These routes link Harlingen with Edinburg, McAllen, Mission, and Santa Rosa, and expand upon Class I Railroads' capabilities through enhanced access to the McAllen Foreign Trade Zone and the Burgos Basin of Mexico.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. The Active Plan identifies a RVSC right-of-way extending between San Benito and Rio Hondo as a multi-use trail route which may serve as an alternate to the preferred Arroyo Colorado route linking Harlingen, Rio Hondo, and San Benito. The railroad on this segment of right-of-way is inactive. The right-of-way remains only partially owned by RVSC, but many former segments have been sold to TxDOT and Cameron County.

RAILROADS: UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD

Union Pacific Railroad (UP) is one of America's largest rail companies and is located in 23 midwestern and western states. UP owns the main line extending both north to Willacy County and beyond, and south across the Rio Grande into Mexico.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. The UP port lead extending from Ruben Torres Boulevard to 69E could eventually be converted into a dual rail-width-trail segment in order to link Port Isabel with Brownsville via an (alternate) southern Bahia Grande route. UP's main line between Los Fresnos and the Arroyo Colorado is identified as a possible alternate corridor (also in the form of a rail-with-trail corridor).



WATERWAYS: DRAINAGE DISTRICTS

Drainage districts provide for the construction and maintenance of canals, drains, ditches and levees, for the drainage of land for a stated public purpose. The creation, powers, and duties of drainage districts are established in Chapter 56 of the Texas Water Code. There are currently four (4) drainage districts in Cameron County responsible for miles of ditches and levees.

Berms, levees, and maintenance easements along irrigation district canals provide potential opportunities for bicycle, pedestrian, equestrian, and water routes. Absent occasional maintenance vehicles, bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian traffic would be free of motor vehicle traffic. A drainage district may permit recreational uses on its property (including trails) but is under no obligation to accommodate such use. However, most drainage districts in Texas recognize the importance of access for trails or water recreation and work to accommodate users.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. The proposed active network identified in Maps 3.2 and 3.3 (pages 3.9 through 3.10) recommends up to 54 miles of trail along drainage ditches.

The Union Pacific port lead between Ruben Torres Boulevard and Interstate 69E may offer an opportunity to develop a "rail with trail" segment connecting Brownsville neighborhoods and activity centers. Photo by Halff Associates

CORRIDOR SNAPSHOT: WESTERN CAMERON COUNTY



The LRGV regional active transportation network proposes facilities that stretch to the furthest reaches of Cameron County. Although the drainage ditch extending between La Feria and Santa Rosa (above, looking south) seems far removed from most proposed Active Routes, a potential multi-use trail (right) in this location can serve as a gateway to a larger regional network extending into Hidalgo County. The image at right conveys the attractiveness of drainage and irrigation corridors in all parts of Cameron County for active transportation and active tourism use.





WATERWAYS: INT. BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION (IBWC)

The International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) administers programs and initiatives relating to boundary demarcation, national ownership of waters, sanitation, water quality, and flood control in the United States – Mexico border region. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the IBWC oversees flood control and irrigation projects which include waterways throughout much of Cameron County. Major floodway projects in Cameron County include the Arroyo Colorado (Main Floodway), and the North Floodway. As recently as 2015, the IBWC oversaw a flood enhancement initiative on portions of the Arroyo Colorado stretching through Harlingen.

Harlingen’s existing Arroyo Colorado Trail is located on property maintained by the IBWC - providing a precedent for the location of active transportation and recreational trail facilities in the Arroyo Colorado floodplain.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. *The proposed LRGV Multi-use Trail Network includes trails along the Arroyo Colorado and the North Floodway in the far northwestern portion of the county. In addition, the proposed LRGV Paddling Trail System extends the length of the Arroyo Colorado to a point on the eastern side of Harlingen. The Active Plan identifies a prioritized dual purpose trailhead/boat launch within the Arroyo Colorado corridor at the FM 509 bridge.*

WATERWAYS: IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

Irrigation districts provide for the drainage of land, and for the delivery of untreated water for agricultural irrigation. The creation, purpose, and powers of irrigation districts are established in Chapter 58 of the Texas Water Code. There are currently seven (7) irrigation districts wholly contained in Cameron County that are responsible for miles of drainage and irrigation canals.

As with drainage ditches, berms, levees, and maintenance easements along irrigation district canals provide potential opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian routes. Absent occasional maintenance vehicles, bicycle and pedestrian traffic would be free of motor vehicle traffic. An irrigation district may opt to adopt rules to:

“regulate residence, hunting, fishing, boating, and camping, and all recreational and business privileges on any body or stream of water, or any body of land, or any easement owned or controlled by the district.” (TWC, Sec. 58.127)

While irrigation districts are not obligated to accommodate recreational use, many throughout the LRGV are allowing trails to be built along their corridors. As residents of their communities, they see the benefits of long trail corridors with few roadway intersections.

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. *The proposed active network identified in Maps 3.2 and 3.3 (pages 3.9 and 3.10) recommends many miles of active routes along irrigation canals. Development of these routes will require contracting with the district for the use of its facilities. (TWC, Sec. 58.136)*

WATERWAYS: US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The US Army Corps is the primary federal manager of the nation’s water resources. The Corps builds and maintains much of the nation’s navigation and flood damage reduction infrastructure and regulates the issuance of Clean Water Act dredge and fill and other permits to the private sector. Since its formation more than 225 years ago, the Corps has significantly transformed our nation’s rivers and coasts, constructing 11,000 miles of inland waterway navigation channels, 8,500 miles of levees and seawalls, and more than 600 dams. The agency also dredges hundreds of millions of cubic yards of material each year from the nation’s rivers and harbors.³

ACTIVE PLAN ROUTES. *The proposed LRGV Multi-use Trail Network includes trails along the Arroyo Colorado and the North Floodway in the far northwestern portion of the county. In addition, the proposed LRGV Paddling Trail System extends the length of the Arroyo Colorado to a point on the eastern side of Harlingen. The Active Plan identifies a prioritized dual purpose trailhead/boat launch within the Arroyo Colorado corridor at the FM 509 bridge.*

³ American Rivers and National Wildlife Federation, A Citizen’s Guide to the Corps of Engineers, 2009.

3.5 CATALYST PROJECTS

The LRGV regional active transportation network includes an extensive system of bicycle, pedestrian, and paddling pathways that are distributed throughout a wide geographic area. Even with an implementation focus on the prioritized LRGV Legacy Routes (page 3.10), Active Plan implementation will be a long-term regional undertaking. Implementation and network development will also be influenced by varying community development needs and interests.

Active Plan participants have identified six (6) proposed “catalyst” projects which should be prioritized by LRGV local governments and regional stakeholders regardless of whether the implementation process adheres to the recommended regional structure proposed in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**, or occurs through local initiative.

The Active Plan's six (6) catalyst projects include:

- **LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: ARROYO-RESACA SEGMENT**
- **LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: BAHIA GRANDE SEGMENT**
- **LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: BATTLEFIELD SEGMENT**
- **LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: SPI SEGMENT**
- **LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM: ARROYO COLORADO SEGMENT**
- **UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE #55: LAGUNA MADRE SEGMENT**

ROUTE SELECTION

The Active Plan's catalyst projects have been selected for consistency with the Plan's five (5) Guiding Principles (page 1.2) and the following additional criteria:

- **ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM.** *The combined projects reflect a desire to entice multiple types of active tourists to Cameron County.*
- **COMMUNITY BENEFIT.** *Project type and location considers access to and from population centers, accommodating individuals of differing abilities and interests, and opportunities to extend important commuting corridors.*
- **EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.** *Projects are distributed throughout Cameron County.*
- **ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY.** *Project selection reflects a desire to decrease initial costs by utilizing public lands, minimizing intersections with highways or streams, promoting low cost surfacing or other facility types, etc.*
- **LEVERAGING EXISTING DEMAND.** *Where possible, projects link to and extend existing active transportation routes and facilities.*
- **ROUTE TYPE.** *Each of the three (3) active transportation network types is represented by the combined projects.*
- **LEGACY ROUTE INCUBATOR.** *Projects include over 37 miles of the proposed Legacy Route portion of the LRGV multi-use trail network. A concerted emphasis on developing these four (4) multi-use trail projects within the next five (5) to 10 years would account for almost 40 percent of the LRGV's Legacy Route.*



Proposed catalyst projects would extend existing active transportation networks within urban oases - such as Harlingen's Arroyo Colorado Trail (above right) - along established corridors such as drainage and irrigation easements to pastoral areas of Cameron County (bottom right). Source: Halff Associates (right)



CORRIDOR SNAPSHOT: PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD NHP



Palo Alto Battlefield NHP's frontage on FM 1847 (above) extends roughly 1.5 miles north from the park's existing parking area. In partnership with the National Park Service, a Historic Battlefield Trail extension to Los Fresnos (see pages 3.42 and 3.43) could be partially located within park property instead of highway right-of-way. Increased physical separation of the trail from the highway will significantly enhance user comfort and enjoyment of the facility.



Source: Halff Associates.

Note: For illustrative purposes only.

THE ACTIVE PLAN

LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: ARROYO-RESACA SEGMENT

SEGMENT LENGTH: 7.2 Miles

DESCRIPTION

The Arroyo-Resaca segment of the LRGV Multi-use Trail System links the cities of Harlingen and San Benito via two (2) separate corridors. One (1) corridor extends east from Harlingen's existing Arroyo Colorado Trail at McKelvey Park - flanking the arroyo on a meandering route. The second corridor extends north from San Benito's existing Heavin Memorial Park through rural farm land along drainage canals. The two (2) corridors link in the vicinity of the Arroyo Colorado at FM 509 and the San Benito Waste Water Treatment Plant. An alternate route would link San Benito to the Arroyo Colorado via a combination of drainage canals and right-of-way segments owned by the Rio Valley Switching Company.

TRAIL ACCESS/CONNECTIONS

Potential Trailheads. Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, Arroyo Colorado/FM509, and US 77 Business.

Potential Wayside Shelters. FM 1846, Mayfield Road.

Key Connections. Include: Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, Harlingen Soccer Complex, San Benito reconstructed wetlands, San Benito Veterans Memorial Academy, and US 77 Business shopping district.



The Arroyo Colorado (1) provides a logical corridor for the extension of Harlingen's existing multi-use trails. San Benito's Heavin Resaca Trail (2) is heavily used for fitness and recreation. An extension of the trail across State Highway 448 would require significant safety improvements - potentially including a pedestrian-activated traffic signal.

JURISDICTIONS: Cities of Harlingen & San Benito, IBWC, US Army Corps

CONSIDERATIONS

The following conditions will influence the development of the Arroyo-Resaca Trail:

At-Grade Street Crossings (Rural). The trail will intersect FM 1846 at a location that decreases the feasibility of an at-grade crossing. There may be sufficient clearance under the existing bridge structure to incorporate a culvert to convey trail users.

At-Grade Street Crossings (Urban). One (1) or more at-grade street crossings may be necessary on the San Benito segment of the trail. Proper on-street signage, markings, and/or signalization will be necessary - as will complimentary design features on the trail, including gates requiring bicyclists to dismount prior to entering the street right-of-way.

Bridges. The trail route may require multiple stream and drainage canal crossings. Use of existing motor vehicle bridges may reduce the need for separate bicycle and pedestrian structures.

Culverts. Where culverts are proposed in lieu of at-grade crossings, design must consider space for sufficient clearance, and a base floor elevation that is above the standard surface level of the adjacent water way.

Shelter. Trail users will be exposed to the heat and sun for long distances. Much of the trail is proposed along utility corridors where plantings for shade may be unfeasible. Wayside shelters should be placed at intermittent locations along the trail.



FIGURE 3-8: ARROYO-RESACA SEGMENT - POTENTIAL COST RANGE ⁽¹⁾

ELEMENT	LENGTH OR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST	PROJECTED COST RANGE
Major Shared Use Path (all weather surface)	5.0 miles	10' to 12' wide reinforced concrete (4" to 5" thickness) or asphalt surface	\$120 to \$150 per Linear Foot	\$3.2 million to \$4.0 million
Crushed Rock Trail Segments (irrigation canals)	2.0 miles	12' wide crushed rock or granite surface on a 6" lime stabilized base (where necessary)	\$50 to \$70 per Linear Foot	\$0.5 million to \$0.75 million
Allowance for intersection crossings	FM 509 - below grade, cross using exist. roadway bridge shoulder		Allowance	\$250,000
	FM 1846 - below grade with ramps to roadway for access		Allowance	\$250,000
	Business 77 in San Benito - at grade with new median refuge, RRFB signals		Allowance	\$200,000
	Mayfield, Odem Road, Russell Lane - at grade with rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB)		Allowance for 3	\$300,000
	Ed Carey in Harlingen - below bridge with access ramps to bridge, create separated pedestrian corridor along exist. bridge		Allowance	\$250,000
Minor Wayside Station	Allowance for 3 included (locations to be determined)	Includes gateway signage, shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$50,000 to \$75,000	\$150,000 to \$225,000
Major Trail Head/Access Location	Up to 5 (McKelvey Park, Heavin Park, FM 509, McCoullough Park, I-69)	Includes signage, parking, shelter, seating, paving, and landscaping	\$100,000 to \$200,000 each	\$500,000 to \$1.0 million
Pedestrian Bridge	Allowance for 1 longer bridge or 2 shorter bridges along (if needed)	12' to 14' wide steel truss manufactured bridge with associated structural footings	\$1800 to \$2,000 per linear foot of bridge	\$300,000
Way-finding and Interpretive Signage/ Features	Allowance for features at key locations (for directional/ interpretive/historic/ cultural purposes)	Locations to be determined	N/A	\$100,000 to \$150,000

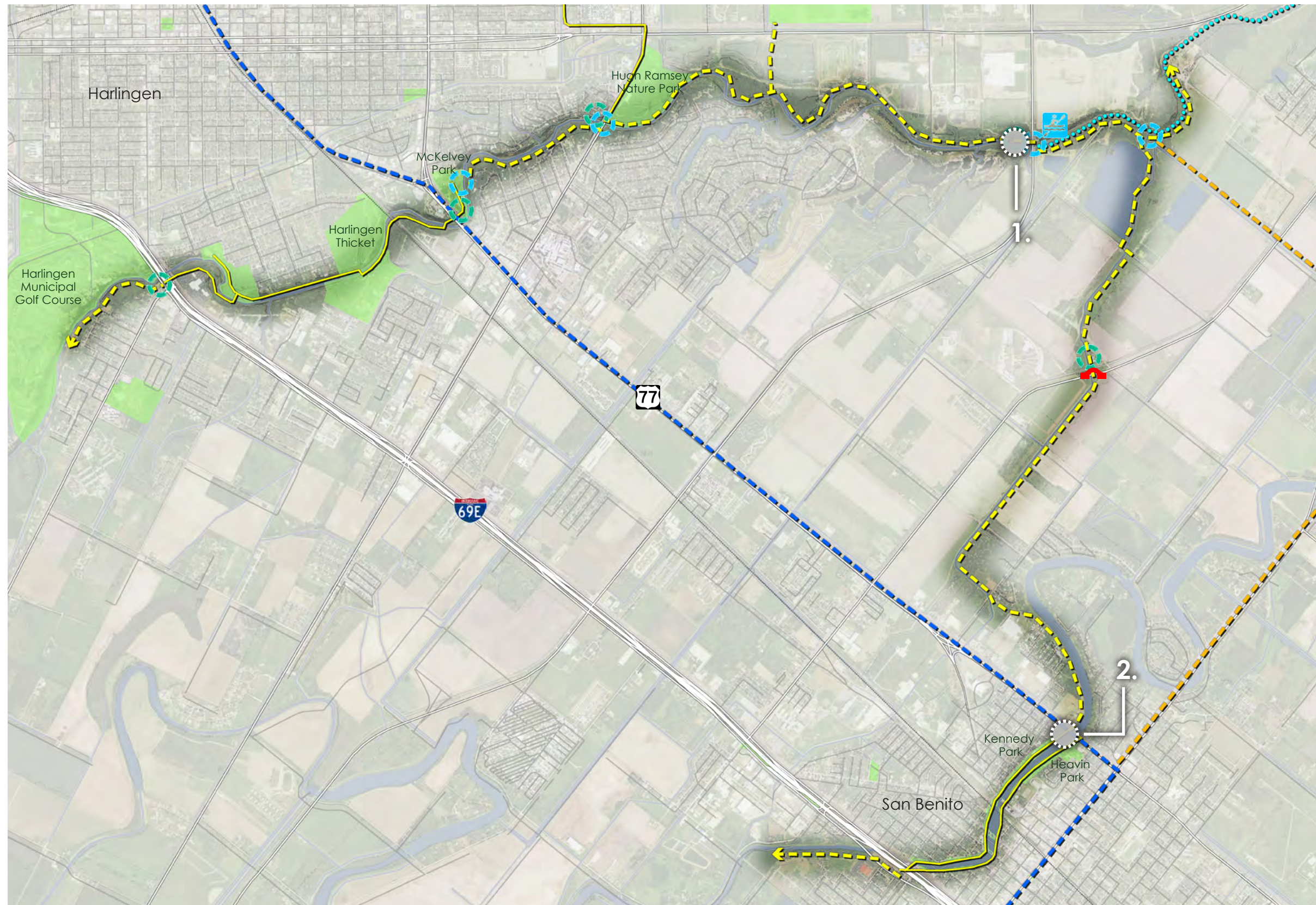
Projected Overall Construction Cost \$6.7 million to \$8.4 million

Allowance for Design, Permitting, Admin. and Contingency \$1.2 to \$1.5 million

Projected Overall Cost Range \$7.2 million to \$9.2 million

(1) Costs shown are in 2016 dollars and are at an order of magnitude, pre-design level. Allowance shown for design, permitting, and contingency will vary per item, location, and conditions. All costs are prior to specific site assessments and any design will require more detailed evaluations to determine specific costs for each specific segment.

MAP 3.6: ARROYO-RESACA MULTI-USE TRAIL SEGMENT



LEGEND

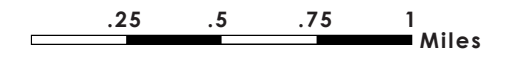
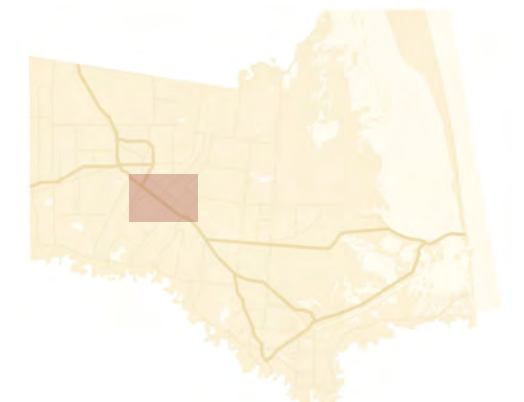
ACTIVE ROUTES

- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Alternate)
- US Bicycle Route (Proposed)
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Proposed)

FEATURES

- Trailhead (Proposed)
- Boat Launch (Proposed)
- Wayside (Proposed)
- Bridge
- Underpass

LOCATION MAP



LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: BAHIA GRANDE SEGMENT

SEGMENT LENGTH: 21.5 Miles

DESCRIPTION

The Bahia Grande segment of the LRGV Multi-use Trail System provides a scenic connection between the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa NWR and Palo Alto Battlefield NHP. The trail route also links the cities of Port Isabel, Laguna Heights, and Laguna Vista, to Brownsville and Los Fresnos through an extension of the City of Brownsville's Historic Battlefield Trail. The trail route follows drainage canals and road rights-of-way; and where possible, aligns with existing restricted use access roads within federal property. The trail would establish a recreational linkage between important historical and natural destinations, and an important transportation connection between bay-side communities and Port Isabel High School.

TRAIL ACCESS/CONNECTIONS

Potential Trailheads. Port Isabel High School, Bahia Grande Visitor's Center (Proposed), SH100/Old Port Isabel Road, FM1847/Drainage ditch #2.

Potential Wayside Shelters. Dispersed along drainage ditch #2 and within the Laguna Atascosa NWR, Bahia Grande unit.

Key Connections. Include: Port Isabel High School, Bahia Grande Unit (Laguna Atascosa NWR), Battlefield Trail, Palo Alto Battlefield NHP.



From its western terminus at FM 1847 (and a proposed extension of the Battlefield Trail north from Palo Alto Battlefield NHP), the Bahia Grande trail would follow drainage ditch #2 east to Old Port Isabel Road (1). The trail could enter the Bahia Grande property from a new trailhead at the intersection of Old Port Isabel Road and SH 100 (2).

JURISDICTIONS (2016): NPS, TxDOT, USFW

CONSIDERATIONS

The following conditions will influence the development of the Bahia Grande Trail:

At-Grade Street Crossings. The trail will intersect Old Port Isabel Road at drainage ditch #2. An at-grade crossing may be constructed at this intersection point, or at Old Port Isabel Road and SH 100 – depending on preferred trail alignment along Old Port Isabel Road.

Drainage Ditch #2. Drainage Ditch # 2 currently exceeds the right-of-way width of Brownsville Drainage District #1. Additional right-of-way or easements will be necessary for public access, as will further consultation with the drainage district regarding shared-use, construction, and maintenance along the corridor.

Bridges. No bridges are anticipated as depicted on Map 3.7 although an alternative trail alignment along the north side of drainage ditch #2 would require the construction or reconstruction of no fewer than five (5) bridges over intersecting drainage canals. Raised boardwalks may be required on some locations in proximity to the Bahia Grande property.

Shelters. Trail users will be exposed to the heat and sun for long distances. Much of the trail is proposed along corridors where plantings for shade may be unfeasible. Wayside shelters should be placed at intermittent locations along the trail.



FIGURE 3-9: BAHIA GRANDE SEGMENT - POTENTIAL COST RANGE ⁽¹⁾

ELEMENT	LENGTH OR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST	PROJECTED COST RANGE
Major Shared Use Path (all weather surface)	6.4 miles	10' to 12' wide reinforced concrete (4" to 5" thickness) or asphalt surface	\$120 to \$150 per Linear Foot	\$4 million to \$5 million
Major Trail using existing dirt road surface	9 miles	Minimum 12' wide trail using existing dirt roads, minor grading and stabilization where necessary	\$30 to \$40 per Linear Foot	\$1.5 million to \$2 million
Major Crushed Rock Trail Segments	6.1 miles	12' wide crushed rock or granite surface on a 6" lime stabilized base (for areas where new or improved trail is necessary)	\$75 to \$100 per Linear Foot	\$2.5 million to \$3.5 million
Scenic Overlooks/ Resting Areas	10 included (at key scenic locations)	Includes seating, small shade shelter, paving, landscaping, and informational signage	\$25,000 to \$50,000 each	\$250,000 to \$500,000
Minor Trailhead/ Access Location	Allowance for 3 included (locations to be determined)	Includes gateway signage, shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$50,000 to \$75,000	\$150,000 to \$225,000
Major Trail Head/Access Location	4 planned	Includes gateway signage, parking, shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$150,000 to \$300,000	\$600,000 to \$1.2 million
Pedestrian Bridge	Allowance for 2 along this corridor	12' to 14' wide steel truss manufactured bridge with associated structural footings	\$1800 to \$2,000 per linear foot of bridge	\$360,000 to \$400,000
Way-finding and Interpretive Signage/ Features	Allowance for features at key locations along the corridor	10' to 20' wide by minimum 8' height segmented concrete box structure, 100' of ramping to reach crossing grade	N/A	\$100,000 to \$150,000

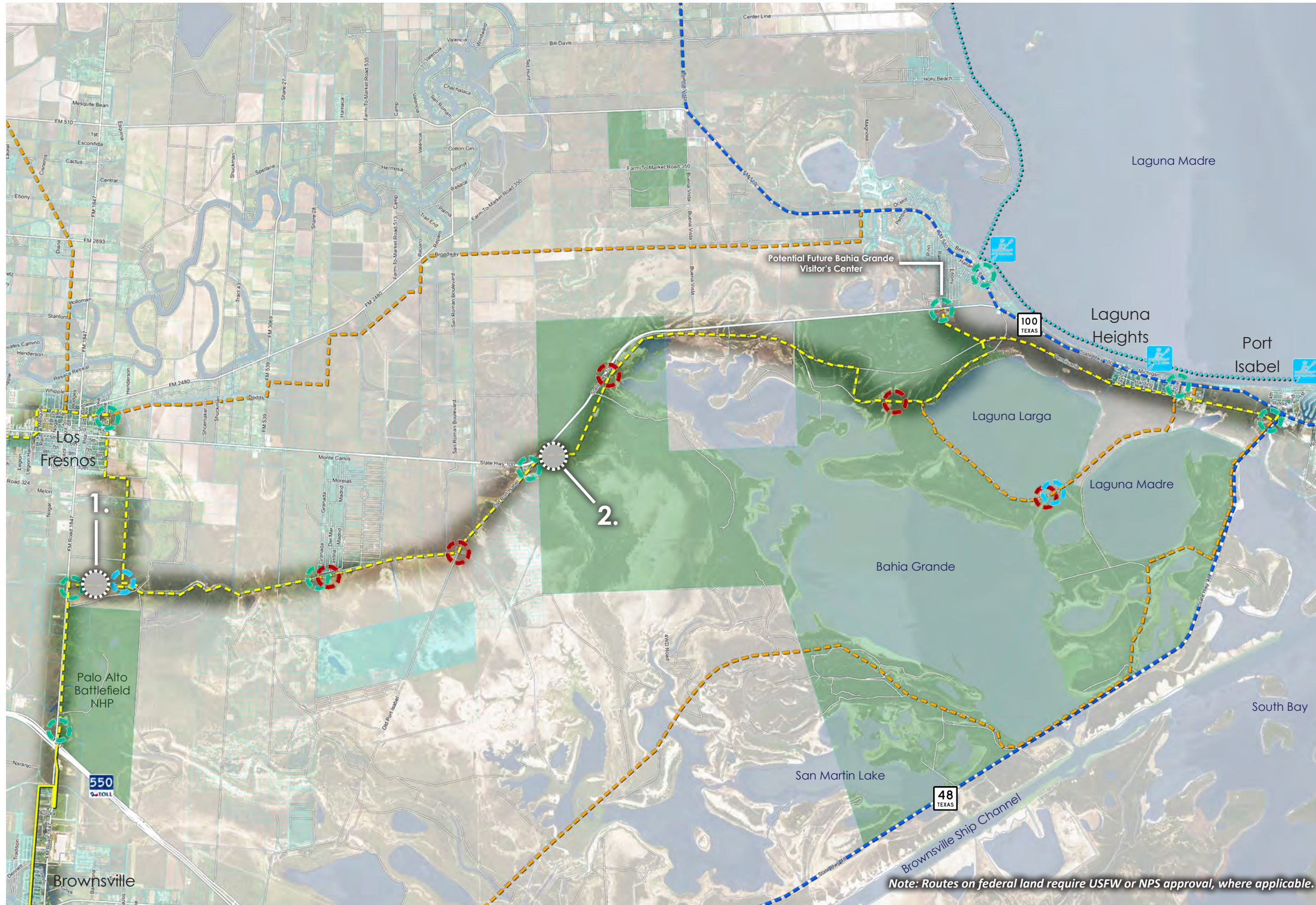
Projected Overall Construction Cost \$9.5 million to \$13 million

Allowance for Design, Permitting, Administration and Contingency \$1.9 to \$2.5 million

Projected Overall Cost Range \$11.4 million to \$15.5 million

(1) Costs shown are in 2016 dollars and are at an order of magnitude, pre-design level. Allowance shown for design, permitting, and contingency will vary per item, location, and conditions. All costs are prior to specific site assessments and any design will require more detailed evaluations to determine specific costs for each specific segment.

MAP 3.7: BAHIA GRANDE MULTI-USE TRAIL SEGMENT



LEGEND

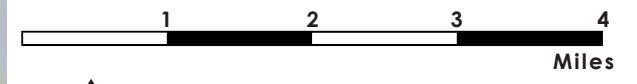
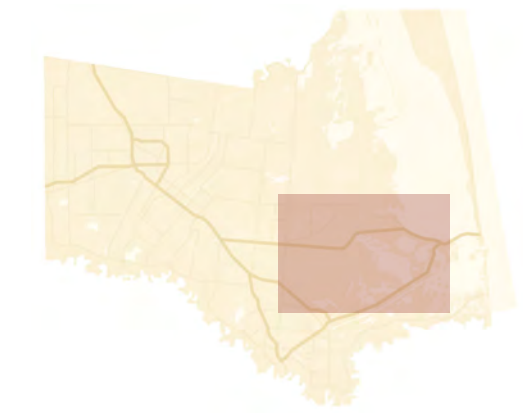
ACTIVE ROUTES

- ▬▬▬ LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- ▬▬▬ LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Alternate)
- ▬▬▬ US Bicycle Route (Proposed)
- ▬▬▬ Existing Multi-Use Trail
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Proposed)

FEATURES

- Trailhead (Proposed)
- Boat Launch (Existing & Proposed)
- Wayside (Proposed)
- Bridge

LOCATION MAP



Note: Routes on federal land require USFW or NPS approval, where applicable.

LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: BATTLEFIELD EXTENSION SEGMENT

SEGMENT LENGTH: 4.2 Miles

DESCRIPTION

The Battlefield segment of the LRGV Multi-use Trail System is an extension of the City of Brownsville's Historic Battlefield Trail. Currently terminating at Palo Alto Battlefield NHP, the Battlefield Trail extension would continue north along Farm Road 1847 for 4.2 miles to the City of Los Fresnos. Mid-way along its route, the trail would be intersected by the Bahia Grande segment of the LRGV Multi-Use Trail System. This intersection would provide a connection between Brownsville, Los Fresnos, and the bay side communities of Cameron County

TRAIL ACCESS/CONNECTIONS

Potential Trailheads. FM 1847 and Drainage Ditch #2.

Potential Wayside Shelters. Bridge crossing of Drainage Ditch #2 as the trail proceeds north to connect with the Los Fresnos Trail.

Key Connections. Include: Palo Alto Battlefield NHP, Los Fresnos



JURISDICTIONS: Brownsville Drainage District #2, NPS, TxDOT

CONSIDERATIONS

The following conditions will influence the development of the Battlefield Trail extension:

At-Grade Street Crossings (Rural). None, although the segment will run along the east side of FM1847. Where possible, the trail should be located outside of the public street right-of-way to increase user comfort and safety.

At-Grade Street Crossings (Urban). None.

Bridges. A single bridge is anticipated over Drainage Ditch #2 where the Battlefield Extension proceeds north from the Bahia Grande Trail segment to the (pending) Los Fresnos Trail.

Shelter. Trail users will be exposed to the heat and sun for long distances. Much of the trail is proposed along corridors where plantings for shade may be unfeasible. Wayside shelters should be placed at intermittent locations along the trail.

FIGURE 3-10: BATTLEFIELD EXTENSION SEGMENT - POTENTIAL COST RANGE ⁽¹⁾

ELEMENT	LENGTH OR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST	PROJECTED COST RANGE
Major Shared Use Path (all weather surface)	4.2 miles	10' to 12' wide reinforced concrete (4" to 5" thickness) or asphalt surface	\$120 to \$150 per Linear Foot	\$2.5 million to \$3.2 million
Allowance for intersection crossings	1 crossing	Crossing to west side of FM 1847 at Hwy 550	Allowance	\$250,000
Minor Wayside Station	1 planned (at FM1847 and drainage channel)	Includes gateway signage, shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$50,000 to \$75,000	\$50,000 to \$75,000
Major Trail Head/Access Location	1 planned (near Palo Alto Battlefield NHP)	Includes gateway signage, parking, shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$100,000 to \$200,000 each	\$100,000 to \$200,000
Pedestrian Bridges	Allowance for (1) 200' bridge and (1) 100' bridge along this corridor	12' to 14' wide steel truss manufactured bridge with associated structural footings	\$1,800 to \$2,000 per linear foot of bridge	\$600,000
Way-finding and Interpretive Signage/ Features	Allowance for features at key locations along the corridor (may serve directional or interpretive/historic/cultural purposes)	Locations to be determined	N/A	\$50,000

Projected Overall Construction Cost \$3.6 million to \$4.4 million

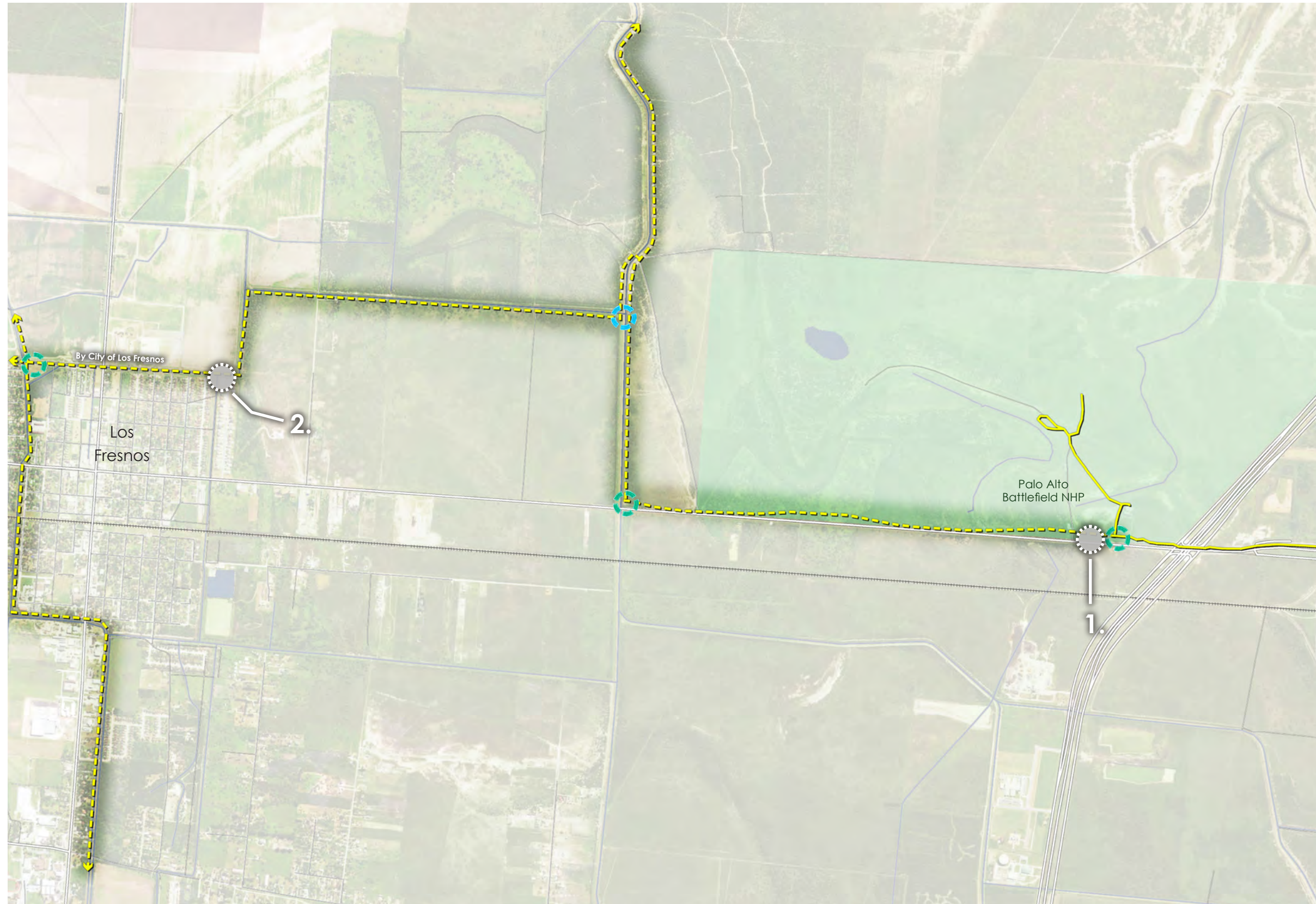
Allowance for Design, Permitting, Administration and Contingency \$0.7 to \$0.9 million

Projected Overall Cost Range \$4.3 million to \$5.3 million

(1) Costs shown are in 2016 dollars and are at an order of magnitude, pre-design level. Allowance shown for design, permitting, and contingency will vary per item, location, and conditions. All costs are prior to specific site assessments and any design will require more detailed evaluations to determine specific costs for each specific segment.

The Battlefield Trail Extension would proceed north along FM 1847 from Palo Alto Battlefield NHP (1) to drainage ditch #2 (where it would merge with the Bahia Grande Trail) and turn east for 3/4 of a mile before proceeding north toward Los Fresnos. The City of Los Fresnos is also beginning work on a City trail beginning at FM 1847 and proceeding east along a drainage ditch on a parallel course with the Brownsville Historic Battlefield Trail Extension. Both trails would merge at the southeast quadrant of the City (2), and travel north of SH 100 to Los Fresnos High School.

MAP 3.8: BATTLEFIELD MULTI-USE TRAIL SEGMENT



LEGEND

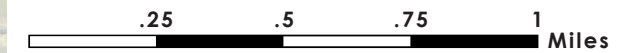
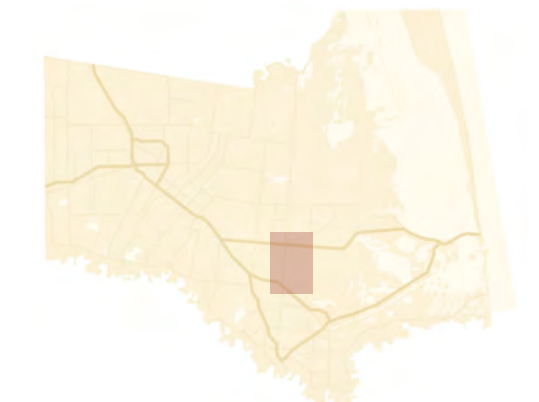
ACTIVE ROUTES

- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Alternate)
- US Bicycle Route (Proposed)
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Proposed)

FEATURES

- Trailhead (Proposed)
- Wayside (Proposed)
- Bridge

LOCATION MAP



THE ACTIVE PLAN

LRGV MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM: SOUTH PADRE ISLAND SEGMENT

SEGMENT LENGTH: 4.2 Miles

DESCRIPTION

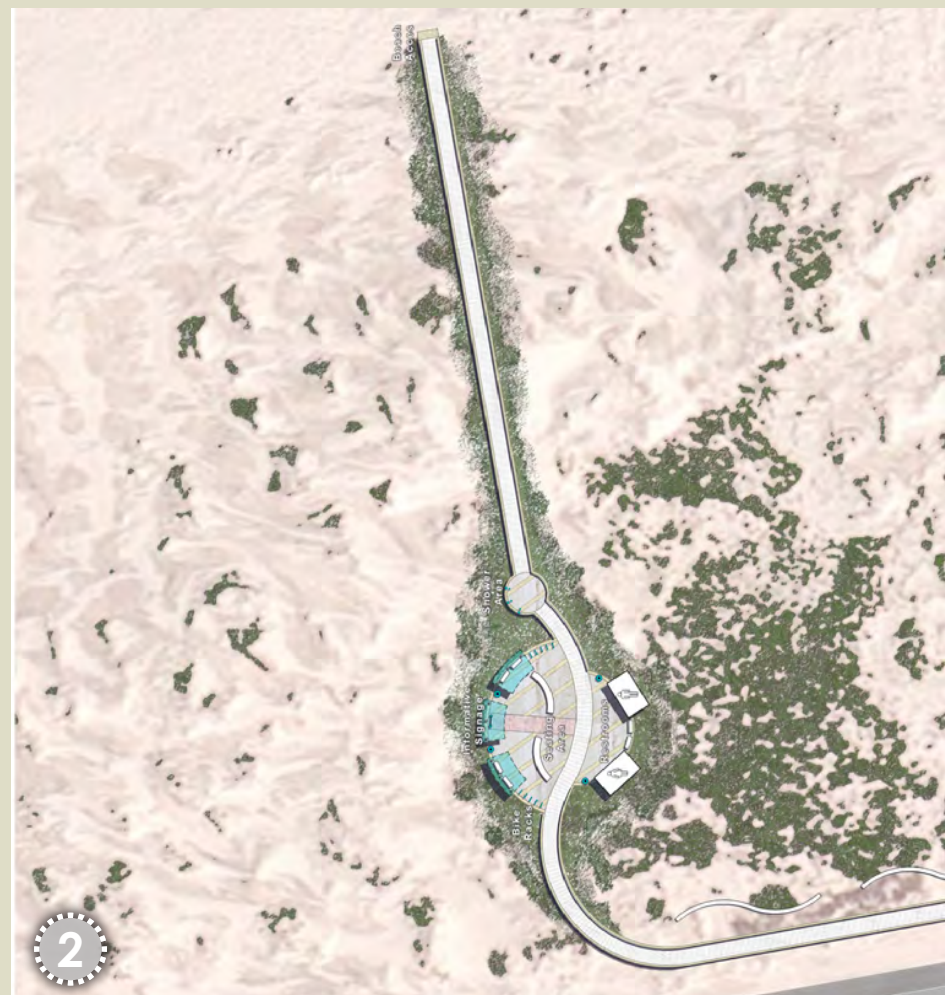
The South Padre Island (SPI) segment of the LRGV Multi-Use Trail System provides bicycle and pedestrian access from the City of South Padre Island north to the undeveloped reaches of the island. The trail would be a separated facility that links pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities to the island's pristine dunes. The facility compliments the wide shoulders currently utilized by experienced cyclists and fitness enthusiasts, and may form part of an island "loop" where users utilize the shoreline for the outward or return leg of their journey.

TRAIL ACCESS/CONNECTIONS

Potential Trailheads. Existing public beach access points may serve as access points, although the construction of new trailhead facilities at these locations is not anticipated. A dual trailhead-beach access catering to bicyclists and pedestrians is proposed at the northern terminus of the trail.

Potential Wayside Shelters. None anticipated.

Key Connections. Include: Laguna Atascosa NWR, SPI Unit.



JURISDICTIONS: Cameron County, City of South Padre Island, TxDOT, USFW

CONSIDERATIONS

The following conditions will influence the development of the SPI Trail:

At-Grade Street Crossings (Rural). None.

At-Grade Street Crossings (Urban). Access driveways to adjacent private development.

Beach Access. The trail route will parallel dunes and cross vehicular beach access points at grade. Shifting dunes may create continual maintenance needs as is currently the case for the roadway. Some boardwalk segments may be necessary.

FIGURE 3-11: SPI SEGMENT - POTENTIAL COST RANGE ⁽¹⁾

ELEMENT	LENGTH OR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST	PROJECTED COST RANGE
Major Shared Use Path (all weather surface)	5.0 miles	10' to 12' wide reinforced concrete (4" to 5" thickness) or asphalt surface over crushed rock base	\$120 to \$150 per Linear Foot	\$3.2 million to \$4.0 million
Allowance for intersection crossings	NA	None currently, should be included during detailed design phase if appropriate.	Allowance	\$0
Minor Wayside Station	Allowance for 1 included (location midway along route, could also serve as future transit stop)	Includes gateway signage, small shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$50,000 to \$75,000	\$50,000 to \$75,000
Major Trail Head/Access Location	1 planned at terminus of trail at end of Highway 100	Includes gateway signage, parking, shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$500,000	\$500,000
Boardwalk Sections (for potential wetland/sensitive areas)	Allowance for elevated sections along 500 linear feet of route (if needed)	Boardwalk section, 12' to 14' width	\$250 to \$500 per linear foot	\$125,000 to \$250,000
Way-finding and Interpretive Signage/Features	Allowance for features at key locations along the corridor (may serve directional or interpretive/historic/cultural purposes)	Locations to be determined	N/A	\$50,000 to \$75,000
Projected Overall Construction Cost			\$3.9 million to \$4.9 million	
Allowance for Design, Permitting, Administration and Contingency			\$0.8 to \$1.0 million	
Projected Overall Cost Range			\$4.7 million to \$5.9 million	

(1) Costs shown are in 2016 dollars and are at an order of magnitude, pre-design level. Allowance shown for design, permitting, and contingency will vary per item, location, and conditions. All costs are prior to specific site assessments and any design will require more detailed evaluations to determine specific costs for each specific segment.

The SPI segment would be a physically separated side path along the eastern side of SH 100 extending north from the developed portion of the island. The side path would parallel designated bike lanes which are located within the current South Padre Island municipal limits (1). The path would terminate at a bicycle/pedestrian-specific beach access (2) including a boardwalk which would allow for a return loop along the beach. The beach access could connect to accessory parking, and to the bike lanes along SH 100.

MAP 3.9: SOUTH PADRE ISLAND MULTI-USE TRAIL SEGMENT



LEGEND

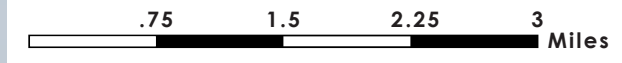
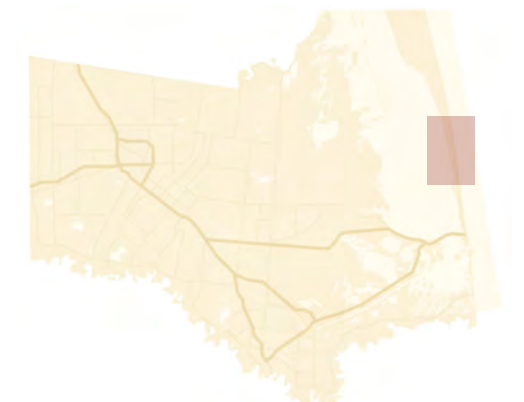
ACTIVE ROUTES

- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Proposed)

FEATURES

- Trailhead (Proposed)
- Boat Launch (Proposed)
- Wayside (Proposed)

LOCATION MAP



THE ACTIVE PLAN

LRGV PADDLING TRAIL SYSTEM: ARROYO COLORADO SEGMENT

SEGMENT LENGTH: 20.4 Miles

DESCRIPTION

The Arroyo Colorado segment of the LRGV Paddling Trail System enables paddling - and associated fishing or wildlife viewing - adventures along Cameron County's principal inland stream corridor. Supported by a system of dispersed launch sites, the paddling trail segment can be broken into excursions of varying time and distance. The Arroyo Colorado route links inland communities with the Laguna Madre, and intersects portions of the proposed LRGV Multi-Use Trail System and USBR. These intersections provide nodes which can serve as inland anchor points which cater to the interests of those who enjoy active tourism pursuits.

TRAIL ACCESS/CONNECTIONS

Potential Launches. Rio Hondo City Hall and City park on west side of the channel, Arroyo City, Adolph Thomae Jr. County Park.

Key Connections. Include: Harlingen, Rio Hondo, Arroyo City, Adolph Thomae Jr. County Park, Laguna Atascosa NWR, Laguna Madre.



2



3



JURISDICTIONS: Cameron County, IBWC, Rio Hondo, US Army Corps

CONSIDERATIONS

The following conditions will influence the development of the Arroyo Colorado Paddling Trail:

Launch Sites. Although public access may be provided in the City of Rio Hondo and at Adolph Thomae Jr. County Park, launches at intervals between both points will require new public investment and/or the conversion of existing facilities on private property in Arroyo City. Launch sites will require basic public facilities such as parking, garbage collection, and perhaps restrooms.

Way-finding. On-water signage and buoys will be integral to safe navigation of the channel - in particular, for users to gauge pace and distance.

FIGURE 3-12: ARROYO COLORADO SEGMENT - POTENTIAL COST RANGE ⁽¹⁾

ELEMENT	LENGTH OR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST	PROJECTED COST RANGE
Boat Launch/ Access Point Improvements at Rio Hondo City Hall area	Includes ramping down to water's edge, small floating dock	Up to 300 lf of access walk/ramp, associated grading and walls where needed, lighting, signage, floating dock	NA	Range from \$250,000 to \$400,000
Boat Launch and Access point improvements at Arroyo City	Includes improvements to existing ramp and dock	Improvements to existing ramp, new floating dock, railings, security lighting, improvements to existing parking, signage	NA	\$100,000
Way-finding buoys	Allowance for 3 per mile over entire 20 mile length (up to 60 buoys total)	Floating buoy for way-finding - may use shore based signs if feasible and preferred. Buoys along edge of channel to avoid shipping conflicts	\$150 to \$300 each (unlighted)	\$9,000 to \$18,000
Way-finding and Interpretive Signage/ Features	Allowance for features at key locations along the corridor (may serve directional or interpretive/historic/ cultural purposes)	Locations to be determined	N/A	\$50,000 to \$75,000

Projected Overall Construction Cost \$420,000 to \$630,000

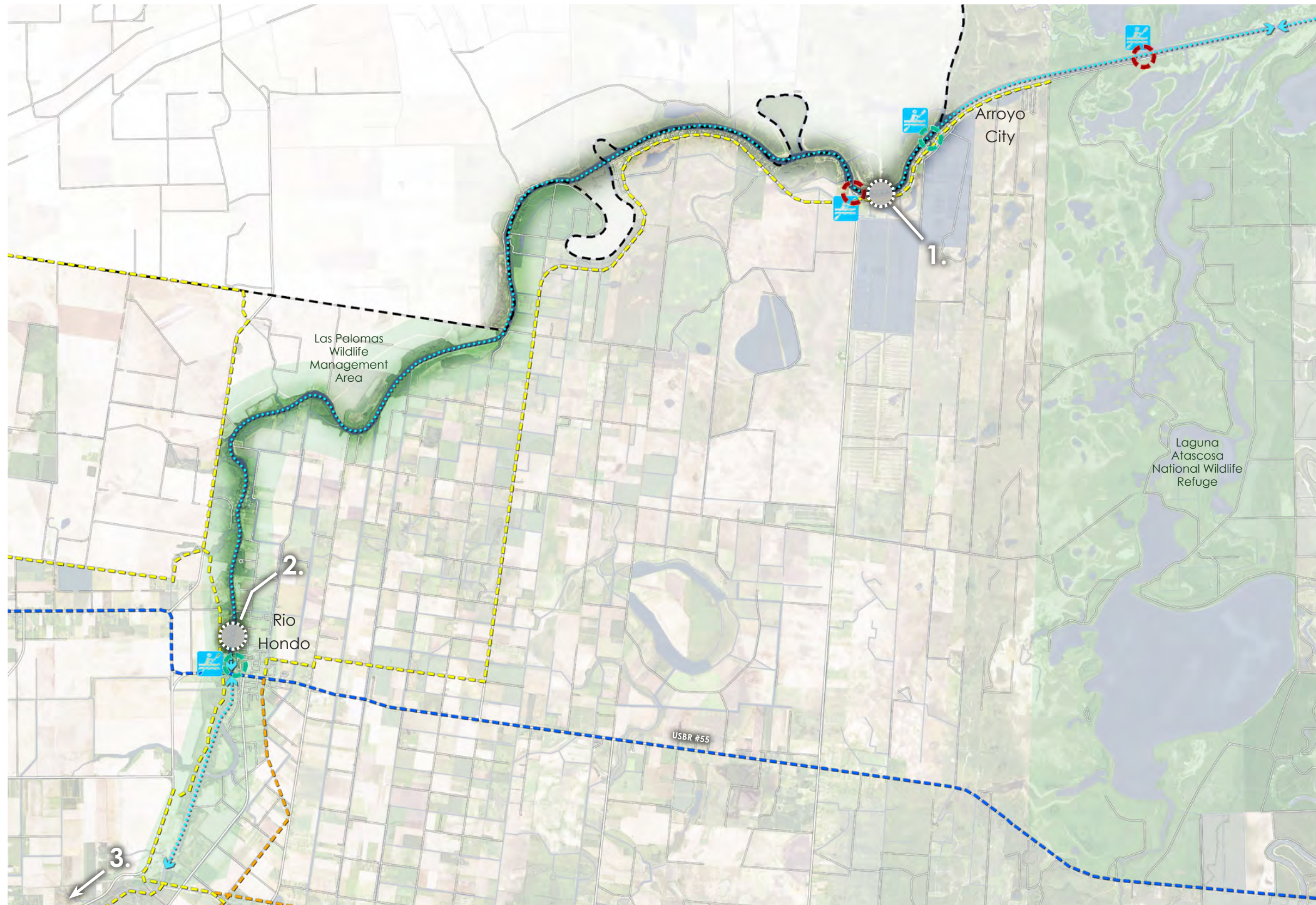
Allowance for Design, Permitting, Administration and Contingency \$80,000 to \$100,000

Projected Overall Cost Range \$500,000 to \$730,000

(1) Costs shown are in 2016 dollars and are at an order of magnitude, pre-design level. Allowance shown for design, permitting, and contingency will vary per item, location, and conditions. All costs are prior to specific site assessments and any design will require more detailed evaluations to determine specific costs for each specific segment.

The Arroyo Colorado segment of the LRGV Paddling Trail System would link paddlers from the fishing villages of Arroyo City (1) to the Laguna Madre (east), or up stream to Rio Hondo. Rio Hondo has at least two suitable options for developing paddling launches either: from the west side of the arroyo on a recently acquired City property, and/or from City Hall park (2). The paddling trail can also be extended further inland to Harlingen (3).

MAP 3.10: ARROYO COLORADO PADDLING TRAIL SEGMENT



LEGEND

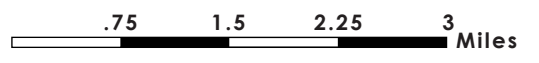
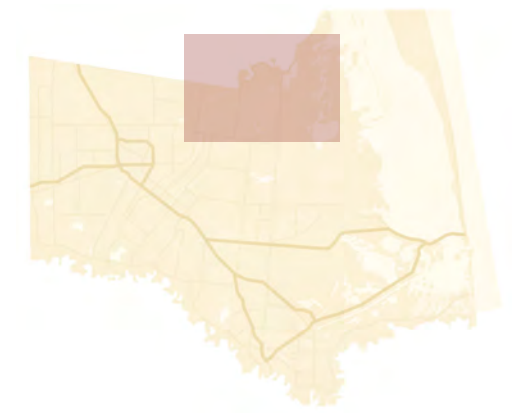
ACTIVE ROUTES

- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Alternate)
- US Bicycle Route (Proposed)
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Proposed)
- County Boundary

FEATURES

- Trailhead (Proposed)
- Boat Launch (Proposed)
- Wayside (Proposed)

LOCATION MAP



THE ACTIVE PLAN

UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE #55: LAGUNA MADRE SEGMENT

SEGMENT LENGTH: 18 Miles

DESCRIPTION

The Laguna Madre segment of proposed USBR #55 will connect Cameron County's coastal and bayside communities with the Laguna Atascosa NWR. The route provides a scenic connection between the County's principal tourism destinations, and the crown jewel of the area's ecological heritage. Where possible, the Laguna Madre segment of the USBR utilizes low-volume thoroughfares to provide a challenging - yet low stress - option for through-cyclists, or half-day out-and-back route for local fitness enthusiasts. This route may currently be accessed from SPI via bike rack equipped buses of the island's free public bus service.

ROUTE ACCESS/CONNECTIONS

Potential Trailheads. Roloff Park in Laguna Vista, potential enhancements at the Port Isabel Event and Conference Center.

Potential Wayside Shelters. Three (3) along the route. Locations to be determined.

Key Connections. Include: Bayside communities including Laguna Vista, Laguna Heights, and Port Isabel; Laguna Atascosa NWR (Bahia Grande Unit and Main Unit)



JURISDICTIONS: TxDOT, USFW, Laguna Vista, Laguna Heights, Port Isabel

CONSIDERATIONS

The following conditions will influence the development of the Laguna Madre segment of the USBR:

Highway Shoulders. Most shoulders have sufficient width to accommodate the addition of pavement marking and signage. Additional widening will be necessary at intersections to provide for right-hand turn lanes and bike lanes.

Trailheads and Waysides. Trailhead locations are assumed in Figure 3-13, but wayside locations are not. Negotiation with communities and private property owners along the route may be necessary to provide ideal spacing of proposed waysides.

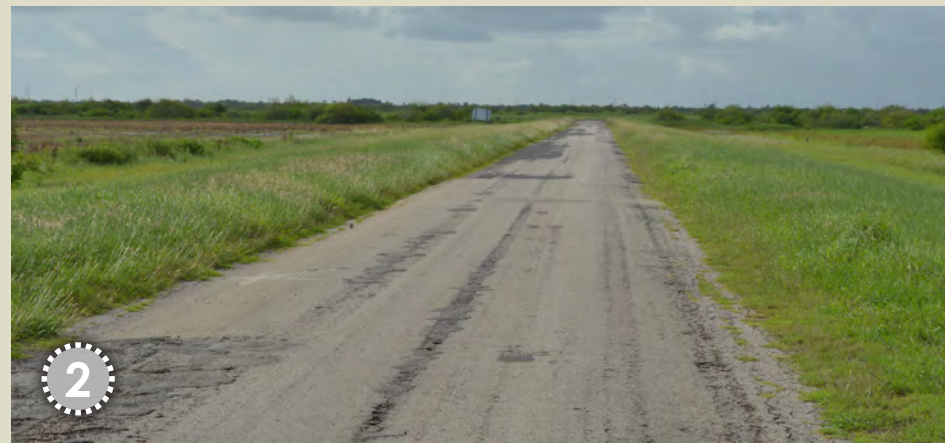


FIGURE 3-13: USBR #55, LAGUNA MADRE SEGMENT - POTENTIAL COST RANGE ⁽¹⁾

ELEMENT	LENGTH OR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST	PROJECTED COST RANGE
Improvements to existing wide shoulders	18.0 miles along Santa Isabel Blvd., FM 510 and Buena Vista Road to Laguna Atascosa NWF	Buffered striping and truncated domes (or similar separator) to delineate bicycle route along shoulders. Requires wide shoulders to be in place, and smooth asphalt seal coat.	\$25 per linear foot (includes both sides of the roadway)	\$2.38 million
Allowance for selective shoulder widening	10,000 linear feet	Allowance to widen existing shoulder from 4' to 10'.	\$25 per linear foot of shoulder (one side only)	\$250,000
Minor Wayside Station	Allowance for 3 included (location midway along route, could also serve as future transit stop)	Includes gateway signage, small shade shelter, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$50,000 to \$75,000	\$150,000 to \$225,000
Major Trail Head/Access Location	1 planned in Laguna Vista at Roloff Park (most trailhead features already in place)	Includes gateway signage, seating, paving, landscaping and informational signage	\$50,000	\$50,000
Way-finding and Interpretive Signage/Features	Allowance for features at key locations along the corridor (may serve directional or interpretive/historic/cultural purposes)	Locations to be determined	N/A	\$50,000 to \$75,000

Projected Overall Construction Cost \$3.5 million to \$3.7 million

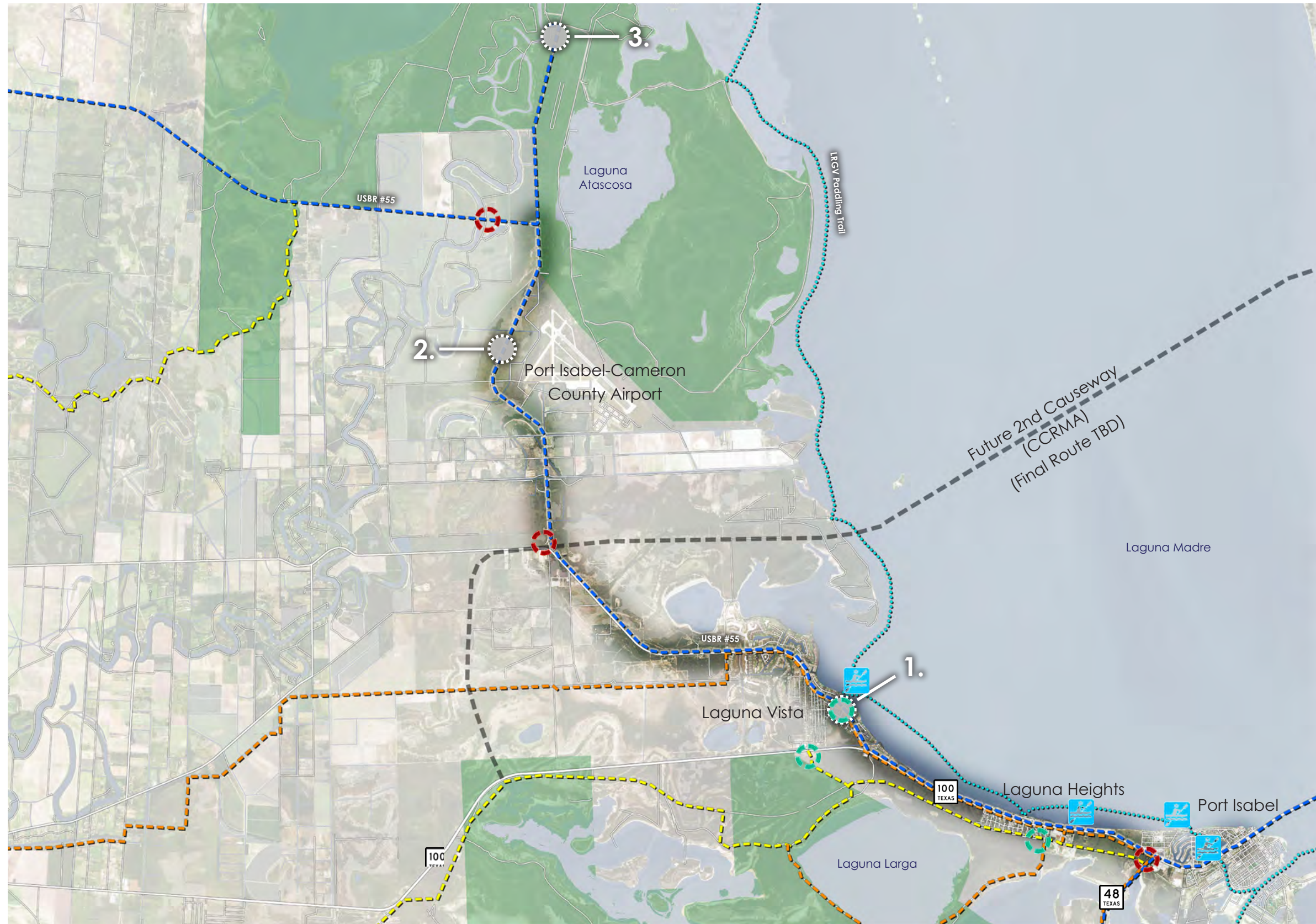
Allowance for Design, Permitting, Administration and Contingency \$0.4 to \$0.5 million

Projected Overall Cost Range \$3.9 million to \$4.1 million

(1) Costs shown are in 2016 dollars and are at an order of magnitude, pre-design level. Allowance shown for design, permitting, and contingency will vary per item, location, and conditions. All costs are prior to specific site assessments and any design will require more detailed evaluations to determine specific costs for each specific segment. To be developed in conjunction with TxDOT.

The bay side communities of Port Isabel, Laguna Heights, and Laguna Vista provide multiple options for the development of wayside amenities to support cyclists as they travel USBR #55 in Cameron County. Laguna Vista's Roloff Park (1) can serve the dual purpose of a USBR rest stop and a paddling trail launch site. Buena Vista Road welcomes bicyclists with low traffic volumes (and soon an improved road surface as part of ongoing upgrades) (2). The segment terminates at Laguna Atascosa NWR (3), one of the area's premiere natural attractions.

MAP 3.11: LAGUNA MADRE USBR #55 SEGMENT



LEGEND

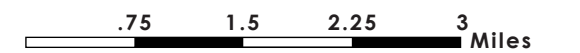
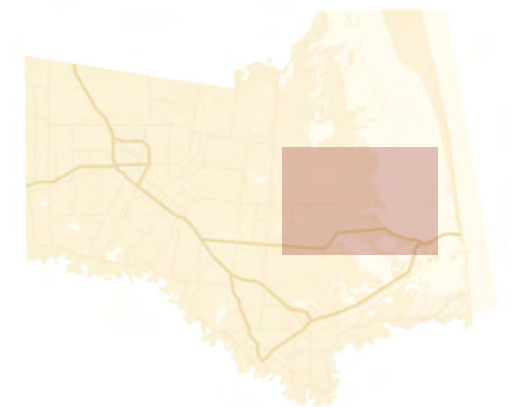
ACTIVE ROUTES

- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Proposed)
- LRGV Multi-Use Trail (Alternate)
- US Bicycle Route (Proposed)
- LRGV Paddling Trail (Proposed)

FEATURES

- Trailhead (Proposed)
- Boat Launch (Existing & Proposed)
- Wayside (Proposed)

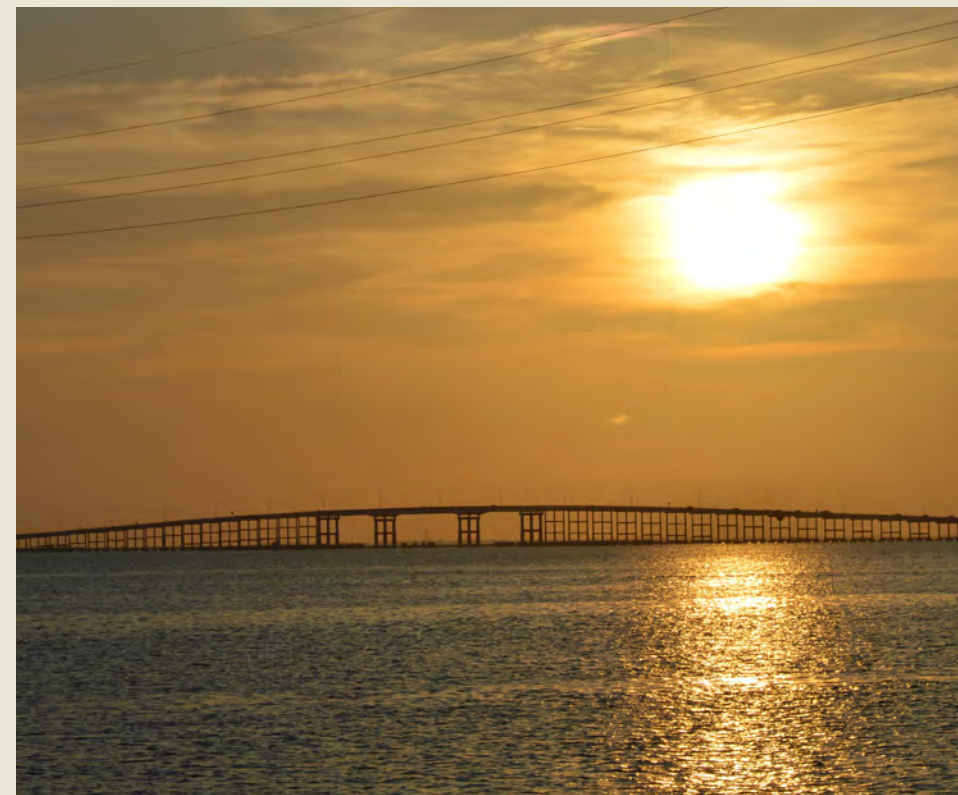
LOCATION MAP



CRITICAL CONNECTION: QUEEN ISABELLA CAUSEWAY

The Queen Isabella Causeway provides the only vehicular connection between mainland Cameron County and South Padre Island. The two-mile long span was opened in 1974 and incorporates four (4) lanes of vehicular traffic. There are currently no bicycle or pedestrian accommodations on the structure.

There has been sustained interest in modifying the causeway to incorporate designated bicycle and pedestrian facilities. A study commissioned by the CCRMA assessed the viability of three (3) bridge modification alternatives for this purpose (**Appendix F**).



The Queen Isabella Causeway is a remarkable potential tourism attraction if it can be modified to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle users. Photo by Halff Associates

Possible scenarios to accommodate a two-way bicycle and pedestrian facility on the Queen Isabella Causeway include:

- **INTEGRATED (MAINTAINS EXISTING BRIDGE WIDTH):** Would convert one existing motor vehicle travel lane to bicycle/pedestrian use. Three (3) lanes would remain for motor vehicles.
- **CANTILEVERED (WIDENS BRIDGE DECK):** Would widen the bridge deck by four (4) feet and adjust median barrier and striping to create a separated bicycle/pedestrian corridor.
- **PARALLEL (SEPARATE BRIDGE STRUCTURE):** A parallel span would be created independent of the current structure for bicycle/pedestrian use.

Cost estimates for the three (3) scenarios range between \$5.6 - \$27 million dollars.¹

Efforts to widen the causeway have recently been bolstered by the Federal Highway Administration's award - to the City of Brownsville - of a 2016 TIGER grant award totalling \$10 million dollars. A portion of the grant is earmarked to fund causeway widening to accommodate a 14 foot wide, two-way pedestrian and bicycle pathway (the "cantilevered" option listed above). Additional funding will be necessary to undertake the project.

Conversion of the Queen Isabella Causeway to a multi-use facility incorporating separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities is a critical component in attracting beach visitors to mainland attractions. The conversion would also serve as a substantial attraction to individuals searching for travel destinations that support active tourism. **Because of the overall tourism benefits provided by this enhancement, plans to modify the Queen Isabella Causeway should be a high priority similar to the six (6) catalyst projects recommended on the preceding pages.**

¹ Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority, Queen Isabella Causeway Bicycle and Pedestrian Study, 2015.

A CONNECTIVITY PRECEDENT: THE ARTHUR J. RAVENEL JR. BRIDGE

South Carolina's Arthur J. Ravenel Jr. Bridge was opened in 2005, and spans the state's Cooper River linking downtown Charleston to Mount Pleasant. The cable-stayed bridge was constructed to replace two (2) pre-existing spans that had become functionally obsolete - with deterioration limiting vehicular tonnage that the bridges could convey, and restricting port access clearances.

Although traffic on the pre-existing bridges was limited to motor vehicles, the former spans were already popular beyond their utilitarian purpose - for years having hosted the annual and (regionally) famous Cooper River Bridge Run. In part due to this popularity, efforts to incorporate a bicycle and pedestrian path into the design and construction plans for the Ravenel Bridge found a receptive local audience. The Charleston Bicycle Advocacy Group (now Charleston Moves) launched the "Can't Wait to Bike the Bridge" campaign to convince officials from the cities of Charleston and Mount Pleasant, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation, to support bicycle-pedestrian connectivity on the new bridge. The campaign was successful.

The new Ravenel Bridge is the third longest cable-stayed bridge in the Western Hemisphere, with a bridge deck clearing the water surface by 186 feet. In addition to its eight (8) vehicular lanes, the south side of the span includes a 12-foot wide two-way bicycle and pedestrian path and cantilevered viewing platforms overlooking Charleston Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean. The path extends for over five (5) miles including for the entire length of the bridge and approaches. In addition to the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity that this facility provides to residents of



the Charleston metropolitan area, many view the multi-modal bridge as both a new stand-alone tourist attraction (owing to the spectacular views) and as a catalyst for healthy activity in the region. A 2008 study initiated by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found:

“The preliminary results of this survey clearly show that if sidewalks and bike lanes are included in roadway design, residents will increase their physical activity as part of their daily routine — be it recreation or commuting to work.”

Vonie Gilreath, Senior Planner, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments²

“This (survey) verifies my daily observations that the path is used by people of all fitness levels, and is not just another venue for the highly fit to work out. It is gratifying to see the significant numbers of African-American users, men and women of all ages, and to see the substantial numbers of users of all races who clearly are trying to get fit but not there yet.”

Dr. Patrick O’Neil, Director, Weight Management Center at the Medical University of South Carolina²



South Carolina’s Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge includes viewing decks and a two-way bicycle and pedestrian path (sometimes referred to as the “Wonders’ Way.”) Source: Flickr: Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge Charleston (SC), Ron Cogswell, 2012



The St. George Island Bridge spanning Florida’s Apalachicola Bay provides another example of enabling active transportation through bridge design. The 4.1 mile long bridge opened in 2004 includes 10 foot shoulders accessible to bicyclists. Source: By Ebyabe - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12133923>

“Towering almost 800 feet over Charleston Harbor, it stands as irrefutable proof of the “if you build it, they will come” theory. Apparently, the Field of Dreams premise works on bridges as well as ball fields.”

Marie McAden, Bike Across the Ravenel Bridge, South Carolina Office of Tourism³

² Quick, D. (2008, May 12). Bridge Pedestrian Lane Raises Activity Levels, Study Reports, The Post and Courier, www.postandcourier.com.

³ South Carolina Office of Tourism, Bike Across the Ravenel Bridge, discoversouthcarolina.com/article/bike-across-the-ravenel-bridge, 2010.



CHAPTER 4 ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM

PORT ISABEL

The Lower Rio Grande Valley active tourism program provides strategies to attract visitors and ensure they have high quality tourism experiences. Building off of existing strengths and drawing on best practices from across North America, the strategies outlined in this report will help the region develop an effective regional coordination structure, promote the region as the best kept secret in active tourism, deliver a first-class active tourism experience, and track and measure progress.

The active tourism program, which will complement and build support for the implementation of the active transportation program, was developed with insight and input from economic development and tourism stakeholders in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

IN CHAPTER 4:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Active Tourism Program Goals, Strategies, and Actions
- 3 Example Active Tourism Program Outcomes and Metrics
- 4 Successful Active Tourism Programs
- 5 What Active Tourists Want



Cyclists know they will be welcomed at the Oakridge Lodge and Guest House in Oregon.
Photo by Lynda Kamerrer



THE
ACTIVE
PLAN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

START WITH WHAT'S WORKING IN THE LRGV AND ADD WHAT WORKS ELSEWHERE

The goals, strategies, and actions in this plan have been carefully developed based on an extensive existing conditions analysis (see chapter 2) and a thorough review of many tourism promotion efforts (see "Successful Active Tourism Programs," page 4.24). Cameron County¹ has world-class nature and wildlife, rich heritage and history, and a vibrant beach and bay tourism economy. It also has the beginnings of a strong biking, hiking, and paddling network. The active tourism program builds on the existing magic of Cameron County and draws on the best adventure tourism strategies from across the continent, including Trail Towns, Scenic Bikeways, Bicycle Friendly Businesses, National Main Street, and Magic Towns.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the active tourism program is to ensure that communities and businesses are able to maximize the economic benefits of the recreational, natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The program works to address tourism issues and opportunities through regional cooperation and to build the connection between the region's active tourism assets and the cities and towns they serve.

To organize and advance the region as an active tourism destination, this plan recommends promoting the Lower Valley as "a hidden gem" that has yet to be discovered by the many visitors to the state of Texas and visitors from within the state. Through engagement with the active tourism plan, communities will create

links to regional assets and develop the infrastructure, lodging, and services needed to attract a wide range of visitors. Success will bring resources to support further investment in local "place making."

The active tourism plan is designed to use the existing assets and active transportation infrastructure available in the region, while at the same time supporting the timely development of new trails, bikeways, blueways and walkways to enhance the growing network.

FLEXIBILITY AND INITIAL STEPS

The active tourism program is a comprehensive set of strategies for the region. Implementation may occur in stages with initial steps taking place in targeted areas of the county. Over time the whole range of activities may be undertaken. Implementers should adopt a flexible approach and take advantage of opportunities as they arrive.

In the initial stages, the strategies and actions should be deployed around the Catalyst Routes, identified in chapter 3, and the existing trails in those corridors. Conducting pilot programs on Catalyst Routes will develop those corridors into tourist draws and will provide a platform to launch region-wide tourism promotion activities.

The active tourism goals, strategies, and actions included in the plan provide a blueprint for transforming how Cameron County perceives itself *and* how potential visitors perceive it as a place to engage in healthy, active recreation. The following section lays out this blueprint in detail, however, additional planning and analysis will be necessary in order to develop a robust program that benefits all communities in the county.

PLACE MAKING is the planning, design, and management of public spaces to create places for people, where they want to visit, linger, and interact with others. Place making builds on local assets and inspiration, to promote health, happiness and well-being.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

These are some of the tangible products of the active tourism program. See the Goals, Strategies, and Actions for a more detailed discussion.

- Regional coordination
- Active tourism training
- Active Destination
 - Business Assessments
 - Certification
- Funding
 - Small business loans
 - A Community Development Fund
- Main Street investments
- Marketing plan
- Themed routes
- County-wide website with
 - An up-to-date tourism asset clearing house
 - A trip planning tool
 - Events promotion
- Business "ambassadors"
- Progress reports
- Economic Impact Study

¹ Note: This chapter refers to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the Lower Valley, and Cameron County interchangeably.



ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: NATIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION



Source: The Outdoor Recreation Economy: Take it Outside for American Jobs and a Strong Economy, 2012, https://outdoorindustry.org/pdf/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf



Source: America's Great Outdoors, Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation Outdoor Recreation: Jobs and Income, <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/docs/outdoor-recreation/recreation-economy.pdf>

Photo source: www.newmexico.com

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: NATURE & HERITAGE TOURISM

U.S. HERITAGE TOURISM



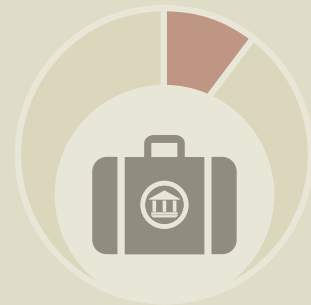
78% [118.3 MILLION ADULTS]
of U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural or heritage activities

Cultural & heritage travelers spend an average of **\$994** PER TRIP, compared to **\$611** for all U.S. tourists



Source: Cultural & Heritage Tourism Study, October 2009, Mandala Research, https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/10/Cultural_Heritage_Tourism.pdf

TEXAS HERITAGE TOURISM



10.5% of all travel in TX is heritage-related

Source: Texas Historical Commission report, 2013

Contributing **\$7.3** BILLION direct travel spending

RIO GRANDE VALLEY NATURE TOURISM



23% of Rio Grande Valley visitors experience nature activities



Contributing **\$463** MILLION to the economy

Source: Economic Impact of Nature Tourism on the Rio Grande Valley: Considering Peak and Off-Peak Visitation for 2011, Texas A&M University, April 2012

Supporting



annually

4.2 ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS



A Great Blue Heron at the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center. Photo by Flickr user laplaya29.

The following goals, strategies, and actions will guide the development of an active tourism program in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. They are organized around the following five key program components:

- *Leadership and capacity building*
- *Small business support*
- *Municipal and community engagement*
- *Marketing and promotion*
- *Monitoring and evaluation*

The narrative that follows introduces recommended strategies and actions that define each of the program's key areas of activity. This narrative also discusses the roles that various constituencies can play in creating and implementing a successful program. In general, these five goals are presented in roughly chronological order, however many of the steps overlap and goals two and three are conducted concurrently.

TOURISM GOAL 1: BUILD CAPACITY FOR A SELF-SUSTAINING ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM

To provide leadership and carry the vision for a high-quality active tourism experience in the LRGV, a regional organizational structure is recommended. That structure should include three basic elements: a coalition of organizations, a lead organization, and community-based working groups. Although applied within this goal solely to active tourism program development, these basic organizational ingredients are also representative of those that are recommended for overall Active Plan implementation.

Successful regional development of an active tourism program is dependent on the concurrent development of the LRGV regional active transportation network recommended in **Chapter 3, Active Transportation Program** (and vice versa). For that reason, the method by which the strategies and actions recommended within Tourism Goal 1 are implemented must be consistent with the overall organizational structure and processes recommended in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**. These strategies are presented independently herein however, so that active tourism program development may occur regardless of the pace of active transportation network development.

STRATEGY 1.1 DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.

A **coalition** of existing organizations – i.e., chambers of commerce, convention and visitor bureaus, downtown revitalization groups, foundations, the National Park Service, and non-profits – should convene to support the implementation of the program. Many of these existing organizations are identified in chapter 2 (and have participated in the development of the Active Plan), including one county-wide tourism promotion non-profit organization that might be considered as a convening entity.

Simultaneously, a **lead organization** or agency will need to be identified to oversee and coordinate efforts for program development and implementation (see also **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**). Once that organization is determined, the coalition members can begin to refine their plan of action including determining program structure, services, and funding mechanisms for implementation. Staff of the lead organization will work with coalition members to directly deliver the programs key components, as listed above.

At the local level, **community-based working groups** will help coordinate and implement the program, working in coordination with the coalition and the lead organization.

This multi-layered structure is intended to integrate active tourism efforts on a large enough scale to attract state and federal money to the region. Grantors like to see collaboration between and across communities. By forming a coalition and community-based working groups, the county positions itself to be a candidate for future funding. Initial implementation of the program should focus on a limited number of high priority projects associated with existing active transportation infrastructure in Cameron County.

The management and leadership structure needs to be scalable and adaptable over time to deliver the active tourism program across the region. Paid staff will need to supplement the skills and capacity of the coalition and the participating communities. It would be reasonable to expect that the staffing roles include program managers, city staff, community planners, website and database managers, and marketing professionals.

Action 1.1.1 Form an implementation coalition.

Identify members of a regional tourism coalition. The coalition will provide vision, direction, and coordination throughout the county. Membership considerations should include:

- **Economic development officials**
- **Convention and Visitors Bureaus**
- **County Health Department officials and University of Texas Department of Health**
- **City Planning Departments**
- **Elected officials**
- **National Parks Service and Fish and Wildlife staff**

Collectively, the tourism coalition must have the ability to deliver region-wide programs and promotions, including:

- **Economic development experience, and potentially delivering small business assistance, such as mentoring, training, technical assistance, business planning, micro granting, and lending.**
- **Access to community-based foundations and lending programs.**
- **Practical experience with community revitalization programs, including commercial building rehabilitation and streetscape improvements.**
- **Strong marketing and branding experience.**

Action 1.1.2 Create a lead organization and administrator.

The lead organization members must have experience successfully working with communities throughout the county. The administrator will need the capacity to manage the program and be willing to commit staffing and resources for the long-term, with the understanding that new funding sources are necessary for full implementation. Because the lead organization may have an equal focus on active tourism and active transportation development (as provided in chapter 5), the program



administrator may not be limited to an individual with tourism or economic development experience. Nonetheless, some key characteristics the administrator should have include:

- **Compatible mission with the active tourism program**
- **Direct communication channels with jurisdictions in the region**
- **Familiarity with recreation-based economic and/or infrastructure development**
- **Demonstrated success at fundraising and ability to administer grants**
- **Existing staff capacity**
- **Understanding of partnership and coalition management**

If no well-suited and committed organization is identified, one may be created.

Action 1.1.3 Establish community-based working groups.

As the catalyst routes recommended in chapter 3 are developed, the accompanying tourism promotion effort will need a management structure and local volunteer group. In the initial implementation phase, a working group should be formed around catalyst routes and supported by the staff of the administrator organization. The working groups will identify and coordinate with community members related to the destinations, businesses, features, and attractions along the route. The working groups will help implement key action steps for the trail corridor, including:

- **Drafting a corridor work plan**
- **Creating working groups**
- **Providing active tourism training and resources**
- **Inventorizing tourism assets**
- **Accessing grants and financing for communities and businesses**
- **Providing Active Destination Assessments and Business Certifications**
- **Launching marketing and promotion strategies**

The membership will depend on the unique make-up of each local community. Likely representatives will be municipal officials, businesses, representatives from tourism related organizations, and local residents/advocates.

STRATEGY 1.2 BUILD PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH COLLABORATION.

Action 1.2.1 Convene a broad range of organizations and agencies.

To gauge the level of interest and support for this effort the coalition should hold initial discussions with a wide-range of active tourism related agencies and organizations. A primary objective of this initial meeting and subsequent communications should be to identify existing efforts in the region and share the vision articulated in this plan. This action will build upon the stakeholder outreach conducted as part of the Active Plan process. See Strategy 3.1 for more detail.

Action 1.2.2 Introduce the public and potential stakeholders to the plan's vision.

Develop a presentation that introduces audiences to the Catalyst Routes and generates excitement for the Active Tourism Program. Seek out a wide array of public venues (community meetings, conferences, events) to make this presentation and cultivate interest and a sense of ownership in the active tourism program. See Strategy 3.1.

Action 1.2.3. Lead stakeholder site visits.

Recruit knowledgeable citizens and community leaders to lead tours and visits to Catalyst Routes as a way to give potential supporters a strong sense of the vision and an opportunity to develop a personal connection to the natural resources and activities around the Active Plan.

STRATEGY 1.3 REVIEW AND UPDATE TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES.

Action 1.3.1 Refine strategic plan for Catalyst Route implementation.

The coalition should review and refine key strategies and actions prior to plan implementation. The review should focus on Catalyst Routes and include the budget, schedule, and funding strategy based on the coalition member's resources.



A cyclist stops to read a tourist sign on U.S. Bicycle Route 35 in Michigan. Photo by Chuck Haney

TOURISM GOAL 2: ENGAGE AND FOSTER ACTIVE TOURISM-ORIENTED BUSINESSES

Many of the model programs reviewed for this plan measure their success by how well their downtown business districts create jobs and attract non-resident expenditures. In these cases, the key to business growth was access to capital and entrepreneurial coaching. The Lower Rio Grande Valley will benefit from a similar approach.

The active tourism business certification program will lay the groundwork for this success. Being certified as an “active destination business” will increase opportunities for private and public funding. Additionally, the certification will provide access to technical assistance and specialized training programs. Businesses that fully engage in the active tourism program will have access to resources that help them maximize the economic potential of the active transportation network and natural and cultural resources to which it provides access.

STRATEGY 2.1 DEVELOP AN ASSESSMENT TOOL AND PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES.

Communities need to know what mix of businesses and services need to be provided to support their role in active tourism. Likewise, local businesses need to know what it takes to attract and serve active tourists. A business assessment process and set of tools can help communities evaluate their existing business assets and identify gaps. These tools can also help educate business owners about serving the active tourism market and provide step-by-step guidance for making adjustments or expansions. A certification process can be formally named and branded as a part of the marketing process discussed in program component four.

Action 2.1.1 Assess community business assets.

As part of a larger community assessment (also discussed in goal three) a corridor working group will facilitate an evaluation of local business needs along select active transportation corridors. Items to be assessed include access to amenities like lodging, restaurants, equipment rental, transportation services, and medical and emergency services. A survey of businesses and public institutions will identify opportunities, challenges, and quality of the business environment. Building on the existing condition review in chapter 2, this process will begin with Catalyst Routes and then expand to new routes as they come on line.

Action 2.1.2 Conduct individual business assessments.

Develop a self-assessment tool for local businesses based existing resources (see “What Active Tourists Want,” page 4.32). This tool will help businesses identify simple ways to appeal to active tourists and to orient their services to the active transportation network.

Action 2.1.3 Deliver action checklists.

The business assessment will result in a list of implementable action items. The coalition can work with the businesses to prioritize the actions and identify possible financing strategies.

STRATEGY 2.2 ESTABLISH ACTIVE DESTINATION CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING.

In time, the lead organization and the coalition should establish a formal recognition and technical assistance program for local businesses that supports the overarching goals of the active tourism program.

Action 2.2.1 Develop an Active Tourism Toolkit and Training.

The active tourism toolkit will include information, case studies, self-assessment surveys, and practical checklists to attract active tourists. The toolkit and training will focus on meeting the needs of local communities and businesses within the regional active tourism program framework.

Action 2.2.2 Launch Active Destination certification.

Building off of the small business assessments, the businesses certification program will provide a set of baseline criteria that are essential in preparing to serve a tourism economy. These criteria include quality food unique to the region, cleanliness, consistency of operation, hours of operation, accommodation of the unique active tourists needs (such as refilling water bottles, bike racks) and more (see “What Active Tourists Want,” page 4.32). A certified Active Destination will be marketed as part of the regional active tourism program promotion, and the business will be eligible for assistance through business support programs. Active Destinations can be identified as part of the active tourism program by providing storefront window decals to help visitors identify preferred businesses and in other promotional materials.



*A happy cyclist outside the bike friendly McKenzie River Mountain Resort in Oregon.
Photo by Lynda Kamerrer*

STRATEGY 2.3 PROVIDE FINANCING OPTIONS AND BUSINESS SUPPORT.

To support implementation of the active tourism program, the coalition should consider pursuing the following options.

Action 2.3.1 Integrate support for Active Tourism businesses into existing Economic Development Councils (EDC).

The lead organization and coalition should work with the existing Economic Development Councils (EDC) and their lending partners to provide low-interest loans to communities and small businesses engaged in the Active Tourism Program. Many EDCs in Cameron County already have small business loan programs. These programs typically support funding for enhancements to existing businesses and the development of new businesses and micro enterprises. Funding criteria should be amended to ensure that Active Tourism Program businesses can compete. These programs may also be expanded if additional capital can be attracted by the new Active Tourism focus.

Action 2.3.2 Develop a dedicated funding source for business development.

The lead organization and coalition should seek out a dedicated funding mechanism and institution that can leverage a variety of new funding sources – private and public. A dedicated source of funds can be used to provide low interest loans and/or grants for existing businesses to upgrade services and new businesses to get started.

Action 2.3.3 Develop a business plan.

To financially support the ambitious infrastructure and programmatic goals of the active transportation program, development of a formal business plan is recommended. It should address the strategies, actions, and financing opportunities presented in this report. The business plan should consider how a diversified package of funding options for businesses and communities might best be developed.



Adams Street in Brownsville, Texas. Photo by Halff Associates.

Action 2.2.3 Designate Active Destination Businesses.

Determine how and when local business will be certified. For efficient promotional impact and to maximize exposure, business level certification can be celebrated in conjunction with community-level certification.

TOURISM GOAL 3: ENGAGE MUNICIPALITIES AND COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT ACTIVE TOURISM IMPROVEMENTS

As the active transportation network develops, it will become increasingly important for each municipality to understand and embrace its multiple goals and values. Development of active transportation infrastructure benefits local residents and provides a tourism opportunity. Development of businesses that support a vibrant active tourism economy contributes to overall local economic health. Finally, an active tourism market will make local public infrastructure upgrades more affordable. These upgrades may include streetscape and facade improvements for main streets, renovated local parks, creation of pocket parks, public art initiatives, or other improvements that give local communities a unique flavor or local charm that make tourists want to visit and stay.

These place making activities are a necessary compliment to the recreation/transportation infrastructure that supports active tourism. To support community enhancement efforts, the lead organization and coalition should provide support for planning, grant writing, and collaboration with county economic development organizations and state agencies. Each jurisdiction must learn about the new services and amenities required to attract and maintain an active tourism economy if they are to harness the economic power of the active transportation network.

STRATEGY 3.1 ORGANIZE AND TRAIN COMMUNITIES.

Each community will be involved with the active tourism program according to its own capacity. The initial organizing should occur around the Catalyst Routes.

Action 3.1.1 Community engagement.

Form an outreach team to engage the communities along the Catalyst Routes to introduce the program and its benefits and solicit participation. This outreach will help communities to understand early and easy steps they can take to capitalize on the active transportation infrastructure. Getting communities on-board early in the implementation phase will help build the necessary support to leverage regional partnerships and funding.

Develop a presentation that introduces audiences to the Catalyst Routes and generates excitement for the Active Tourism Program. Seek out a wide array of public venues (community meetings, conferences, events) to make this presentation and cultivate interest and a sense of ownership in the active tourism program.

Take small groups of potential stakeholders on visits to the best existing and potential activity tourism sites. Recruit knowledgeable citizens and community leaders to lead tours and visits to Catalyst Routes as a way to give potential supporters a taste of the vision and an opportunity to develop a personal connection to the natural resources and activities around which this Active Tourism Plan is built. Coordinate with strategy 1.2.

Action 3.1.2 Inventory community assets and conduct assessment.

The inventory and assessments will take a holistic view of how well a community is prepared to provide services to users of the active transportation network. Of particular focus will be an evaluation of business community needs as discussed in Goal 2. Starting with communities along Catalyst Routes, each will complete an inventory of existing conditions as a baseline for the assessment.

Bicycle friendly community assessments will be focused on attractions, supporting businesses, gateways, way-finding aids, and other accessory facilities that will support the active tourist economy. Assessments will rely on existing plans and studies as much as possible when looking at supporting infrastructure, route conditions, and opportunities for connections. For each community, current lodging should be evaluated and needs identified through conducting a region--wide lodging assessment.

Action 3.1.3 Develop an implementation action plan.

Working with each community, an action plan will be developed that lays out a framework for improvement. Components of the plan may include short and long term goals, key tasks and priorities, funding sources, capacity building support, and implementation schedule. Assisting in securing recommended community enhancements should be supported by the administrating organization and coalition members.



South Padre Island tourism. Photo by Halff Associates



Andy Bowie Park Beach Access #2 on South Padre Island. Photo by Halff Associates.

STRATEGY 3.2 GROW THE ACTIVE TOURISM NETWORK THROUGH COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE.

Action 3.2.1 Provide community-level resources and training.

Develop an active tourism program guide for communities and train communities to help implement its recommendations. Many excellent models exist for various active tourism tool kits. Drawing from resources from Adventure Cycling, the Kentucky Trail Town Program, the Allegheny Trail Alliance “Trail Towns Guide” and others will be helpful in developing support documents and tools that can help communities to organize (pages 4.24 through 4.31).

Action 3.2.2 Establish community design recommendations.

In addition to their recreation-related destination, active tourists want to visit aesthetically pleasing and inviting business districts. The community assessments will help communities determine whether they need to develop specific design guidelines to create a sense of place and quality town centers. Communities will need flexibility in deciding the types and level of enhancements they wish to undertake. For many communities, this type of design guidance already exists and can be refined. The National Main Street Program has extensive information on community design (see “Successful Active Tourism Programs,” page 4-24).

Action 3.2.3 Conduct scan tours of leading cities.

A delegation of active tourism leaders from Cameron County should visit cities that have recently redeveloped their downtowns. These visits will generate inspiration and ideas on design and planning. Possible cities may include Meridian, MS, or Chattanooga, TN.

STRATEGY 3.3 IMPROVE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM COMMUNITIES.

Use the community assessments to identify feasible enhancements to physical infrastructure. Consider aggregating infrastructure needs region-wide to leverage funding.

Action 3.3.1 Increase access to EDC funding and explore creation of a community development fund.

First, work with EDC to market existing small business loan programs to active tourism businesses. See existing conditions in chapter 2 for more information.

Second, through regional cooperation, leverage the economic potential of the active tourism program to increase access to existing local funding and by advocating for the development of an active tourism program community fund – a new source of funding or multiple sources channeled together. Examples of possible funding sources include the Texas Office of Economic Development and Tourism or a community development fund funded with the support of the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (see “The Progress Fund,” page 4.21).

The active tourism program, capitalized through a dedicated fund, can provide matching funds for state or federal funding sources, support necessary connections to the active transportation network, improve main streets and promote the unique characteristics of each place. This fund could yield significant near term impact, improving the experience and quality of life for year round residents as well as visitors.

TOURISM GOAL 4: PROMOTE THE ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM

To seamlessly integrate the active tourism program into existing regional and statewide marketing efforts will require the development of a new strategy that compliments current promotional plans.

The key components for establishing this new brand include:

- **Unified active tourism program brand (logo, tag line, etc.)**
- **Organizing region-wide events**
- **Marketing as a collective region**

The branded materials and messages will build local awareness (media, community meetings, etc.) and provide a platform to coordinate with state and regional tourism entities. The result should be that each community will have accessible and user friendly marketing materials that highlight their recreation assets, businesses, and available services.

STRATEGY 4.1: BRAND AND MARKET THE ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM.

Develop a regional branding and marketing strategy that builds on existing strengths and communicates the active tourism vision for the area. This effort will require a budget for reproduction of collateral materials, website hosting, and other typical market campaign expenses. The results of this work should be graphics, logos, window decals, and other materials that can be used by local communities and local businesses to advertise their participation in the active tourism program. Through the branding and marketing process, the overall program will be named as well as the individual program components, such as the Active Destination certification program.

Action 4.1.1 Develop regional marketing plan.

Secure funding to retain the professional services of a marketing and public relations firm with experience working in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Work with this firm to develop an appropriate array of branding and marketing products.

- **Name and brand the active tourism program and active transportation network**
- **Identify key themes to promote the region**
- **Develop targeted marketing/communication to attract South Padre Island visitors**
- **Develop marketing materials**

Action 4.1.2 Develop themed routes.

Create, brand, and promote specific routes within the active transportation network based on theme or organizing concept (e.g. name of wildlife). Themed routes reinforce the desired image of the county as rich in culture, heritage, wildlife, and active recreation (see "Successful Active Tourism Programs," page 4.24). The action builds on existing destinations identified on **Map 2.1: Cameron County Tourism Destinations** (page 2.24).

- **Develop logo and/or visual identity that fits nicely within the overall brand**
- **Map routes both virtually and in print, distribute through website and tourism related businesses**
- **Develop marketing approach focused on themed routes**

Action 4.1.3 Develop way-finding and branded signs for the network.

Establish a clear identity for the active tourism program including way-finding and signs. To clearly identify when visitors are entering an active tourism program community, establish branded signs, kiosks, and way-finding across the region. Seek out low-cost ways to enhance existing signs. To ensure the signs are designed and placed consistently, establish a sign guide for communities wishing to capitalize on the active tourism program brand. The sign guide should establish colors, graphics, layout and more. See the Allegheny Trail Alliance sign guide for use as a model.

Action 4.1.4 Implement retail promotions.

Establish creative business promotions that support multi-location and multi-day visitation for lodging, eateries, special events and more. Examples might include a homemade tortilla bike tour, a wildlife water trail tour, a fat bike beach tour, and "bike to the birds" rides.

Action 4.1.5 Promote designated "Active Destinations."

Develop local promotional packages building on regional marketing of the regional website and active tourism branding efforts. This approach will especially help small communities in the active tourism program network that may have important assets, but lack staff capacity and financial resources to develop appropriate materials, signs, and other components.

STRATEGY 4.2: CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS HUB.

Integrate the active tourism program message and brand into local and regional communications. Coordinate promotional efforts by using state-of-the-art electronic media in multiple platforms to efficiently communicate the many active tourism opportunities in the region. Designate ambassadors to set the tone and act as front-line resources for residents and visitors.

Action 4.2.1 Create a regional active tourism website.

Create a comprehensive, interactive website that highlights the active tourism program and its partners. Design should be geared toward the visitor with easy to access information about the region and maps. The content should also include the history, list the partners and provide news features, updates about active tourism program progress for the community and other relevant organizational information (see "What Active Tourists Want," page 4.32).

Action 4.2.2 Maintain a clearinghouse of tourism assets in the region.

Compile the assets identified along each Catalyst Project corridor to create and maintain a clearinghouse of tourism assets. These should be put into a database that can be consistently updated and accessed by the active tourism program partners. See chapter 2 for an initial list to build upon over time.

Action 4.2.3 Host a Trip Planning Tool.

Develop a user-friendly trip planning tool for visitors to customize their single or multi-day active tourism trips. Include a series of pre-determined itineraries or themed packages that encourage a variety of recreation options. These itineraries may initially be based on the themed routes and promotional packages identified in actions 4.1.2 and 4.1.4.

Action 4.2.4 Promote efforts.

Use existing tourism communication outlets to promote the Lower Rio Grande Valley, including:

- *State and regional tourism promotion entities*
- *Tourism industry sector (e.g. Adventure Cycling Association, Bike Overnights, American Trails, Rails to Trails Conservancy, American Hiking Society, National Audubon Society)*
- *Establish a social media plan and engage tourism "influencers" to promote the region as an active tourism destination on relevant platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and others as capacity allows.*

Action 4.2.5 Implement a tourism ambassador program.

Develop a tourism ambassador program. Work with well-located businesses within each community to be designated as a formal welcome destination. Businesses may include restaurants, lodgings, convenience stores, or gas stations. Provide training to front-line ambassadors for the region at these establishments and materials about active tourism in the region for the ambassador to distribute. An important component to creating front-line ambassadors is for them to experience the active transportation network firsthand. Thus, ambassadors can relate their experience to the visitors with enthusiasm and confidence.

STRATEGY 4.3: PLAN AND CONDUCT EVENTS.

Although the development of active tourism program branded events will take some time to develop, efforts should be made to integrate the brand, program logo, and materials into existing regional events to build awareness among visitors and residents alike. Often starting small and piggybacking on successful events like CycloBias, the Jalapeno 100, and the Longest Causeway Run & Fitness Walk can set the stage for other events that take advantage of, or advocate for, new active transportation

infrastructure. Events that move people from one venue or one community to the next are excellent ways to demonstrate an active tourism vision.

Action 4.3.1 Identify and aggregate active tourism events.

Conduct an inventory of area events and work to incorporate complimentary active program brand, messages, and activities. This action can build on the existing conditions information in chapter 2 and be published on the regional website (Action 4.2.1).

Action 4.3.2 Plan, promote and conduct events.

Coalition members and the corridor-based working-groups can designate sub-committees to organize events. Sub-committee members should attend events to hand out materials and build awareness and support of the active tourism vision.

Develop a branded calendar and disseminate event registration and promotions through electronic and print media; coordinate with local businesses to support event activities; and develop multi-day trips.

Organizers should consider fully supported multi-day trips with themes relevant to the region, such as Bike, Beach, Birds or Bike the Bridge: Port Isabel to South Padre Island. The key is to tie these events to the vision through branding, messaging and regional collaboration.

TOURISM GOAL 5: MEASURE PROGRESS AND BUILD MOMENTUM



One of the many highlights along the Great Allegheny Passage is this high trestle bridge.
Photo by Saara Snow

Continued success over time will be dependent on measuring and celebrating the outcomes associated with the active tourism program. At the beginning stages of implementation, the administrator and coalition members should set realistic, measurable, and attainable benchmarks to track accomplishments and adjust the plan as needed.

STRATEGY 5.1 IDENTIFY KEY OUTCOMES OF THE ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM.

Measuring performance will be important to demonstrate the response to the active tourism program and use of the active transportation network, as well as the economic impact of the public investments in active transportation infrastructure.

Action 5.1.1 Determine desired outcomes and metrics.

The goals and strategies laid out in this plan may form the basis of a regional "strategic plan" as shown in the example below (see "Example Active Tourism Program Outcomes and Metrics," page 4.18). Once the metrics are chosen, they should be on-going. Some will be measured yearly and others could be examined over a two to five year span.

It is important that there be steps taken to ensure chosen outcomes and metrics are measurable on a long-term basis, and that the data are integrated into future strategies. Progress reports can communicate outcomes and can be structured according to the active tourism program goals, strategies, and actions.

STRATEGY 5.2 MONITOR PROGRESS AND PRODUCE PROGRESS REPORTS AND AN ANNUAL REPORT.

Action 5.2.1 Monitor and report progress.

Once the coalition comes to consensus on performance measures, the administrator should monitor progress and regularly report back to the coalition and participating communities. The progress reports should be structured according to the active tourism program goals, strategies, and actions, and can be incorporated directly into the annual report.

Action 5.2.2 Commission an economic impact study.

Based on available funding, the coalition should hire an outside entity to conduct an economic impact study. To do this, the coalition and lead organization should retain the assistance of a reputable institution, such as a university or tourism related consultant, to assess and house the data, and to publish the findings. University graduate programs related to tourism industry or the business sector might provide the least expensive option, especially if the outcomes are consistent with their educational and programmatic goals.

Action 5.2.3 Produce annual report.

The annual report should be streamlined, easy to understand, based on verifiable data, and be a compelling marketing tool for future funding. Infographics and success stories can create easily digestible and impactful information. Alternatively, seek out existing related annual reports or studies that could be modified to include the active tourism program performance measures. A specific tool could also be developed to monitor progress.



ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: WATER TRAIL TOURISM



Photo source: www.americantrails.org

PENNSYLVANIA'S WATER TRAILS

The Schuylkill, the North Branch of the Susquehanna, Juniata, and Three Rivers

Visitors annually generate

\$731,000

in economic output

including

\$593,000

to the Gross State Product (GSP)

Source: 2012 PA Water Recreational Water Trails Economic Impact Study, Submitted to Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee by ICF Macro



Photo source: Driftly's Canoe Rental

KICKAPOO RIVER IN RURAL SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN

People canoeing on the river spend over

\$1.2

MILLION

a year

Photo source: WI Department of Tourism

Source: Anderson, Alan. Outdoor recreation, community development, and change through time: A replicated study of canoeing and trout angling in Southwestern Wisconsin. University of Wisconsin, Cooperative Extension Center for Community Economic Development. Madison, WI. 2000.



Photo source: www.VisitNC.com

NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL PLAINS WATER TRAIL SYSTEM

Paddling tourists contribute

\$55.14

MILLION

in economic impact

The combined benefit of local and non-local expenditures totals

\$103.9

MILLION

Source: Thigpen, Jack PhD. North Carolina Coastal Plains Paddle Trails Initiative: The State of North Carolina Coastal Paddling Survey. North Carolina Sea Grant, North Carolina State University, Dept. of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management; Fall 2001

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: BICYCLE TOURISM



PIKES PEAK AREA, INCLUDING COLORADO SPRINGS

Bicycle tourism adds
\$23
MILLION
per year

Up to
270%
return on
investment



“Bicycling is one of the most cost-effective transportation investments the region can make.”

Source: The Economic Impact of Cycling in the Pikes Peak Region, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments; Trails and Open Space Coalition; Steer Davies Gleave, 2015, www.adventurecycling.org/default/assets/File/USBRS/Research/2015%20Pikes%20Peak_econ_impact_cycling.pdf



THE STATE OF OREGON

\$400
MILLION
in economic
activity annually

Photo source: bikeportland.org

Source: The Economic Significance of Bicycle-Related Travel in Oregon Detailed State and Travel Region Estimates, 2012, Dean Runyan Associates, http://www.deanrunyan.com/doc_library/bicycletravel.pdf



LE ROUTE VERTE IN QUEBEC, CANADA

Bicycle tourists
spend an average
\$214
PER DAY
while cycling



than other
types of tourists



Two-thirds of those surveyed
plan to return for another trip

Source: A 2014 study by Transat Chair in Tourism in Quebec Province, <http://www.velo.qc.ca/en/pressroom/20150428145143/Cycle-tourists-Quality-tourists-for-regions-throughout-Quebec>



ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: TRAIL TOURISM



THE GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE (GAP) IN PENNSYLVANIA & MARYLAND

Cost
\$80
MILLION
to complete

Generates up to
\$100
MILLION
in annual spending

Overnight
cyclists spend
\$114
PER DAY



Day
riders spend
\$24
PER DAY



Photo by Thomas Moore

THE SILVER COMET TRAIL IN GEORGIA

Generates
\$120
MILLION
in annual spending

Supporting
1,300
jobs

\$37
MILLION

in employee earnings

Upon completion, the trail will generate an estimated **\$180 MILLION** in annual spending statewide, supporting **2,000 JOBS** & **\$55 MILLION** in earnings.



Photo source: Americatrails.org

ON THE WASHINGTON & OLD DOMINION (W&OD) TRAIL IN VIRGINIA

Spending by non-locals contributes



\$1.8 annual
economic
output
MILLION

34
full-time job
equivalents

\$642,000
of personal income
in the Northern
Virginia economy

Source: Great Allegheny Passage 2012 Economic Impact Study, Frostburg State University and Saint Vincent College, 2012, <http://www.atatrail.org/au/impact.cfm>. Per day spending numbers are averages.

Source: Silver Comet trail Economic Impact Analysis and Planning Study, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, July 2013, http://www.bnwga.org/wp-content/uploads/Silver_Comet_Combined.pdf

Source: The Washington & Old Dominion Trail: An Assessment of User Demographics, Preferences, and Economics, USDA, US Forest Service, Southern Research Station, the University of Georgia, 2004, <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/recreation/WOD.pdf>

4.3 EXAMPLE ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND METRICS

Goal 1: Build Capacity for a Self-Sustaining Active Tourism Program:

Metrics are simple, based on whether the organizational actions detailed in the active tourism program are achieved. The report should show an organizational chart and list coalition members, organizational, agency and political stakeholders, and participating communities and their working group members. Calendars or a list of events could also be included.

Goal 2: Engage and Foster Active Tourism-Oriented Businesses:

After the small business Active Tourist Assessment Tool is created, measure:

- *Number of business assessments conducted*
- *Document results of needs assessments and action checklists*

After an active tourism business certification and training program is established, measure:

- *Number of designated Active Destination Businesses*

Once financing options and an Active Tourism business loan program is established measure:

- *The number of requests for loans, grants from the business sector*
- *The number of funded programs/projects for designated communities and small businesses*

Goal 3: Engage Communities to Support Active Tourism Improvements

Measuring the success of organizing and training communities will rely on the following:

- *Number of communities engaged and participating with working groups*
- *Number of inventoried community assets and business assessments*
- *Additional metrics laid out in the implementation action plan*

Growing the active tourism network through community assistance will be measured by:

- *The number of community-level resources distributed and training programs are conducted*
- *The establishment of community-level design guidelines*
- *Tourism-related sales tax and bed tax revenue generated*
- *Reduction in storefront vacancies*
- *Documenting new or expanded tourism related businesses*
- *Number of participating Active Destination communities*

Improving the physical infrastructure for active tourism program communities will be measured by:

- *Number of loans or grants provided through EDC funding*
- *The creation of a community development fund*
- *Number of business loans provided through these programs or through other entities*
- *Miles of trail and sidewalk established per communities across the county*
- *Number of new active transportation connections established between existing tourism assets*

Goal 4: Promote the Active Tourism Program

Branding and marketing will help drive demand. After a marketing plan, including brand identity and logo, is established along with a comprehensive website, signing guide, and events, success can be measured through the following:

- *Number of themed routes mapped and signed*
- *Number of way-finding and branded signs for the network*
- *Number of print maps/brochures distributed via tourism related businesses*
- *Number of visits to the website*
- *Page views and length of time per page*
- *Number of downloaded maps off the website*
- *Increased number of lodging rooms*
- *Event registration counts*
- *User counts on the network using volunteers or electronic counters*
- *Visitor counts*
- *Higher occupancy rates*

An example of an achievable measure might include asking tourism related businesses to monitor occupancy rates and business sales during specific active tourism promotions and/or events, especially during “off peak” months where the hotel and tourism-related businesses can more accurately assess the impact of these events or promotions.

CASE STUDY: ALLEGHENY TRAIL ALLIANCE, GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE AND THE TRAIL TOWN PROGRAM

The following case study provides a detailed discussion of the Great Allegheny Passage Trail Towns Program. It highlights the important aspects of the program as they apply to the proposed active tourism program and indicates where those elements appear in the goals, strategies, and actions section.

The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) is a 150-mile rail trail in Maryland and Pennsylvania, connecting Washington, D.C., to Pittsburgh, PA. The vision behind the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) was to create an active tourism destination by linking seven independent rail trails that run from Pittsburgh, PA, to Cumberland, MD, and connect to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath National Historic Park (C&O Canal). By attracting active tourists, the trail provides economic benefits and business development opportunities to the rural communities that lay adjacent to the old rail lines, while also serving the recreation and transportation needs of the local population.

The formation of the Allegheny Trail Alliance as a formal organization hinged on everyone believing in the vision and working in collaboration towards that common goal. It was through this vision that trail supporters overcame seemingly insurmountable barriers, for example, the \$2 million Salisbury Viaduct, a 1,908 feet long bridge, and the \$11.8 million Big Savage Tunnel repair project.

The goals and strategies from the Active Transportation Program align well with the Allegheny Trail Alliance Great Allegheny Passage Trail Town Program model. Cameron County can adapt aspects of this model to existing local opportunities and needs.

ORGANIZATION: ALLEGHENY TRAIL ALLIANCE

The Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA) is a coalition of seven trail managers. The coalition also includes trail partners, community leaders, tourism professionals and supporters of the Great Allegheny Trail:

- **Mountain Maryland Trails from Cumberland to the Mason-Dixon Line**
- **Somerset County Rails to Trails Association from the Mason-Dixon Line to Confluence**
- **Ohioyle State Park from Confluence to Connellsville**
- **Regional Trail Corporation from Connellsville to McKeesport**
- **Steel Valley Trail Council from Clairton to Homestead**
- **Friends of the Riverfront from Homestead to Pittsburgh**
- **Montour Trail Council from Coraopolis to Clairton**

The ATA has a board of directors and supporters include a long list of partners: National Park Service, community leaders, visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, event directors, hotel and business owners, friends groups, and state parks.

Similarly, the proposed strategy for Cameron County would bring together key partners to form a region-wide coalition (see Tourism Goal 1).

IMPLEMENTATION: TRAIL BUILDING

For almost 30 years, the ATA was focused on trail building and maintenance. While each trail group was devoted to their own individual trail, the ATA provided additional impetus to lengthen and connect these trails with the goal of providing a continuous non-motorized route from the end of the C&O Canal Towpath into downtown Pittsburgh and the airport. The challenge for visionaries behind the effort was in gaining buy-in from individual trail managers. According to Linda McKenna Boxx, past president of the ATA, after the trail managers formally partnered in 1995, it took six years for the members to agree on the name, the Great Allegheny Passage. The process involved bringing over 80 partners together through an "Interpretive Concept Plan" which



Art sculptures create interest along the Great Allegheny Passage and beckon cyclists to come off the trail and into town. Photo by Saara Snow

developed a list of sites and defined the historical significance of the corridor. This process helped the trail managers feel connected to the trail so they could agree on the name. Once a name was chosen, the ATA focused on branding, finding funding for the connections, and business and community development.

Grants & Funding: According to the ATA, 50 percent of the funding for the trail came from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through state capital funds and recreational trail grants. Another 25 percent came from federal grants, including what is currently known as the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program Set-Aside [formerly known as the Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP) and then the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP)]. The remaining 25 percent came from private foundations and county-level contributions. In addition, several municipalities donated in-kind services by providing city owned machinery and staff time. The ATA focused on accomplishing the easy connections first and then used combinations of grants and donations to fund the most difficult aspects, such as tunnels and bridges. There are over 50 structures on the GAP and most had to be built or repaired.

The funding for Cameron County trail development and tourism promotion will similarly likely come from a wide range of sources. For a list of possible funding sources, see chapter 5.

Infrastructure from trail to town: In addition to the trail itself, non-motorized and/or safe connections from the trail into the towns and accommodations were needed. Communities built infrastructure including trails and on-street bike lanes using local money, Recreational Trail Program grants, and TAP.

In Cameron County, South Padre Island is currently making these kinds of improvements to enhance tourism and local travel – see chapter 2.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Trail Towns Guide: In 2005, *Trail Towns – Capturing Trail Based Tourism – A Guide for Communities in Pennsylvania* was released by ATA. The project was administered by the Regional Trail Corporation and financed by a grant from the Keystone Recreation Park and Conservation Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and National Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. Additional funding was provided by the National Park Service, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office. The guide is “designed to help leaders in these ‘Trail Towns,’ take advantage of the economic opportunity,” and “will help you transform your town into a more inviting and memorable tourist destination, and in the process, make your town a better place for your own residents to live, work and play.”

A “Trail Town” is a destination along a long-distance trail. Whether on a rail trail, towpath, water trail, or hiking trail—trail users can venture off the trail to enjoy the scenery, services, and heritage of the nearby community with its own character and charm. It is a safe place where both town residents and trail users can walk, find the goods and services they need, and easily access both trail and town by foot or vehicle. In such a town, the trail is an integral and important part of the community.²

² Allegheny Trail Alliance, *Trail Towns – Capturing Trail Based Tourism – A Guide for Communities in Pennsylvania*, 2005. <http://www.atatrail.org/pv/docs/1TTManual.pdf>

The goal of the guide is to help communities prepare for trail users, accentuate their amenities and build services that will aid business development. The guide references America's Main Street Center's “Four Point” or “Main Street Approach” to revitalization of community centers and provides a template for town leaders to get organized and identify key stakeholders – those that can service as “catalysts” and provide advice on partnership building, finding resources to support initiatives, and staying focused while patient.

The Main Street Four Point Approach is similar to the strategies in Tourism Goal 4 of the Cameron County active tourism program.



A kiosk on the Great Allegheny Trails tells cyclists what they can find in Frostburg, a town just off the trail. Photo by Saara Snow



A trail built leading to the town of Frostburg helps cyclists navigate the up-hill climb from the Great Allegheny Passage to town. Photo by Saara Snow.



Cyclists getting ready to enter one of the many tunnels along the Great Allegheny Passage in Pennsylvania. Photo by Saara Snow

A chapter of the guide is devoted to business development and focuses on the demographics and spending patterns of trail-user customers and their needs, providing lists of basic goods and a checklist that communities can work toward developing over the long-term. For Cameron County, a discussion of active tourist markets is included in chapter 2 and a checklist of active tourist needs is included in chapter 4. Another chapter is devoted to how towns can promote themselves, including branding, websites, advertising, and events. For Cameron County, branding and marketing is the focus of Goal 4. The final chapter of the ATA guide recommends that communities develop a Trail Master Plan to help them identify their needs, identify funding opportunities and help them accomplish their goals over time.

For Cameron County, this can be found in chapter 5 as well as Tourism Goal 5 of the active tourism program.

The Progress Fund: At the request of the ATA, in 2007 the Trail Town Program (www.trailtowns.org) became registered and administered by The Progress Fund in Pennsylvania, a community development financial institution. "The Trail Town Program® works in small rural towns across western Pennsylvania and western Maryland, focusing on community and economic development around trail tourism and outdoor recreation."³ For the Trail Town Program, the Progress Fund provides certification, low-interest loans, and some grants for businesses and communities for several trails,



³ The Progress Fund

not just the GAP. The funding adds amenities that the towns need to attract visitors from the trail into the community. These improvements also serve the local residents. For Cameron County, Goal 3 of the active tourism program recommends exploring the creation of a community development funds similar to the Progress Fund.

Trail Town Program Services: The Trail Town Program offers technical assistance for businesses wishing to start or expand. They offer marketing research and help business owners identify key locations, services and opportunities that trail tourism provides. They assist with business plans and offer summits, workshops and other networking opportunities.

For Cameron County, similar recommendations are made in Tourism Goal 2 of the active tourism program.

Key components of the Trail Town Program include:

- 1 **On-going economic research such as business and trail-user surveys which enables the Program and the business sector to both understand un-met needs and demonstrate success.**
- 2 **Community connections from trail to town which includes community grants for "gateway" amenities such as trailheads, bike corrals, kiosks, signs, and bike fix-it stations.**
- 3 **Bike rack program which provides discounted bike racks for towns or businesses to purchase.**
- 4 **Trail Town Art fosters pride in the community as well as attracts trail-users to the town.**

TOURISM PROMOTION

Branding and signing the trail: The ATA developed a logo and a policy for use of the logo by public and private entities.⁴

In addition, in 2008 the ATA developed a "Graphic Identity and Sign Guidelines Manual" which clearly lays out the way the logo, trail signs, and promotional materials can be developed. According to the manual, "trail users need and expect signage: to lead them to trail access areas; for rules and regulations; to describe the history and heritage of the region; to direct them to town services; and to orient and educate visitors."⁵



The Manual was funded through several tourism grant programs, the ATA, the Trail Town program and the Foundation Center. It is divided into seven sections which provide the purpose of providing signs, sign construction information, GAP background, logo guidelines, graphic specifications (including colors, typeface), sign location guidance, and illustrations on how to build and lay out graphics for GAP sign family.⁶

TrailBook, a guidebook for the GAP and C&O Canal:

Initially, volunteers for the ATA developed trip planner called "Linking Up!" which provided tips and planning recommendations. Trail maps were available but "on street" connections between sections were not provided as the ATA feared trail users may not be prepared to merge with traffic. Recognizing that a guide to the trail was an opportunity, the ATA developed what is known as TrailBook. The book provides trail information, a planning guide, and maps.

At \$10 per copy, the TrailBook does more than just serve the needs of the traveling public, it provides an important revenue stream for the ATA while also providing an opportunity for businesses to advertise their services and special amenities. Approximately \$40,000 is raised annually from the sale of the TrailBook and all proceeds are put into trail maintenance or special projects.

Website: The ATA website provides the following useful information for visitors:⁷

- **Downloadable maps**
- **Directions and Parking**
- **Mileage chart**
- **Elevation chart**
- **Services by map segment**
- **Camping information**
- **Bike tour services, multi-modal connections and shuttle information**
- **Trip preparation, safety information and trail etiquette**



In addition, the website provides a place for trail users to write up trip reports, information about tour providers, and post important trail access information (such as closures).

For Cameron County, Tourism Goal 4 of the active tourism program recommends creating a county-wide website with a clearing house of tourism assets, a trip planning tool, and promotion of local events.

Social and Traditional Media: Every year, numerous articles appear in area newspapers, magazines, television reports, and personal blogs. The ATA knows how important these articles are to selling the trail to potential users, so they post them on the website.⁸ This type of "earned" promotion is the golden ticket to building an active tourism destination.

⁴ Logo: <http://www.atatrail.org/au/logo.cfm>

⁵ Allegheny Trail Alliance & Trail Town Program, 2008

⁶ Great Allegheny Passage Graphic Identify & Sign Guidelines, August 31, 2008, <http://www.atatrail.org/docs/GAPGuidelines.pdf>

⁷ ATA website, <http://www.atatrail.org>

⁸ ATA website, <http://www.atatrail.org/ne/news.cfm>

The accessibility of the trail from two major metropolitan areas makes the trail a great place to “try” active travel according to Bike Overnights, a website devoted to helping people experience short one or two night bike trips featured the GAP.⁹

The ATA also administers a Great Allegheny Passage Facebook page where they post relevant updates about the trail, inspiring and related content and trail photos.¹⁰

For Cameron County, Goal 4 of the active tourism program recommends creating a marketing plan and connecting with existing active tourism promotion efforts.

MEASURING SUCCESS

In a recent presentation at the National Bicycle Tourism Conference, Linda McKenna Boxx, past ATA president and trail visionary who has devoted much of her professional life to completing the trail stated, “The Great Allegheny Passage cost \$80 million to complete over a 30-year time span, however the return on investment to the states and communities it serves is \$75 to 100 million annually.”

⁹ Bike Overnights, <http://www.bikeovernights.org/post/two-days-on-the-great-allegheny-passage-with-a-recumbent-trike>

¹⁰ GAP Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/GAPTrail>

Visitor/Business Surveys & Economic Impacts: Early on, the ATA recognized that in order to continue to expand and improve the GAP, they needed to demonstrate success. As early as 2002, trail-user surveys were being conducted. These initial surveys were mail-in and provided the first snapshot of what was happening both on and off the trail, who trail-users were, and where users were coming from.

The first full-scale economic impact study was conducted in 2008 and 2009 and made big headlines. ATA could define day-trip expenditures (\$13/day), overnight or multi-night expenditures (\$98/day) and business developments, including sales and growth attributed to the trail. In addition, it identified side-line benefits due to the revitalization of the towns along the trail.

In 2012, another series of trail-user and business surveys were conducted for The Progress Fund Trail Towns Program. The reports were written by the Center for Regional Progress, College of Business, Frostburg State University. The trail-user report demonstrated continued growth in spending (multi-day trips went up to \$114/day and day trips to \$17/day) and reinforced trail-user

“knowns” such as age (45-64 year olds), and accommodation choices. Businesses along the trail attribute 30% of their gross revenues to the GAP, and about half of the businesses said that the trail affected their decision to expand. According to the report, “at the county aggregation level, the weighted average annual revenue generated from the trail per establishment was about \$650,000. At the firm type aggregation level, the weighted average annual revenues generated from the trail per establishment was \$2.1 million.”¹¹

For Cameron County, Tourism Goal 5 of the active tourism program recommends setting goals for outcomes and specific metrics, conducting an economic impact study, and carefully tracking progress.

Overall, the story of Allegheny Trail Alliance, the Great Allegheny Passage, the Progress Fund, and the Trail Town Program illustrates many elements that make up a successful active tourism strategy. Many of these components are reflected in the Cameron County active tourism program, where they are applicable to the local context.

¹¹ Center for Region Progress, 2012. The surveys and reports are available on the ATA website: <http://www.atatrail.org/au/impact.cfm>

The Great Allegheny Passage cost \$80 million to complete over a 30-year time span, however the return on investment to the states and communities it serves is \$75 to 100 million annually.

Lisa McKenna Boxx, Past President, Allegheny Trails Alliance

4.4 SUCCESSFUL ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAMS

The following case studies feature successful active tourism programs operating across North America. Each program contains lessons that Cameron County can learn from and elements it can put into action. These brief “snap shots” describe the program, highlight important takeaways for Cameron County, and indicate how the program relates to the proposed goals, strategies, and actions in the county’s active tourism program.

TRAIL TOWNS PROGRAMS

Pennsylvania & Maryland; Kentucky; Northern Michigan

What it is: Trail Towns are a community destination along a long-distance trail, such as a rail-trail, towpath, water trail, or hiking trail. Their economies are oriented towards attracting and accommodating trail-based visitors.

Background: The Allegheny Trail Alliance started the program for the Great Allegheny Passage in 2007. Other trail town programs have begun in Northern Michigan and Kentucky. Similar programs include Canal Towns on the C&O Canal National Historic Park and the Appalachian Trail Community Program.

Administration Model: Each program is administered by an entity: a foundation, state tourism agency, university extension office, or a coalition. All provide manuals or “how-to” guides that list key components and steps for communities seeking designation to take including: trail-to-town connections (signs, information kiosks); bike racks, canoe and kayak racks; landscaping and streetscaping; safety (lighting, patrolling); business and hospitality services; attractive appearance of the businesses (turn back doors into trail front doors).

Implementation Details: Each program varies, however all have the following components:

- **BRANDING.** Symbolic designation such as a logo, sign or name
- **INFRASTRUCTURE.** Way-finding signs; kiosks, bike racks; bike lanes or trails to & within town
- **ART AND CULTURE.** Existing assets; developed art features & events
- **BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION.** Ensuring business products/ services meet users’ needs

Funding Sources: Funding for each program varies. The Canal Towns program is supported by the Canal Trust. The Appalachian Trail program by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The GAP Trail Town program is by the Progressive Fund, a community development financial institution. The Kentucky program is the Active Tourism Division of state tourism. In Northern Michigan, funding by state tourism and a non-profit, the Land Information Access Association (LIAA).

Key takeaways:

- **Trail Town programs provide a framework for working regionally with the towns in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. By focusing on the trail-to-town connections and the four components, towns can assess their strengths and weaknesses and prioritize improvements.**
- **Trail Town programs are focused on a symbiotic relationship between tourism and business. An organizing and funding entity must exist or develop to take on program administration.¹²**

Related Cameron County active tourism program goals: Aspects of Tourism Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 (For more details, see “Case Study: Allegheny Trail Alliance, Great Allegheny Passage and the Trail Town Program.”)

¹² GAP Trail Town Program:

- The Progressive Fund Trail to Town <http://www.trailtowns.org/>
- Allegheny Trail Alliance GAP Trail Towns <http://www.atatrail.org/pv/trailtowns.cfm>
- Trail Towns Manual <http://www.atatrail.org/pv/docs/1TTManual.pdf>

Canal Towns:

- Canal Trust <http://www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-towns/>

Appalachian Trail Communities Program:

- AT Conservancy <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/home/conservation/youth-community-engagement/a-t-community-program>

Kentucky Trail Town Program:

- Kentucky Tourism <http://www.kentuckytourism.com/outdoor-adventure/sites-services/trail-town/>
- How to Guide <https://elcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/4-Trail-Town-How-to-Guide.pdf>

Northern Michigan Trail Towns Program:

- LIAA <http://www.liaa.org/projectinfo.asp?pjtrv&rid=11&gid=1&v=p>
- Michigan State University Extension http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/is_your_town_a_trail_town
- Manual http://www.liaa.org/downloads/trail_town_manual.pdf

ADIRONDACK TRAIL TOWNS

Adirondack Park, NY

What it is: The Adirondack Trail Towns (ATT) is a proposed initiative in Adirondack Park, a six-million-acre park in northern New York State. The ATT program is highlighted as a key strategy in ADVANTAGE Adirondacks, the economic development plan for the park. The ATT links visitors to local communities through existing recreational trails and new thematic trails to promote the Park's artistic, cultural, entertainment, culinary, natural, and other resources. The ATT program is designed to support the development of a sustainable economy that respects the Adirondack's unique mixture of public and private lands.

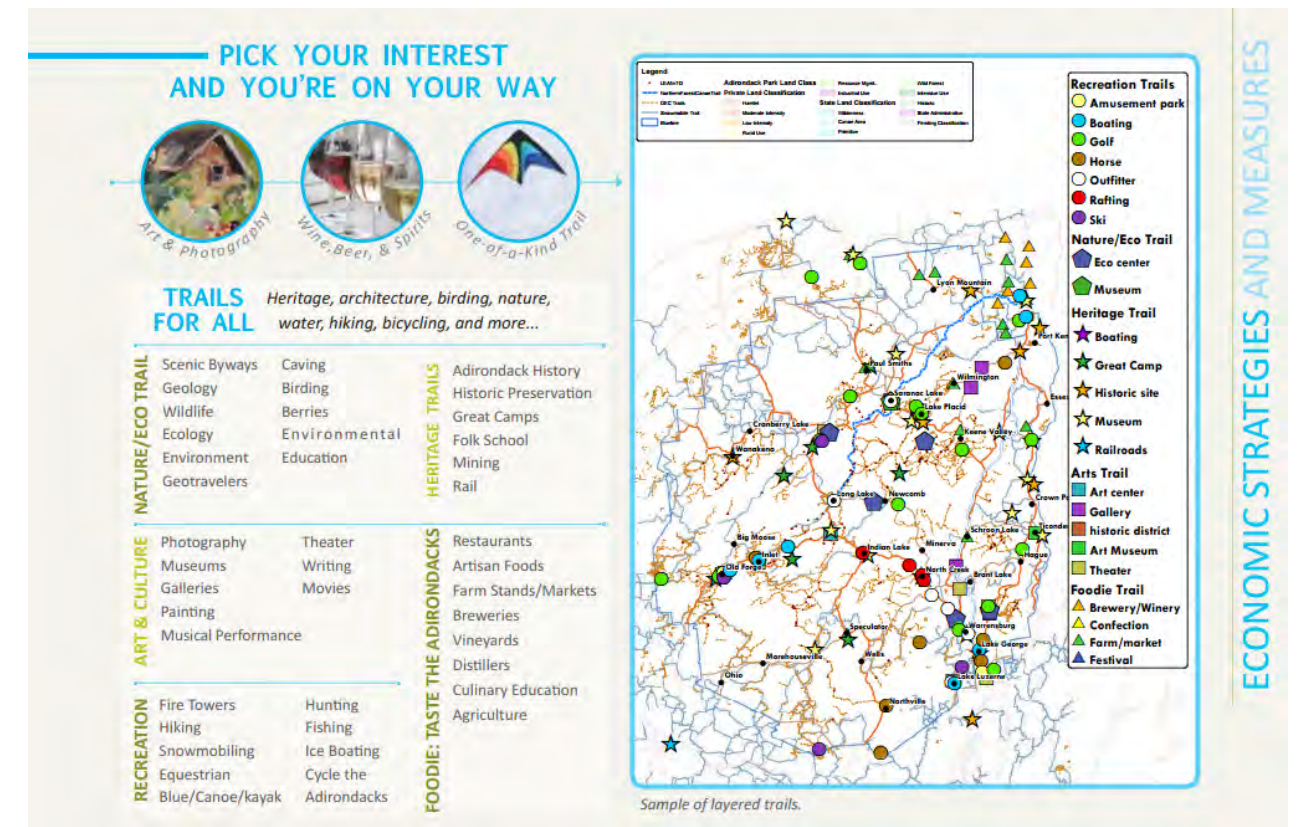
Background: The ATT is based on the Trail Town concept developed by the Allegheny Trail Alliance for the Great Allegheny Passage. While Trail Towns have followed a physical trail, the Adirondack Trail Town concept also invests in thematic trails, which follow a route connecting towns (with dispersed amenities relating to a specific theme such as a region's culinary highlights or local wines).

Administration Model: Rather than investment in a single community, Trail Town programs target towns located along a linear trail, route, or large natural resource to take advantage of trail users who pass through multiple communities. Collective marketing among towns boosts the region's image and attractiveness by providing a more diverse range of interests than any single town can offer.

Implementation & Funding Sources: The New York State Department of State is currently funding development of the Adirondack Trail Towns Strategic Plan for the Adirondack Partnership. The plan identifies select pilot alignments that are intended to be implemented in the next phase of the project.

Key takeaways:

- **Regional marketing and cross promotion is key. Communities can work together to encourage visits to multiple communities in a region and multi-day trips, which increase the amount of lodging, dining, and other tourism dollars spent in the region.**
- **A successful program should provide the communities and small businesses with support and tools to maximize their economic potential such as coordination, infrastructure enhancement, regional financial partnerships and investment and promotion.**
- **Identification of high value pilot routes can be an effective implementation strategy to move key projects forward and demonstrate the regional model at a scalable level.**¹³



Related Cameron County active tourism program goals: Tourism Goal 3 (Inventory Community Assets); Goal 4 (Themed Routes)

¹³ Adirondack Strategies, <http://www.adirondackstrategies.com/pdf/advantage-adirondacks-final-full-report-2014-11-21-compressed.pdf>

THE BICYCLE FRIENDLY BUSINESS PROGRAM

Nationwide; Santa Monica, CA

What it is: The Bicycle Friendly Business (BFB) program is a national certification program for businesses that contribute to a thriving bicycling culture based on the four E's of Encouragement, Engineering, Education, and Evaluation and Planning.

Background: Beginning with its own designation as a Bicycle Friendly Business (BFB), the Santa Monica Bike Center has helped more than 11 businesses achieve BFB certification.

Administration Model: The BFB program is a national program of the League of American Bicyclists. Any business with two or more employees is eligible to apply for certification through a four-step process. The BFB program benefits include national & local recognition, promotion, inspiration and feedback from a team of experts. In Santa Monica, California, the Santa Monica Bike Center manages the program in partnership with the League of American Bicyclists, Bike & Park, and Sustainable Streets.

Implementation Details: In order to receive certification, businesses must demonstrate that they meet certain criteria for encouragement, education, engineering, evaluation and planning related to employee bicycling. Business programs include such things as incentives for riding, maps and other educational materials, bicycle parking, showers, and special programs.

Key takeaways:

- *The BFB designation increases the morale, health, and quality of life for the designated businesses employees in addition to contributing to the bicycling culture of the community.*
- *Businesses praise the program for helping them reduce their carbon footprint, increase employee bicycling and positively impact the workplace culture.¹⁴*

Related Cameron County active tourism program goals:

Tourism Goal 2 (Active Destination Businesses)



Source: http://issuu.com/santamoniacfb/docs/bfb_yearbook_final_5320cdcf67b2e7/5?e=13966236/10422121

¹⁴ Links: http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFB_Overview.pdf
<http://smbikecenter.com/services/bfb-certification/>
http://issuu.com/santamoniacfb/docs/bfb_yearbook_final_5320cdcf67b2e7/5?e=13966236/10422121



Businesses located in central business districts are excellent candidates for bicycle friendly business designation due to their centralized location and access to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Photo by Halff Associates.

TRAVEL OREGON'S BICYCLE FRIENDLY BUSINESS DESIGNATION

Oregon

What it is: Travel Oregon's Bicycle Friendly Business program differs from the League of American Bicyclists Bicycle Friendly Business because it is specifically geared toward bicycle travelers.

It serves as a recognition and training program aimed to:

- **Help businesses understand the importance of Oregon's growing bike tourism industry.**
- **Provide tips and tools for how businesses can be bike friendly, and**
- **Highlight businesses who commit to enhancing the Oregon biking experience for visitors and Oregonians.**



A close up of the Bike Friendly Business sign outside the Oakridge Lodge in Oregon.
Photo by Lynda Kamerrer.

Tourism-focused businesses that meet certain requirements gain special recognition through Travel Oregon's marketing channels and websites and receive a bicycle friendly toolkit.

Background: The program launched in 2014. Travel Oregon manages an advisory group, known as the Oregon Bicycle Tourism Partnership that consists of over 50 organizations and individuals with various interests in bicycling, tourism, community development, and economic development. The partnership, along with the development of the Scenic Bikeways program managed by State Parks and Travel Oregon's www.RideOregonRide.com website reinforced the need for a bicycle friendly business program that focuses on helping the business sector develop services and amenities that serve the growing bicycle tourism industry.

Administration Model: The Oregon Tourism Commission, also known as Travel Oregon, manages the program. Travel Oregon estimates the program is inexpensive to administer due to the fact that many areas of the program are managed by different members of the Travel Oregon staff. Travel Oregon pays one FTE staff to coordinate all bicycle tourism promotions, projects and programs.

Implementation Details: To apply for the Bicycle Friendly designation, businesses must watch a short series of bicycle tourism videos and meet certain requirements, such as providing a minimum number of bicycle amenities from an approved list, meeting certain bicycle parking requirements, and meeting

certain lodging and food requirements (lots of carbs!), if applicable. All participating businesses receive a welcome packet with a Bike Friendly toolkit, stickers, window clings, and have the option to purchase a customized Bike Friendly sign. There are currently 526 recognized Bike Friendly Businesses.¹⁵

Funding Source(s): Travel Oregon manages the program and is funded from the state 1 percent lodging tax. The initial development of the program and the launch phase cost about \$10,000-\$15,000.

Key takeaways:

- **Bicycle-related tourism contributes \$400 million into Oregon's economy annually, according to a 2012 study. The Bike Friendly Business program is designed to help local businesses tap into this growing segment of the state's economy by delivering a premier experience for people biking in Oregon.**
- **Becoming a bicycle friendly business is relatively simple, increases business and positively impacts bicycle tourism in the state.**¹⁶

Related Cameron County active tourism program goals:

Tourism Goal 2 (Business Assessment; Business Certification Program); Tourism Goal 4 (Promote Active Designations); Tourism Goal 5 (Economic Impact Study)

¹⁵ List of Travel Oregon Bicycle Friendly Businesses, <http://rideoregonride.com/resources/bike-friendly-businesses/>

¹⁶ Link: <http://industry.traveloregon.com/industry-resources/product-development/bike-friendly-business-program/>

NATIONAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM



Source: <http://www.americusga.gov/#!downtown-amicus/c11wd>



Source: http://edgecast.travelok.com/images/photos/1295326284-ardmore381_485.jpg

What it is: The Main Street program accreditation process evaluates local Main Street programs and provides national recognition to those that meet a set of 10 performance standards. Not every Main Street program receives National Main Street Program status. It is considered a prestigious designation for those that achieve it.

Background: Established in 1980 as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Main Street Center works with statewide, citywide, and sometimes county-wide level coordinating programs to encourage preservation-based community revitalization, and has equipped more than 2,000 older commercial districts with the skills, and organizing framework they need for renewal.

Administration Model: In 2013, the National Main Street Center, Inc. launched as an independent subsidiary of the National Trust. As a nonprofit organization, the National Main Street Center Inc., provides information, offers technical assistance, holds conferences and workshops, and conducts research and advocacy on critical revitalization issues.

Implementation Details:

The national accreditation program strives to:

- *Provide local and national visibility to local Main Street programs that understand and fully utilize the Main Street Four-Point Approach,[®] eight Main Street principles, and that continue to evolve organizationally to meet new challenges;*
- *Provide national standards for performance for local Main Street programs; and*
- *Provide realistic goals and a tangible incentive for local Main Street programs that do not yet meet the criteria for national recognition.*

Evaluation criteria determines the communities that are building comprehensive and sustainable revitalization efforts and include standards such as fostering strong public-private partnerships, securing an operating budget, tracking programmatic progress, and actively preserving historic buildings.

Key takeaways:

- *There is a direct connection between the appearance and economic structuring of a downtown and the ability of that community to draw visitors.*
- *The Four-Point Approach has many applications for communities like Brownsville, Harlingen, South Padre Island and Port Isabel. Those points are Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and organization.¹⁷*

Related Cameron County active tourism program goals:

Tourism Goal 3 (Community-level resources; Community Design; Community Development Fund)

<http://www.americusga.gov/#!downtown-amicus/c11wd>

http://edgecast.travelok.com/images/photos/1295326284-ardmore381_485.jpg

¹⁷ Link: <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-programs/official-designation.html#.VjkZxrerRhE>

PROGRAMA PUEBLOS MÁGICOS – MAGIC TOWNS PROGRAM

Mexico



Central City and Cathedral, Angangueo, Mexico, Source: VisitMexico.com/pueblos magicos



Street Scene, Valle de Bravo, Mexico, Source: VisitMexico.com/pueblos magicos

What it is: The Magic Towns program – Programa Pueblos Mágicos – is a strategy for tourism development promoting towns throughout Mexico that offer visitors a “magical” experience – based on their natural beauty, cultural character, or historical significance. Towns awarded this designation receive federal funds to increase infrastructure, conserve their heritage, and improve local services.

Background: The Magical Towns Program was developed by the Ministry of Tourism in 2001 to highlight the great tourism value of towns throughout Mexico. As of 2015, a total of 111 towns and villages in all 31 states have been awarded the title Pueblo Mágico.

Administration Model: National program administered by Mexico's Secretariat of Tourism (SECTUR).

Implementation Details: Approximately 400 million pesos (more than \$24 million US dollars) was awarded for 2016 spending on maintenance, rebuilding historic centers, improving infrastructure, installing underground utilities, developing tourism products, training and other projects. In order to be designated a Pueblo Magico and receive federal funding, local governments must partner with a non-profit agency that will assist in planning, certifying and monitoring the town's projects.

Funding Source(s): Federal tourism funds

Key takeaways:

- *The Pueblos Magicos Program has been very successful in creating a new tourism identity for Mexico that goes beyond beaches to focus on Mexico's unique cultural identity and heritage. The program has resulted in a large increase in tourism and economic development dollars to the designated towns. Many countries throughout Latin America are implementing or considering similar programs.*
- *The public-nonprofit partnership aspect of the program is critical and must include a robust communication and public involvement component to ensure buy-in by local groups as individual projects are developed and selected.*¹⁸

Related Cameron County active tourism program goals:
Tourism Goal 3 (Community-level resources; Community Design)

http://www.visitmexico.com/work/models/PueblosMagicos30/WebPage/Angangueo/photoEscudo_Angangueo_SANGANGEO_Home_Header_950x434.jpg
http://www.visitmexico.com/work/models/VisitMexico30/WebPage/Valle_de_bravo/photoEscudo_Valle_de_bravo_valledebravomain.jpg

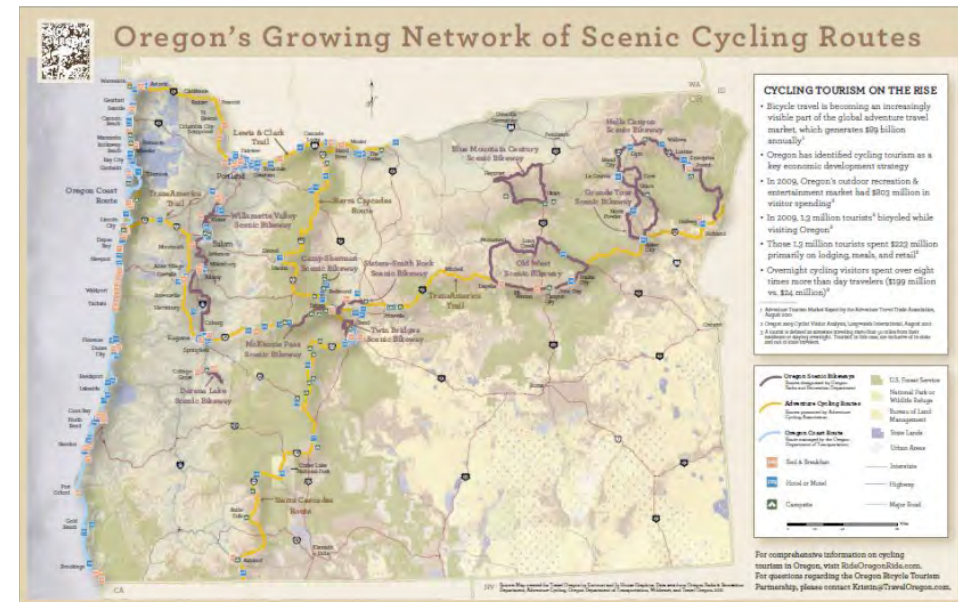
¹⁸ Links: <http://www.sectur.gob.mx/pueblos-magicos/>
<http://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/pueblos-magicos-list-gets-28-new-additions/#sthash.UFuSF7Ke.dpuf>,
https://www.academia.edu/2076163/Nonprofit-Public_Partnerships_for_Local_Development_Social_Inputs_in_Policy_Implementation

OREGON SCENIC BIKEWAYS

Oregon



Smith Rock Scenic Bikeway. Source: <http://www.pathlesspedaled.com>



What it is: Oregon Scenic Bikeways are themed and signed bicycle tourism routes that follow low-stress roads and trails, connecting numerous communities, and historic, cultural and scenic destinations. Themed routes include Old West Scenic Bikeway, Covered Bridges Bikeway, and Willamette Scenic Bikeway.

Administration Model: The program is administered by Oregon State Parks under the care of a committee that reviews regional community applications and awards the certification. Once certified, Travel Oregon promotes the route via videos, maps and promotions on the RideOregonRide website and Oregon Department of Transportation signs the routes. Communities add bike lanes and business services in order to get certified.

Funding Sources: The initial concept for Oregon Scenic Bikeways came out of a collaboration called Oregon Bicycle Tourism Partnership. The first state park staff person's salary was paid for by Cycle Oregon, a cross-state annual ride that puts event revenue into a foundation to support new bicycle programs and projects across the state. After the first couple years of the program being supported by the non-profit funding, the state parks were able to budget the staff and support team needed to effectively run the program.



Key takeaways:

- Themed routes increase the popularity and marketability of bicycling trips.
- Collaborations can increase the creativity of ideas and partnerships can help with program delivery.¹⁹

Related Cameron County active tourism program goals:

Tourism Goal 4 (Themed Routes; Branding; Website)

¹⁹ Links: <http://rideoregonride.com/rides/scenic-bikeways/>

Old West Scenic Bikeway <http://rideoregonride.com/road-routes/old-west-scenic-bikeway/>

BIKES IN BEDS

Western North Carolina



Bikes in Beds

How to maximize bicycle
tourism in Haywood County
and Western North Carolina

What it is: Bikes in Beds is a bicycle tourism report that assesses the bicycle tourism market, existing assets, economic potential, branding and promotional activities, and the potential for a scenic bikeway program in Western North Carolina, specifically Haywood County.

Background: The intent of the study is to maximize existing opportunities in the county and develop a framework for increasing all types of bike tourism in the region. There are ten action steps outlined in the report.

Administration Model: The report was prepared by three consultants for the county tourism authority, council of governments, and the local bicycle club as an extension of the Haywood County Comprehensive Bicycle Plan.

Implementation Details: The report defines what a bicycle tourist is, shows existing bicycle tourism in the region, provides economic impacts, and highlights projects that can be implemented. The report defines steps but does not assign a coordinating entity to administer the projects. As an extension of the county bicycle plan, the assumption is that the county will work with the bicycle community and tourism authority to act on the recommended steps.

Funding Sources: No funding sources were outlined in the report.

Key takeaways:

- *The study shows the importance of cooperation and coordination between local tourism, county government, and the bicycling community and that a plan helps all entities work toward a shared vision.*
- *Bikes in Beds report highlights branding pillars and emerging bicycle tourism opportunities that should be considered in the Cameron County plan.²⁰*

Related Cameron County active tourism program goals:

Tourism Goal 4 (Marketing Plan)

²⁰ Link: http://www.bicyclehaywoodnc.org/Files/2015_Bikes-in-Beds_WNCBikeTourism-FINAL-LowResolution.pdf

4.5 WHAT ACTIVE TOURISTS WANT

BECOMING AN ACTIVE TOURISM DESTINATION

Active tourists are seeking appealing attractions and destinations, suitable amenities, well-maintained infrastructure, high quality support services and businesses, and a location with a reputation for charm and natural resources. Destinations with unique or rare natural resources, which are well managed and not exploited, will lead to the authentic experience that active tourists are interested in.

Accommodating tourism requires both hard and soft infrastructure. Hard infrastructure includes roads and trails (see chapter 3), airports, lodging facilities. Soft infrastructure includes trail maps, information on heritage and culture, ground operators and outfitters, and training programs for adventure tourism providers such as guides and interpreters (chapter 4). According to The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), active tourists are “perhaps more sensitive than other travelers when it comes to soft tourism infrastructure.” While both hard and soft infrastructure are important, the latter can be developed for less cost, and more quickly.

This section describes the soft infrastructure that active tourists are looking for when selecting their destinations and in determining whether to return.

AMENITIES:

Active travelers are looking for include services that fit their active and healthy lifestyle.

- **Access to high quality, fresh and local food, both in restaurants and at grocers and markets is a high priority. Food is fuel and it is particularly relevant for those partaking in recreational activity on to their vacations. Active tourist are also interested in foods that are culturally relevant to the area they are visiting.**

- **Camping and accommodations that cater to the active traveler, including hostels and bed and breakfasts or locally-owned motels. Hiker Biker sites that offer simple camp spots and assure the traveler that they will be accommodated without a reservation are a great amenity that doesn't cost a lot to install or maintain.**

INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION

Websites: Active Travelers, like any tourist needs information about the region and they want to see what is possible. Web-based information with downloadable maps, itineraries and links to tour providers along with photos, videos and features on the activities that can be experienced in the area is key, but is often lacking on tourism-based websites. Active Tourists have become adept at searching numerous support sites, such as transportation, parks, wildlife refuge, National Parks, but the active traveler shouldn't have to work this hard. By linking to all these sites, local chambers and destination organizations can accentuate their offerings and additional tourist information geared to the active tourist is bonus.

Social Media: More and more tourists are booking trips based upon their friends and family trips posted on social media. Trips are also being booked by people who follow action/outdoor based photographers and industry insiders, such as National Geographic, Outside Magazine, REI, The North Face, etc. State and local tourism agencies that are leading the way are investing in hiring adventure tourism experts called “Influencers” and are using hashtags, unique campaigns, and trip blogs to inspire people to book trips to their regions and states and for branding. The most popular social media platforms for tourism are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Tumblr.



The Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, one of Cameron County's world class tourism assets.

TRAIL TOWN ASSESSMENT SAMPLE QUESTIONS¹

The questions below were developed by the Allegheny Trail Alliance to help communities assess their potential to attract trail-based tourism.

Traffic & Access Issues Assessment

- Is there adequate signage for motorists to find the trail from town?
- Excluding the trail, are there bike lanes or share the road signs in town?
- Are crosswalks well marked?
- Are the sidewalks in good shape?
- Are bike racks placed in easy to find place or near businesses?

Business Checklist

- Is there a “gateway” point to enter/leave town (like a piece of art/mural/sign)?
- Is there a tourism information or visitor center?
- Is there a bike shop in town?
- Does the town use special events to encourage people to come to town?
- Is the trail linked to downtown events and happenings?

Design Checklist

- Does the downtown feel distinct or special?
- In general, are vacant storefronts reasonably maintained?
- Are parks/green spaces easily accessible and welcoming to visitors?
- Are there recycling receptacles in town?

Access Area

- Is there an attractive, well placed access area sign?
- Is there an information kiosk or bulletin board? Is there a map of the town with businesses/services on bulletin board or kiosk?
- Is there interpretive information?
- If the trail crosses any roadways, are the crossings safe?
- Are there public water fountains or restrooms?

QUICK TIPS TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS FRIENDLY TO ACTIVE TRAVELERS

- Access to water
- Outdoor vending machines
- Charging station for mobile devices and free Wi-Fi
- Secure and safe bike parking
- Covered pavilion or simple shelter to rest, eat, or camp
- Message boards for hikers and cyclists to leave notes for each other and/or a service binder for local businesses to post ways they cater to active tourists
- A website to provide information about cultural, heritage, and active things that your community/business offers
- Low-cost hotel, hostel, or camping available within walking distance
- Hours of operation and weekend hours that accommodate early and late arrivals
- Bike lanes or paths through town and signs showing the way
- Bicycle repair and refueling supplies available for purchase, such as repair kits, tubes, spokes, bike tools, energy bars, and drinks
- Bicycle maintenance tools such as a bike stand, a floor pump and tools for making repairs
- Bike racks or hitching posts located outside businesses
- Restrooms available to the public

ADDITIONAL SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE

- **BUSINESS SERVICES.** Visitors need easy access to the activities they are interested in participating in, that means businesses that offer rentals, instruction and tours as well as support for those activities such as shops that sell and repair.
- **MAPS.** Visitors need to know where the routes, land and water trails are at a regional level. The importance of good, quality maps cannot be understated. Maps must provide the correct level of detail for travelers to easily find the “trail” as well as orient to the area and services should be featured as well.
- **ITINERARIES.** Another feature that travelers are finding increasingly helpful is a structured itinerary, complete with map, stops and historic and cultural features they can visit during the activity.
- **SIGNS.** Successful active tourism destinations have human-scaled way-finding signs, directional information and tourism kiosks. Signs can be branded to the region and for themed routes. Signs also serve local needs providing access to trails and safe active transportation routes, business services and destinations, such as museums, and parks.
- **SHUTTLES.** Bus services to active tourism destinations strengthen participation in those activities. Shuttles need to be able to accommodate bicycles, canoes, kayaks and paddle boards and have a regular, consistent schedule that tourists and local residents can count on.
- **EVENTS.** Running, biking, and paddling events that are well-branded and use the active tourism trails and routes or recognizable destinations/attractions can promote the region and build participation in the activity, both locally and internationally.
- **UNIQUE AMENITIES.** For active tourists, the unique attributes that play to the outdoor enthusiast’s interest in authentic experiences, nature, and culture should be highlighted in promotional materials, on websites, in social media and on trip blogs.

¹ <http://www.trailtowns.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Sample-Assessment-Questions.pdf>





CHAPTER 5 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITY CONSTRUCTION ON SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

The LRGV's active transportation and tourism programs, developed with the sustained participation of representatives from multiple LRGV communities and organizations, are ambitious and will require continued collaboration and coordination to implement.

The greatest challenge to the successful implementation of Active Plan recommendations is not one of motivation. Many local governments in Cameron County are already enhancing their transportation networks to accommodate multiple user groups. In partnership with area health organizations, they are investing in recreational trail amenities to promote walking and biking. Likewise, state and federal partners have utilized trail networks as a low-cost way to improve public access to the resources that they manage in Cameron County. Local chambers of commerce and tourism development entities market the active transportation resources within tourist destinations or throughout their own community. Nonetheless, successful Active Plan implementation will require that these localized active transportation or active tourism program efforts are viewed as part of a regional whole – and that regional objectives are considered as local investment priorities are determined.

Chapter 5, Implementation Program, of the Active Plan combines the active transportation network and active tourism program recommendations of Chapters 3 and 4 into a single administrative structure and work program. This chapter defines the time frame for Active Plan implementation, establishes the framework for program administration, ties funding sources to applicable projects and initiatives, and identifies a preferred short-term work program.

IN CHAPTER 5:

- 1 Implementation Program Parameters
- 2 Plan Administration
- 3 Program Funding
- 4 Short-term Work Program



THE ACTIVE PLAN

Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.

Henry Ford

5.1 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM PARAMETERS

Chapters 3 and 4 of the Active Plan establish goals, objectives, and actions for the development of a regional active transportation network and active tourism program. Although the implementation of these two (2) distinct initiatives may take place autonomously, all preceding Active Plan chapters emphasize that the reach and effectiveness of each program is dependent on concurrent and coordinated action.

Figure 5-1: Coordination of Active Plan Principles and Goals, illustrates the dual track approach to Active Plan goal development. Although active transportation network and active tourism program development may continue to be implemented along a dual track moving forward, **Chapter 5, Implementation Program** provides general parameters to ensure that the timing and approach to these activities is done in a manner that provides maximum benefit to the greatest possible number of Cameron County communities.

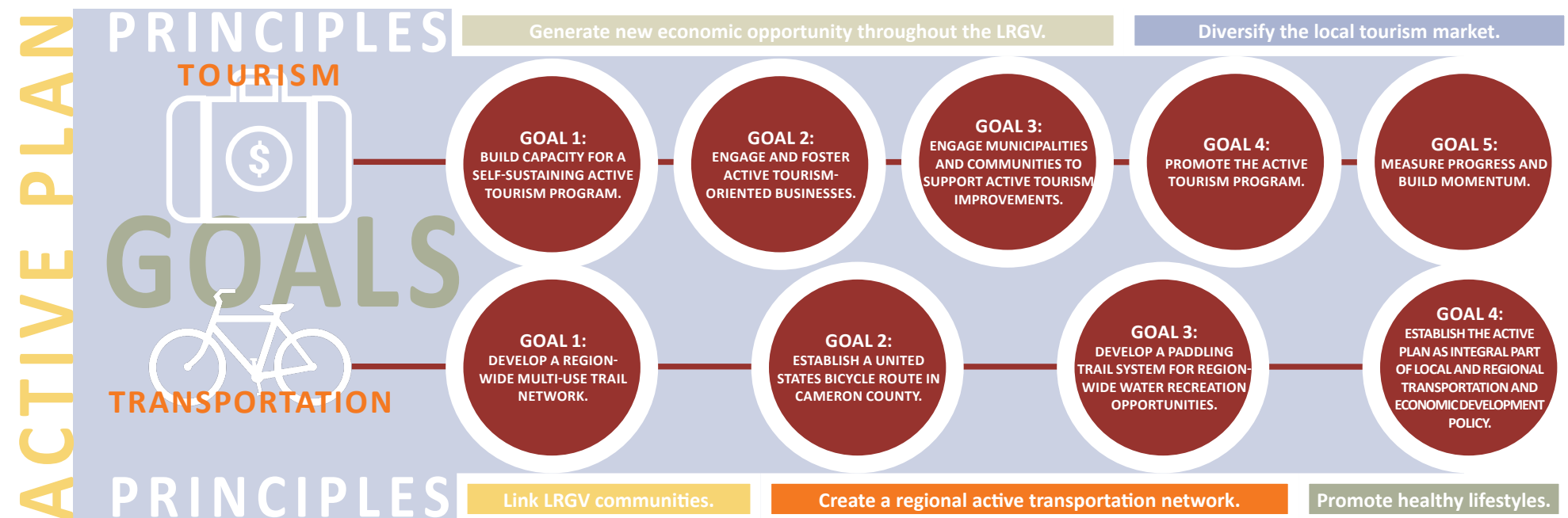
To that end, Chapter 5 addresses the following:

- **PLAN ADMINISTRATION.** Identifies a recommended administrative structure for Active Plan implementation. Discusses roles and responsibilities of local partners, and methods for monitoring progress toward implementation.
- **PROGRAM FUNDING.** Identifies all applicable funding sources which may be leveraged by one (1) or more Active Plan implementing partner for the development of active transportation infrastructure, or active tourism marketing programs.
- **SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM.** Consolidates key actions and initiatives from Chapters 3 and 4 to provide a list of priority steps which should be taken within the first few years of Plan adoption/endorsement by Active Plan participants.



Active Plan corridor development will require sustained and coordinated action among units of government, public authorities, and economic development agencies. Photo by Halff Associates

FIGURE 5-1: COORDINATION OF ACTIVE PLAN PRINCIPLES AND GOALS





CONSISTENCY WITH THE TEXAS OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

With a heavy emphasis on the development of recreational facilities, the Active Plan has been prepared in accordance with the TPWD's Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan Guidelines. Active Plan contents include all seven (7) plan components recommended by TPWD. Of particular note is the Active Plan's approach to "needs assessment and identification." LRGV regional active transportation network and active tourism program recommendations have been prepared using two (2) of the three (3) needs assessment approaches recommended by TPWD: **1)** Demand-based approach; and, **2)** Resource-based approach. The emphasis on these needs assessment approaches reflects the Active Plan's scope which extends beyond obvious local park and recreation demand, and considers how area-wide resources can build upon Cameron County's recreation economy.

The Active Plan is also consistent with the six (6) recommendations and 25 actions of the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (2012) (TORP). Active Plan recommendations most directly align with the following four (4) TORP recommendations:

- **Promote to general public and decision makers the total economic value of parks and recreation as it relates to attracting tourism, economic development and improving the quality of life.**
- **Seek sustainable funding and leverage resources to meet the expanding outdoor recreation and conservation needs of the growing, diverse and predominately urban population of Texas.**
- **Respond to prominent outdoor recreation trends.**
- **Manage access to public waters for recreation.**

Although the above TORP recommendations are intended to guide TPWD activities, they also reflect actions which will be undertaken by Cameron County local governments and partnering stakeholders to implement the Active Plan.



Active Plan efforts correspond with TPWD recommendations to promote the economic value of parks and recreation. Photos by Halff Associates



5.2 ACTIVE PLAN ADMINISTRATION

An Active Plan implementation structure was first introduced in **Chapter 4, Active Tourism Program**. Tourism Goal #1 (Build capacity for a self-sustaining active tourism program), recommends the development of an implementation coalition, and the creation or identification of a lead organization. Although the strategies within chapter 4 are focused on methods to create a successful active tourism program, the tourism strategies mirror the recommended approach for overall Active Plan implementation.

Figure 5-2: Active Plan Organizational Structure, illustrates the recommended implementation process. To ensure long-term coordinated Plan implementation by all planning participants, the organizational structure recommends a three-step process: *Organize, Formalize, then Implement*.

This implementation framework is structured around a central professional organization that represents the collective interests of all participating Cameron County government jurisdictions and non-governmental stakeholders. Although such an organization will rely on the valuable contributions of volunteers to undertake many of the initiatives recommended in this plan, **a professional organization (with a defined mission) is best equipped to ensure coordinated and successful Active Plan implementation over time.**

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The three (3) steps to building an Active Plan organizational structure depicted in **Figure 5-2** are as follows:

- **ORGANIZE.** *Representatives of participating local governments and other stakeholder organizations will form a steering committee. The steering committee will build a permanent organization to lead Active Plan implementation. The committee will prepare a charter, by-laws, solicit funding for organizational resources (compensation, hardware/software, physical location, etc.) and other necessary steps to create a non-profit Active Plan organization. Secondary responsibilities in this phase will be to initiate active tourism programs, and active transportation network development.*
- **FORMALIZE.** *Upon formation of the Active Plan organization, the steering committee may assume the role of the organization's Board. Additional representatives of area governments, stakeholder organizations, and other private interests may assume roles on one (1) or more committees to support Board activities. Figure 5-2 proposed three (3) committees: 1) A technical advisory committee responsible for infrastructure development and construction; 2) A land trust committee responsible for rights-of-way, easements, and dedications; and, 3) A programs and marketing committee responsible for active tourism program development.*
- **IMPLEMENT.** *While Active Plan implementation activities may already have been initiated by individual partners, the proposed organizational structure ensures that there is uniform buy-in – across Cameron County – for projects that could otherwise be viewed as only having a community-specific benefit. The Active Plan organization provides a neutral party to promote and oversee transportation network and tourism program.*

There are significant precedents throughout the United States for the organizational structure proposed in **Figure 5-2**. Please refer to pages 5.6 and 5.7 for a representative case study.

STAFFING

As with many other regional planning initiatives across the country, the chances of sustained implementation of the Active Plan increase under the oversight of paid staff. (Paid staff may simply mean that the duties of an individual employed by an existing entity are revised to allow the person(s) to manage the Active Plan's implementation.) Such a scenario may be a suitable low-cost approach in the LRGV as implementation activities are initiated. Long-term however, Active Plan organizational staff members should operate independently of an existing organization (particularly a local government) in order to avoid the perception of preferential treatment.

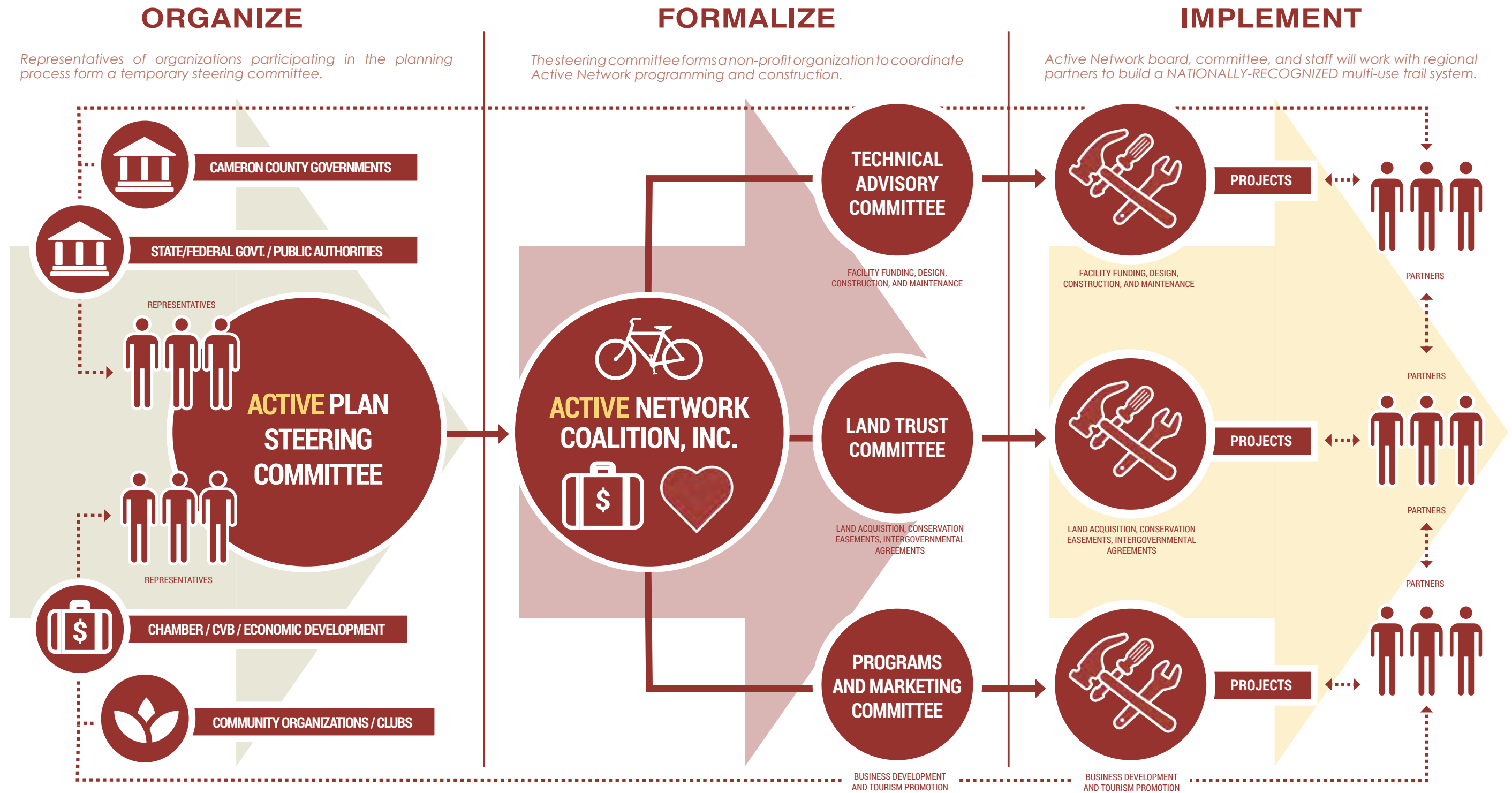
Paid Active Plan staff need not be extensive (one (1) to two (2) staff members, at most), but are essential to ensure that there is a singular focus on the initiatives of this Plan. In much the same way as a parks and recreation department, essential staff may ultimately include: **1)** An executive director who focuses on infrastructure development; and, **2)** A programs coordinator who oversees tourism program development and memberships.

RESOURCES

Similar to staffing, costs of a full-time organization may be reduced if housed at the offices of an existing foundation or similar entity - where office space, hardware, and software may be shared until organizational finances make it possible for greater organizational autonomy. Funding support may come from a combination of direct local government contributions, endowment funds, and grants.



FIGURE 5-2: ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION CASE STUDY: OZARK GREENWAYS, INC.

Since 1991, Ozark Greenways, Inc., has been the voice of active transportation throughout the Springfield, Missouri, metropolitan area. Serving an estimated 2014 population of over 440,000 residents, Ozark Greenways (OG) has been a consistent presence in the region for over 25 years – facilitating the development of a substantial multi-use trail network. With multiple entities throughout Springfield involved in recreation and transportation investment, OG has helped to ensure that the community's original 1996 Vision 20/20 trail commitments continue to be met collaboratively. These efforts have resulted in the development of 68 miles of multi-use trails, and 72 miles of on-street bicycle routes (and counting) throughout the metropolitan area.



ACTIVITIES

OG's mission is to develop a comprehensive public greenway trail network. It engages in planning, fundraising, and advocacy activities to develop trails within the city of Springfield, Greene County, and outlying municipalities. OG assembles funds, oversees design and construction, engages in trail maintenance, and builds community support for an ever-expanding network of multi-use trails, and on-street bicycle routes. The organization's scope is not limited to a single corridor, but rather encompasses a region-wide network that includes trail segments extending as far as 30 miles from downtown Springfield.

Over time, OG's activities have expanded beyond trail-specific advocacy, construction, and maintenance, to include events and programs that promote greater Springfield as a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community. The organization now protects the area's natural and cultural heritage by directly engaging in efforts to acquire conservation easements and promote urban forestry.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

OG is greater Springfield's "clearinghouse" for bicycle and pedestrian coordination. It represents many communities' commitment to region-wide trail development. A small paid staff is overseen by a Board selected to represent the broadest possible geographic and relevant professional scope possible.

- **STAFF.** OG is staffed by an executive director and a program coordinator. The executive director oversees trail network development – including fundraising and easement acquisition. The program coordinator oversees membership and organizational programming – including local bicycle-friendly business programs. In fulfilling their roles, OG's two (2) staff members essentially serve as the area's bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, and trail marketing coordinator.
- **BOARD.** OG's 15 member board of directors guides staff efforts. As a trails organization (principally), the board ties all activities and initiatives – including community awareness - to the organizational mission of developing a comprehensive greenway trails network.
- **COMMITTEES.** Board and other organization members serve on committees including a technical planning and construction committee, and land trust committee. Organizational committees are also staffed by professional engineers, planners, accountants, and attorneys representing partnering communities and other stakeholder agencies.
- **MEMBERS.** OG is a membership organization currently sustained by over 1000 individual and corporate members. Annual memberships help keep OG's doors open; but, members also provide thousands of hours of annual in-kind labor volunteering for events, fund-raising, and trail system maintenance.



Ozark Greenway's individual and corporate members sustain the organization's activities through direct donations and volunteer labor. Photo by Ozark Greenways

FUNDING

OG's projects and operations are funded through a combination of sources. Trail and accessory facility construction is typically funded through local, state, federal, and private grants, with in-kind matching contributions often provided by the City of Springfield, or other local government. Some trail projects are incorporated directly into larger parks or transportation projects that are included in municipal or county capital improvement programs.

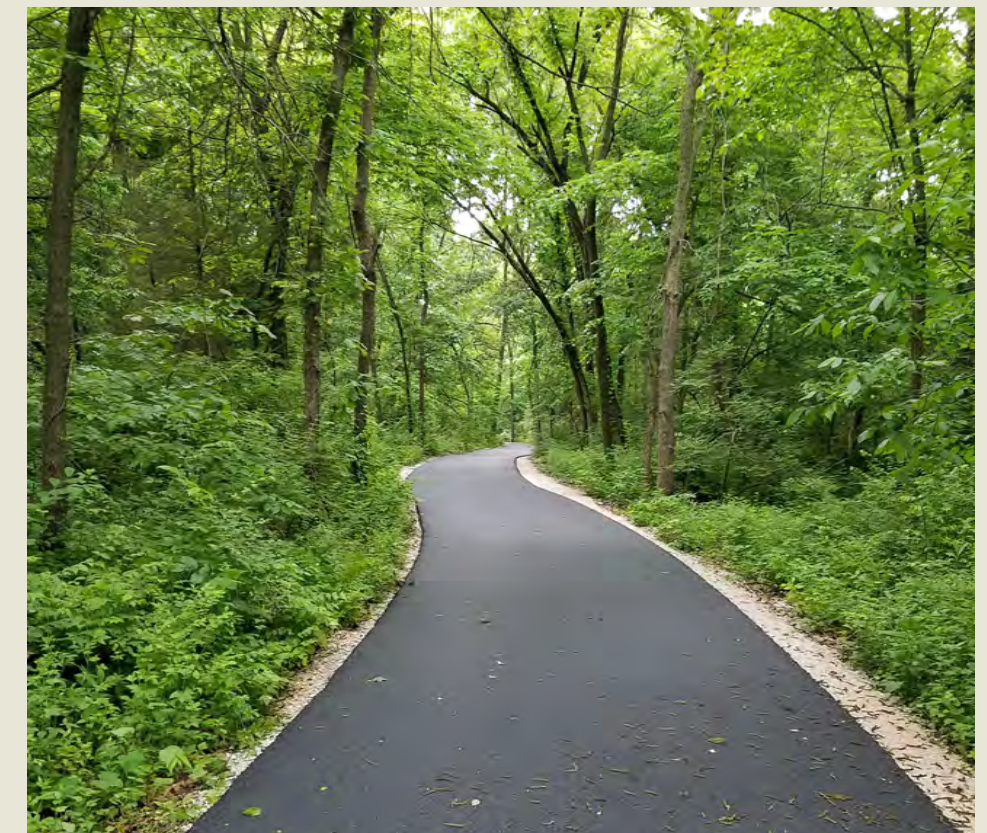
Administration and operations are funded by memberships, events, fund-raisers, and direct assistance from local governments and the city of Springfield's utility authority. These funding sources support OG's roughly \$200,000 annual operating budget including: salaries and benefits (2 full-time employees), office space and materials, computer hardware and software, etc. Staff salaries and benefits account for roughly 1/2 to 2/3 of the organization's operating budget.

OG benefits from an endowment fund established through the Community Foundation of the Ozarks which will be used in the future to build and maintain additional trail mileage, and fund additional OG staff.

PARTNERS

In addition to the local government entities that provide direct funding assistance, OG's activities are supported by local bicycling, running, and paddling clubs; conservation organizations; foundations; public authorities; and, state and federal partners.

It is true that OG is not required to partner with the same number of local government entities to achieve its success as would be necessary in the LRGV to implement the Active Plan. In addition, OG's mission is limited to local mobility and recreation – and does not include the active tourism objectives that are advocated in this Plan. Regardless, the organization's evolution from trail advocacy, to bicycle and pedestrian network development across multiple jurisdictions, illustrates the effectiveness (or necessity) of investing in a central active transportation “clearinghouse.”



Consistent trail branding and maintenance standards are utilized by OG communities through an intergovernmental agreement. Photo by Ozark Greenways

5.3 PROGRAM FUNDING

The wide range of governmental and non-governmental entities interested in implementing the Active Plan's transportation, recreation, and tourism goals presents LRGV communities and stakeholders with a unique opportunity. Ongoing Active Plan support and participation increases local partners' cumulative access to potential funding sources. Enhanced opportunities to access funding is the direct result of the diversity of stakeholders who have participated in the Active Plan's planning process. Local, state, and federal governments, public authorities, and non-governmental organizations have access to different funding sources, and funding mechanisms, that can be coupled to build the networks and programs recommended in this Plan in an expedited manner.

An inventory of funding opportunities related to Active Plan implementation are found on pages 5.8 through 5.12. The federal, state, and local funding opportunities are divided into two (2) categories: **A)** Infrastructure Funding; and, **B)** Programmatic Funding. The "infrastructure funding" category lists funding sources that may be used principally for the design and construction of the proposed LRGV active transportation network facilities. Programmatic funding sources are primarily intended to fund recommended active tourism programs.

Many of the funding sources listed are competitive grant programs. Many may also be leveraged among each other, or with other local funds derived from general funds, bond obligations, hotel/motel tax allocations, TIRZ collections, foundation grants, endowments, or even in-kind services.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING SOURCES

FEDERAL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (CDBG)

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—HUD

PURPOSE: This U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program, under the "Entitlement Communities" program area, provides annual grants to larger cities and urban counties to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and opportunities to expand economic opportunities, primarily for low- and moderate-income people.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY:

Examples include commercial district streetscape improvements, sidewalk improvements, safe routes to school, and neighborhood-based bicycling and walking facilities that improve local transportation options or help revitalize neighborhoods.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: City

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: Varies

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Varies

INFORMATION: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/

APPLICATION: Brownsville: <http://grants.cob.us/community-development/programs-1/cdb>; Harlingen: <http://www.myharlingen.us/default.aspx?name=CD.CDBG.Background>

FEDERAL LANDS ACCESS PROGRAM (FLAP)

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—USDOT/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

PURPOSE: Improve transportation facilities that provide access to Federal lands, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY:

Transportation planning, research, engineering, preventive maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration, construction, and reconstruction of roads, and provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Targeting State and county-owned roads accessing Federal land.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: State and local facility owners

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: Sliding scale match

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Spring of 2017 (Cyclical)

INFORMATION: Buena Vista Road in Cameron County, accessing Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, was selected in the FY2015 funding round.

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/APPLICATION:

<http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/tx/>; <http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/>
Information will be updated to reflect the FAST Act

FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY PROGRAMS (GENERAL INFORMATION)

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—USDOT/FHWA

PURPOSE: Eligibility for all federal funds: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/funding/funding_opportunities.cfm

HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROV. PROGRAM (HSIP)

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—FHWA

PURPOSE: To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Bicycle and pedestrian safety infrastructure projects are eligible, as long as they are consistent with Virginia's Strategic Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), are support by crash data, comply with Title 23, and are based on the state's safety goals. Projects on all public roads are eligible.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: Projects are typically selected by the state safety office.

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 90% Fed./ 10% Local Share

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Varies

INFORMATION: <http://onlinemanuals.txdot.gov/txdotmanuals/hsi/hsi.pdf>; http://www.nctcog.org/trans/safety/documents/HSIP_1214.pdf

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/APPLICATION:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidehsip.cfm>;

METRO. & STATEWIDE AND NONMETRO. TRANS. PLANNING

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—Fed. Transit Agency (FTA)

PURPOSE: Provides funding and procedural requirements for multimodal transportation planning in metropolitan areas and states that is cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive, resulting in long-range plans and short-range programs of transportation investment priorities.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Planning for bicycle facilities in a state or metropolitan transportation network.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: State DOTs and MPOs

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 80% Fed./ 20% Local Share

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Varies

INFORMATION: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidemetroplan.cfm>



RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—FHWA

PURPOSE: To develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY:

Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; construction of new recreational trails; easements; and assessment of trail conditions.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: local project sponsors

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 80/20

TYPICAL FUNDING: Max: \$200,000

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Cyclical

INFORMATION: Administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/APPLICATION: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/business/grants/recreation-grants/recreational-trails-grants>

RESTORE ACT

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Trust Fund

PURPOSE: The Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (The RESTORE Act). The RESTORE Act employs a regional approach to restoring the long-term health of the valuable natural ecosystems and economy of the Gulf Coast region.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Direct Component grants must support projects that: restore and/or protect natural habitats; mitigate damage to fish and/or wildlife; improve state parks in coastal areas; protect against coastal floods; promote tourism and/or consumption of Gulf Coast seafood; or develop the workforce and/or create jobs in the coastal region.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: State and local governmental agencies; Non-governmental agencies (for profit, non-profit, sole proprietors, private business, charitable organizations, educational organizations)

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: N/A

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Applications for Texas projects for grant funding under the Direct Component were accepted April 20, 2016.

INFORMATION: Scoring criteria: economic benefits, environmental benefits, comprehensive benefits, project logistics, community engagement. <https://www.restorethetexascoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Framework.pdf>

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/APPLICATION: <http://www.restorethetexascoast.org/civil-penalties-funding-gulf-restoration-restore-act/>

RIVERS, TRAILS, & CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RTCA)

REVENUE SOURCE: National Park Service (NPS)

PURPOSE: To support community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Goals and results for conservation and recreation; Roles of project partners are substantive; Broad community support; Role for the National Park Service is clear and fits mission; advances NPS objectives.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: Project applicants may be state and local agencies, tribes, nonprofit organizations, or citizen groups. National Parks and other Federal agencies may apply in partnership with other local organizations.

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: N/A

TYPICAL FUNDING: N/A

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JULY 1 (Annually)

INFORMATION: Contact Erich Melville: erich_melville@nps.gov

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/APPLICATION: <http://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>

TIGER DISCRETIONARY GRANT

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—USDOT

PURPOSE: To support innovative projects, including multimodal and multijurisdictional projects which are difficult to fund through traditional Federal programs. Successful TIGER projects leverage resources, encourage partnership, catalyze investment and growth, fill a critical void in the transportation system or provide a substantial benefit to the nation, region or metropolitan area in which the project is located.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Highway or bridge projects eligible under title 23, United States Code (including bicycle and pedestrian related projects)

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: State, local and tribal governments, including U.S. territories, transit agencies, port authorities, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and other political subdivisions of State or local governments.

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 80% Federal/ 20% Local Share. Larger local share indicates local priority and increases funding likelihood.

TYPICAL FUNDING: Average grant: \$10.4M; Urban area minimum: \$10M; Rural area minimum: \$1M

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Varies [Most recent round: May 2016 pre-application; June 2016 final]

INFORMATION: <https://www.transportation.gov/tiger>

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/APPLICATION: Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance: https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/TIGER_BCA_Guidance.pdf

STATE

BOAT ACCESS GRANTS

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act

PURPOSE: To construct new, or renovate existing, public boat ramps that provide public access to public waters for recreational boating.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Breakwaters; Loading docks; Land acquisition; Fish cleaning stations; Restrooms, showers, potable water, security lights; Parking areas; Camping facilities accessible only by boat; Access roads, bridges, signals; Engineering (planning and design), and environmental clearance and permit costs; Dredging, stump removal, and aquatic weed control; Navigational aids in the immediate area of access facilities; Signage

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: Local government sponsors

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 75% matching funds (25% local)

TYPICAL FUNDING: max: \$500K

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Oct 1, annually

INFORMATION: Related to the Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund, operated at the state level

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/APPLICATION: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/business/grants/recreation-grants/boating-access>

LOCAL PARKS GRANTS

REVENUE SOURCE: Texas Parks and Wildlife (Funded by State Sporting Goods Tax)

PURPOSE: To assist local units of government with the acquisition and/or development of public recreation areas and facilities throughout the State of Texas.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Recreation facilities

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: Cities, counties, river authorities, municipal utility districts, and other special districts

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 50% matching funds

TYPICAL FUNDING: Oct 1, annually

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Related to the Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund, operated at the state level

INFORMATION: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/business/grants/recreation-grants/about-local-parks-grants>

REGIONAL

The Region's Metropolitan Planning Organizations program Category 7 and 9 funds.

CATEGORY 7. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

[Formerly the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP)]

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—FHWA

PURPOSE: To provide flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, and ADA sidewalk modification, any Transportation Alternatives Program activity

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: Project selection for RSTP funds is made by the local MPO

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 80% Federal/ 20% Local Share

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: TBD

INFORMATION: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/factsheets/stp.cfm>

CATEGORY 9. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM SET ASIDE

[Formerly the Transportation Alternatives Program, formerly Transportation Enhancements]

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal—FHWA

PURPOSE: To support bicycling and walking (as well as other activities, such as storm water mitigation and vegetation management)

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities, Rails-to-Trails, Safe Routes to School activities, Recreational Trail activities

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: Local governments; Regional transportation authorities; Transit agencies; Natural resource or public land agencies; School districts, local education agencies, or schools; Tribal governments

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 80% Federal/ 20% Local Share

TYPICAL FUNDING: \$40,000 - \$970,000

APPLICATION DEADLINE: TBD

LOCAL

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

REVENUE SOURCE: Local

PURPOSE: Local improvements

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Public infrastructure

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: City

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: N/A

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: N/A

INFORMATION: N/A

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/ APPLICATION: N/A

DEVELOPER IMPACT FEES

REVENUE SOURCE: Local private funds

PURPOSE: To fund growth-related public service costs, including off-site services such as roads. Impact fees can also help local communities generate revenues for the development and extension of local street networks, transit stations, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Roads and multi-use paths

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: N/A

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: N/A

TYPICAL FUNDING: Varies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: N/A

INFORMATION: N/A

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/ APPLICATION: N/A

MULTI-NATIONAL

NORTH AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK—COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

REVENUE SOURCE: International

PURPOSE: The objective of the CAP program is to support the implementation of critical environmental infrastructure projects for economically distressed communities in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

NON-MOTORIZED PROJECT ELIGIBILITY: Public Transportation is an eligible project type.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/PROJECT SPONSORS: CAP grants are available for public projects in all the environmental sectors eligible for NADB financing. Priority will be given to drinking water, wastewater, water conservation and solid waste infrastructure. The funding, construction and operation of a proposed project must be completely independent and not depend on any other pending investment.

NON-LOCAL/LOCAL SHARE: 10% local share

TYPICAL FUNDING: Up to \$500,000

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Reviewed as received

INFORMATION: Applications will be considered on the basis of sectors, financial need, and environmental benefit.

LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/ APPLICATION: <http://www.nadb.org/programs/cap.asp>



PROGRAMATIC FUNDING SOURCES

CHAPTER 380/381 AGREEMENTS

REVENUE SOURCE: State

PURPOSE: Chapters 380 (cities) and 381 (counties) of the Local Government Code respectively grant cities and counties broad discretion to make loans and grants of public funds or the provision of public services, at little or no cost, to promote all types of business development including industrial, commercial and retail projects. Each agreement may be uniquely tailored to address the specific needs of both the local government entity and the business prospect.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Cities should review their charters for provisions that may restrict their ability to implement an incentive agreement. Both cities and counties should consider adopting policies or guidelines to provide a framework for negotiating development agreements.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: For a "public purpose," e.g. "for the public purposes of development and diversification of the economy of the state, the elimination of unemployment or underemployment in the state...or the development or expansion of transportation or commerce in the state."

CRITERIA: Job creation potential

TYPICAL FUNDING LEVEL: Depends on number of potential jobs

MATCH: N/A

TO BE INCLUDED IN APPLICATION: N/A

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: N/A

APPLICATION LINK: Work with local Economic Development Council (EDC)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FUND (CDFI FUND)

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal (U.S. Department of Treasury)

PURPOSE: To create economic opportunity in America's underserved communities and transforming the lives of the people who live and work there.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Certified CDFIs, e.g.: <http://www.rgvcommunityloancenter.com/>

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: Financial Assistance awards and Technical Assistance grants.

CRITERIA: All Applications will be initially evaluated by external non-Federal reviewers who are selected based on criteria that includes: a professional background in community and economic development finance; experience reviewing financial statements of all CDFI institution types; and experience performing underwriting of community and economic development projects.

TYPICAL FUNDING LEVEL: \$100,000 - \$2,000,000

MATCH: Varies

TO BE INCLUDED IN APPLICATION: Funding Application Detail; Application Financial Data; Financials and Portfolio; Impacts; Application Activities Levels; Funders; Matching Funds Used; Customer Snapshot Table; Key Personnel; Policies; Product Design; Narratives

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: <https://www.cdfifund.gov/Documents/FY2016%20CDFI%20Program%20NOFA.pdf>

APPLICATION LINK: <https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/cdfi-program/Pages/apply-step.aspx#step2>

FY 2016 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

REVENUE SOURCE: Federal (Department of Commerce)

PURPOSE: To make construction, non-construction, and revolving loan fund investments under the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Programs.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Nonprofits, County governments, City or township governments, Native American tribal governments, Institutions of higher education, State governments

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: Strategic investments on a competitive- merit-basis to support economic development, foster job creation, and attract private investment in economically distressed areas of the United States.

CRITERIA: Job creation in distressed areas.

TYPICAL FUNDING LEVEL: \$100,000 - \$3,000,000

MATCH: N/A

TO BE INCLUDED IN APPLICATION: N/A

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: Matthew Giannini
Austin Regional Office
903 San Jacinto, Suite 206
Austin, TX 78701
P: 512-516-1878
E: mgiannini@eda.gov

APPLICATION LINK: <https://www.eda.gov/how-to-apply/>

KRESGE

REVENUE SOURCE: Foundation

PURPOSE: The Kresge Foundation invests in improving the bedrock economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions of urban life, with an emphasis on reducing disparities facing low-income people; advancing their pathways of opportunity; and promoting cultural vibrancy, systems of mutual support and environmental sustainability in the communities in which they live.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: nonprofits and government entities

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- Embed arts and culture in larger community revitalization initiatives.
- Engage in cross-disciplinary, cross-sector activities.
- Exhibit strong leadership.
- Include artists and arts organizations.
- Extend benefits to all stakeholders, especially low-income community members.
- Demonstrate commitment to sustained engagement and empowerment of low-income residents.
- Work to ensure current residents can remain in their community even where revitalization changes neighborhood economics.

CRITERIA:

- Lack traditional investors, but have secured some public or philanthropic investments to support other elements of community revitalization.
- Demonstrate success in pursuing creative placemaking strategies.
- Show support for the creative placemaking effort from multiple sectors.
- We accept and review these proposals on an ongoing basis.

TYPICAL FUNDING LEVEL: varies

MATCH: N/A

TO BE INCLUDED IN APPLICATION: See application link

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: <http://kresge.org/programs/arts-culture/harvesting-leading-practices#>

APPLICATION LINK: https://kresge.fluxx.io/user_sessions/new

NATIONAL TRUST PRESERVATION GRANTS

REVENUE SOURCE: NTHP

PURPOSE: To encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money for preservation projects. These grants help stimulate public discussion, enable local groups to gain the technical expertise needed for particular projects, introduce the public to preservation concepts and techniques, and encourage financial participation by the private sector.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Public agency, 501(c)(3), or other nonprofit organizations to be considered eligible. Must be an Organizational Level Forum member or National Main Street Network member of the National Trust.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: Education and Outreach: Support for preservation education activities aimed at the public.

CRITERIA: The significance of the project or resource The degree to which the project furthers one of the preservation priorities mentioned above The need for funding and the urgency of the project The project's budget and the applicant's proven ability to secure a match The project's timeline The long-term objectives or impact of the project The qualifications of the key personnel, including consultants. The demonstrated ability of the

applicant to complete preservation projects
The potential to replicate the project in other communities

TYPICAL FUNDING LEVEL: \$2,500-\$5,000

MATCH: Dollar for dollar match

TO BE INCLUDED IN APPLICATION:

- Completed application, with budget
- Digital images
- A list of applicant's board
- IRS letter of tax-exempt status
- Resume of consultant/personnel
Letters of endorsement
- Letter of consent from property owner

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/find-funding/preservation-funds-guidelines-eligibility.html#Vjkc_LerRhE

APPLICATION LINK: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Common/LogOn.aspx?eqs=wG-r-jJPukaZXX0vZfjnMw2>

PHILANTHROPIC GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

REVENUE SOURCE: Philanthropy

- The Foundation Center: <http://foundationcenter.org>
- The Catalog for Federal Domestic Assistance: www.cfda.gov
- All federal grants: www.grants.gov
Texas eGrants: www.texasonline.state.tx.us/tolapp/egrants
- Texas Nonprofits: www.txnp.org
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: <http://www.achp.gov/heritagetourism-assist.html>
- Grant Watch: www.grantwatch.com/cat/8/economic-development-grants.html
- Grant Helpers: www.thegranthelpers.com/municipal-grants/economic-development-grants

TAX-RELATED STATE AND LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
REVENUE SOURCE: State

PURPOSE: The State of Texas has established state and local economic development programs that provide support and incentives for companies that invest and expand their operations and workforces in Texas communities. Programs include Tax Increment Financing; Tax Abatement Agreements; Value Limitation; Freeport Exemption; Development Corporation Act Type A/B Sales Tax for Economic Development; County Assistance Districts; Enterprise Zones; Chapter 380/381 Agreements; Municipal and County hotel Occupancy Tax; public Improvement Districts (PIDs); Municipal Management Districts; Neighborhood Empowerment Zones; NAFTA Impact Zones.

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: <http://texasahead.org/lga/96-1201.pdf>

APPLICATION LINK: N/A

TEXAS ENTERPRISE ZONE PROGRAM

REVENUE SOURCE: Office of the Governor Economic Development and Tourism.

PURPOSE: This program may help Main Street communities maintain financial health through the encouragement of job creation and business development. The purpose of the Texas Enterprise Zone program is to encourage job creation and capital investment in areas of economic distress by providing communities with an economic development tool through which they can offer state and local incentives and program priority to new or expanding businesses located in these designated areas.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Nominating jurisdiction and business in distressed area

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES: Investments in job creation (e.g. construct, upgrade, renovate facility)

CRITERIA: Jobs created; commitment to community

TYPICAL FUNDING LEVEL: N/A

MATCH: N/A

TO BE INCLUDED IN APPLICATION: an

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/ecodev/ed_bank/enterprise_zone

TEXAS WIDE OPEN FOR BUSINESS GRANTS

REVENUE SOURCE: State

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: Information on Texas business grants: <https://texaswideopenforbusiness.com/services/grants>

TEXAS WIDE OPEN FOR BUSINESS INCENTIVE FINANCING

REVENUE SOURCE: State

LINK TO MORE INFORMATION: Information on Texas business financing: <https://texaswideopenforbusiness.com/services/incentives-financing>

PLANTING THE SEED: ACTIVE PLAN ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING

The proposed Active Plan organization will need funding support from the implementing partners - both, governmental and non-governmental. Funding support may take the form of direct monetary allocation and in-kind contributions. Figure 5-3 provides a suggested funding structure for an Active Plan organization of two (2) paid staff members. The organizational size presented in the Figure represents an ideal organizational size within five (5) years of plan Active Plan adoption.

Figure 5-3, Active Plan Annual Administrative Funding

Element	Details	Funding Source	Cost/Value
Staff (Director)	Administration, trail development, properties, fund raising, grant writing, maintenance (Cost includes salary and benefits)	Local government contributions, memberships, fund raising, endowment funds, grant administration	\$75,000 - \$125,000
Staff (Program Coordinator)	Memberships, program development, fundraising, administrative support, marketing (Cost includes salary and benefits)		\$30,000 - \$50,000
Office Space	Surplus office space. Co-located with a local government, non-profit organization, or other institution		\$0,000 - \$7,000
Supplies	Computer hardware and software, vehicle allowance/mileage, general office supplies		\$5,000 - \$8,000
Total Cost			\$110,000 - \$190,000

There may obviously be variations to the organizational structure highlighted above. Staff may be part-time. Population growth, and anticipated regional active transportation network size, may ultimately necessitate additional future staff (including maintenance). Compensation packages presented however, are intended to attract paid staff with the appropriate professional backgrounds to manage an active transportation-focused non-profit organization.





ANNUAL FUNDING SCENARIOS

The potential funding commitments of local governments and other regional stakeholders will extend beyond the recommended annual administrative funding scenario presented in **Figure 5-3**. **Figure 5-4: Active Plan, Potential Funding Scenario**, and **Figure 5-5: Active Plan, Potential Annual Funding Sources**, illustrate that local commitments will be necessary to leverage the other funding sources referenced on pages 5.8 through 5.11 for administration, program and trail development, and long-term maintenance.

Figure 5-4 projects that local project development (shared among all participating government entities) will range from as low as 50,000 dollars in the first year of plan implementation to as high as 500,000 dollars annually for the first five (5) years of multi-use trail, bikeway, and paddling trail development. (All estimated costs are cumulative.) The figure indicates that an additional cumulative total of between 100,000 dollars and 1 million dollars may be necessary on an annual basis to match potential grants.

Figure 5-5 identifies potential Active Plan funding sources by category including: operations, program and trail development, and maintenance. Assuming continued efforts over the next several years to develop the proposed LRGV regional active transportation network, annual expenditures could range between 1.1 million and 6.6 million dollars. **(Between 60 and 90 percent of all projected annual expenditures are dedicated to program and trail development - the majority of which would be off-set by external grants.)**

The figure projects that local sources should account for between 20 to 50 percent of all annual expenditures. As the system is developed in full, annual costs are expected to drop significantly.

FIGURE 5-4: ACTIVE PLAN, POTENTIAL FUNDING SCENARIO ¹		
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2 THROUGH 5 (ANNUALLY)
OPERATIONS / MANAGEMENT ²		
Administrative Operations	\$60,000 to \$120,000	\$110,000 to \$190,000
PROGRAM/TRAIL DEVELOPMENT		
Branding	\$6,000 to \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$40,000
Local Project Development	\$50,000 to \$250,000	\$100,000 to \$500,000
Match for External Funding Pursuits	\$100,000 to \$500,000	\$200,000 to \$1,000,000

¹ Amounts shown in this scenario are for illustrative purposes only. Amounts will vary as more detailed programs, designs, and opportunities are developed.
² Also see Figure 5-3 for a breakdown of anticipated annual operations costs.

FIGURE 5-5: ACTIVE PLAN POTENTIAL ANNUAL FUNDING SOURCES ¹	
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES (ANNUAL)	PROJECTED CONTRIBUTIONS (COST RANGE)
OPERATIONS / MANAGEMENT ²	
Local Governments (Smaller)	\$25,000 to \$40,000 (Individual contributions: \$2,500 to \$5,000)
Local Governments (Larger)	\$30,000 to \$75,000 (Individual contributions: \$10,000 to \$25,000)
Other Area Governmental Agencies	\$10,000 to \$25,000
Local Non-profit / Foundation Sources	\$20,000 to \$30,000
External Grants	\$25,000 to \$50,000
Self-raised Funds (after Year 2)	\$10,000 to \$25,000
TOTAL ANNUAL OPERATIONS/MANAGEMENT	\$120,000 to \$245,000
PROGRAM/TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	
Locally-raised Funds	\$50,000 to \$250,000
Other Area Agencies	\$50,000 to \$250,000
Local Non-profit / Foundation Sources	\$50,000 to \$250,000
External Grants	\$500,000 to \$5,000,000
Self-raised Funds (after Year 2)	\$50,000 to \$100,000
TOTAL ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT	\$700,000 to \$5,850,000
MAINTENANCE SCENARIO ³	
Staffing (4 - 6 staff)	\$150,000 to \$250,000
Equipment (excluding initial start-up)	\$75,000 to \$150,000
Supplies (fuel, minor repairs and replacement, etc.)	\$75,000 to \$100,000
TOTAL ANNUAL MAINTENANCE	\$300,000 to \$500,000

¹ Amounts shown in this scenario are for illustrative purposes only. Amounts will vary as more detailed programs, designs, and opportunities are developed.
² Also see Figure 5-3 for a breakdown of anticipated annual operations costs.
³ Scenario only. Can be divided among multiple agencies and municipalities. Will vary based on number and type of facilities being maintained.

5.4 IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAME

The identification and inclusion of “Legacy Routes” in **Chapter 3, Active Transportation Network**, serves as a clue that the combined active transportation and active tourism recommendations contained within this plan will take years – perhaps decades – to fully implement. The regional active transportation network envisioned within the Active Plan will be a legacy left by today’s leaders for the enjoyment and welfare of the children and grandchildren of Cameron County.

Full Active Plan implementation is expected to take 20 years or more to accomplish. This long-term commitment does not however, preclude short-term implementation of many Active Plan recommendations.

SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM

Figure 5-6: Active Plan Implementation, Short-term Work Program, lists a series of steps that implementing partners should take within the next few years to build the capacity and momentum that will ensure uniform transportation network development and comprehensive branding and marketing. The short-term work program includes actions that are derived from the transportation and tourism goals presented in chapters 3 and 4, and associated administrative actions necessary for Plan implementation (as presented within this chapter). Corresponding active transportation and active tourism goals and strategies should be cross-referenced to provide context for the steps listed in **Figure 5-6**.

Short-term work program actions are listed according to a loose chronology, but the order of tasks may vary according to resources or interest. Implementation of the short-term work program is a cooperative effort – the actions listed in **Figure 5-6** are not designed to be implemented by individual government or non-profit entities in Cameron County. As a result, most steps are focused on program development as opposed to network designed and construction. It is assumed that individual agencies may take steps (hopefully, in consultation with Active Plan partners) to develop individual segments of the LRGV regional active transportation network in conjunction with the group activities listed in the short-term work program.

FIGURE 5-6: ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM¹

ACTION (YEAR 1)			PLAN GOAL (PAGE)	DESCRIPTION	ENTITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	METRIC/BENCHMARK
STEP	CATEGORY	ACTION					
A.	ADMINISTRATION	CONVENE AN ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE.	CHAPTER 5 (PAGE 5.4)	THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE SHOULD: PREPARE AN ADOPTION RESOLUTION TEMPLATE; AFFIRM STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT TO A PERMANENT ORGANIZATION; ASSIGN ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION TASKS; AND, INITIATE BY-LAWS AND CHARTER FOR A NON-PROFIT ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION.	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 1 - 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADOPTION RESOLUTION TEMPLATE MEETING MINUTES WITH ASSIGNED TASKS SIX MONTH TO ONE-YEAR SCHEDULE FOR ORGANIZATION FORMATION YEAR ONE MEETING SCHEDULE
B.	TOURISM	FORM AN ACTIVE TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION COALITION.	TOURISM GOAL #1: ACTION 1.1.1 (PAGE 4.6)	THE COALITION SHOULD INITIALLY BE DRAWN FROM ORGANIZING COMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS, BUT EXPANDED TO INCLUDE OTHER KEY ENTITIES AS IDENTIFIED IN CHAPTER 3. THE COALITION MAY ULTIMATELY TRANSFORM INTO A COMMITTEE OF THE ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 1 - 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COALITION MEMBERSHIP LIST YEAR ONE MEETING SCHEDULE
C.	ADMINISTRATION	REVIEW GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND PURSUE AS APPROPRIATE.	CHAPTER 5 (PAGE 5.8)	EVALUATE GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES THAT MAY BE USED TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NETWORK CATALYST SEGMENTS AND ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. MATCH SOURCES TO LOCAL FUNDING OPTIONS TO GENERATE FUNDING STRATEGIES FOR INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS THAT WILL MINIMIZE DUPLICATIVE EFFORTS.	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 1 -12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIST OF PRIORITY PROJECTS AND FUNDING STRATEGIES FOR INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS. FUNDING SCHEDULES.

¹ Time frames shown are approximate and start with the adoption of the Active Plan by at least one (1) participating local government.

FIGURE CONTINUED ON PAGE 5.15



FIGURE 5-6: ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM¹

ACTION (YEAR 1)			PLAN GOAL (PAGE)	DESCRIPTION	ENTITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	METRIC/BENCHMARK
STEP	CATEGORY	ACTION					
D.	ADMINISTRATION	SOLICIT LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE PREPARATION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #4: ACTION 4.1.1 (PAGE 3.8)	PREPARE AND DISSEMINATE RESOLUTION TEMPLATES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. LANGUAGE COULD ADDRESS: OVERALL STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT, CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS, INTENTION TO SUPPORT AND HELP FUND IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS.	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 6 -12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS, MUNICIPALITIES (NUMBER) ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS, COUNTY, CCRMA (NUMBER) SHORT-TERM COMMITMENTS IN EACH RESOLUTION (PERCENT)
E.	ADMINISTRATION	SOLICIT THE COMMITMENT OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES (DRAINAGE, IRRIGATION), ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES, NON-PROFITS, AND FOUNDATIONS TO THE ACTIVE PLAN THROUGH THE PREPARATION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #4: ACTION 4.1.2 (PAGE 3.8)	PREPARE AND DISSEMINATE RESOLUTION TEMPLATES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. LANGUAGE COULD ADDRESS: OVERALL STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT, CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS, INTENTION TO SUPPORT AND HELP FUND IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS.	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 6 -12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS (NUMBER) ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS, PUBLIC AUTHORITIES (NUMBER) SHORT-TERM COMMITMENTS IN EACH RESOLUTION (PERCENT)
F.	ADMINISTRATION	"STOCKPILE" FUNDING COMMITMENTS TO BE USED FOR QUICK RESPONSES TO ATTRACTIVE GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.	CHAPTER 5 (PAGE 5.8)	DURING EFFORTS TO SOLICIT ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT, VERIFY INTENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS TO SUPPORT PENDING/POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR SPECIFIC PLAN-RELATED PROJECTS.	ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 6 - 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIST OF TENTATIVE COMMITMENTS SCHEDULE OF INTENDED GRANT APPLICATION ACTIONS RELATED TO TENTATIVE LOCAL COMMITMENTS.
G.	TOURISM	ESTABLISH A TOURISM PROGRAM MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE.	TOURISM GOAL #1: ACTION 1.1.3 (PAGE 4.7)	DEVELOP A WORK PLAN FOR ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING EFFORTS. LED BY THE ACTIVE TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION COALITION (ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE).	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 6 - 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WORK PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE
H.	TRANSPORTATION	COORDINATE WITH TPWD TO CONDUCT AN LRGV PADDLING TRAIL EXPEDITION.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #3: ACTION 3.1.1 (PAGE 3.8)	WORK WITH LOCAL PARTNERS, MEDIA, TPWD, AND APPLICABLE FEDERAL ENTITIES TO PLAN AND CONDUCT A MULTI-DAY PADDLING EXPEDITION ON THE PROPOSED LRGV PADDLING TRAIL ROUTE. USE THE EVENT TO BUILD LOCAL INTEREST, AND TO MAP THE ROUTE.	ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, USFW, TPWD, MEDIA, PADDLING OUTFITTERS	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 6 - 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PADDLING EXPEDITION EVENT (DATE) PARTICIPATING AGENCIES (NUMBER) MEDIA COVERAGE (NEWS RELEASES, STORIES, VIDEO DOCUMENTATION) SOCIAL MEDIA (VIEWS, LIKES, ETC.) ROUTE OPTIONS (GPS COORDINATES)
I.	TRANSPORTATION	CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO FINALIZE THE USBR.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #2: ACTION 2.1.1 (PAGE 3.6)	WORKING GROUP DUTIES MAY BE ASSUMED BY A COMMITTEE OF THE ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION (FOLLOWING INCORPORATION).	LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES, TXDOT	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 3 - 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WORK GROUP SCHEDULE

¹ Time frames shown are approximate and start with the adoption of the Active Plan by at least one (1) participating local government.

FIGURE CONTINUED ON PAGE 5.16

FIGURE 5-6: ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM¹

ACTION (YEAR 1)			PLAN GOAL (PAGE)	DESCRIPTION	ENTITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	METRIC/BENCHMARK
STEP	CATEGORY	ACTION					
J.	TRANSPORTATION	MAP USBR CORRIDOR CONDITIONS.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #2: ACTION 2.1.2 (PAGE 3.6)	RECRUIT LOCAL VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST IN CONFIRMING PROPOSED USBR CONDITIONS. PRODUCE A DIGITAL INVENTORY OF CONDITIONS TO BETTER DETERMINE ROUTE DEVELOPMENT COSTS.	ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, LOCAL CYCLING CLUBS, TXDOT	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 3 - 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIS DATA (ROAD SECTIONS, LENGTHS, WIDTHS, CONDITIONS, SIGNAGE, ETC.) DETAILED SEGMENT IMPROVEMENT COSTS
K.	TRANSPORTATION	FINALIZE PREFERRED USBR.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #2: ACTION 2.1.2 (PAGE 3.6)	WORK WITH TXDOT, CCRMA, MPOS, AND SURROUNDING JURISDICTIONS TO FINALIZE A PROPOSED ROUTE. ADJUST STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS TO INCORPORATE NECESSARY USBR IMPROVEMENTS.	ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, TXDOT	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 9 - 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REFINED ROUTE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS BY SEGMENT COMPLETED PRE-APPLICATION
L.	TOURISM	PREPARE A BRAND FOR THE ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION, AND THE LRGV REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK.	CHAPTER 3: (PAGE 3.31) & TOURISM GOAL #4: (PAGE 4.12)	DEVELOP A BRAND (LOGOS, COLORS, SIGNS, ETC.) THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO PROPOSED LRGV REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK ROUTES, AND ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAMMING. UTILIZE INITIALLY TO BUILD ENTHUSIASM FOR AN ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION.	ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE	YEAR 1 (MONTHS 1 - 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMPLETED LOGOS, BRANDING ELEMENTS
M.	ADMINISTRATION	ROLL-OUT THE ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION	CHAPTER 5	SUBMIT PAPERWORK FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION STATUS. FOLLOWING APPROVAL, CONDUCT A KICK-OFF MEETING WHERE BOARD MEMBERS ARE FORMALLY APPOINTED. HOLD MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT DRIVES AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT CAMERON COUNTY.	ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE	YEAR 1 (MONTH 9 - 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMPLETED CHARTER AND BY-LAWS NON-PROFIT DESIGNATION WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS AND MATERIALS KICK-OFF- PRESENTATION MEMBERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS (NUMBER)
N.	ADMINISTRATION	SOLICIT FUNDING COMMITMENTS FOR ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS.	CHAPTER 5 (PAGE 5.4)	SEEK SEED MONEY THROUGH FOUNDATIONS OR GRANT TO SUPPORT A PAID STAFF PERSON. SEEK LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO ASSIST WITH LONG-TERM OPERATIONS.	ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE	YEAR 1 (MONTH 6 - 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FUNDING COMMITMENTS (NUMBER, AMOUNT, DURATION)
O.	ADMINISTRATION	CONDUCT AN ANNUAL ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW.	CHAPTER 5	ANNUAL TASK WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE AD-HOC ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, OR BY ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION BOARD (DEPENDING ON STATUS OF ORGANIZATION).	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS (OR ACTIVE PLAN BOARD)	YEAR 1 (MONTH 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANNUAL RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

¹ Time frames shown are approximate and start with the adoption of the Active Plan by at least one (1) participating local government.

FIGURE CONTINUED ON PAGE 5.17



FIGURE 5-6: ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM¹

ACTION (YEAR 2)			PLAN GOAL (PAGE)	DESCRIPTION	ENTITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	METRIC/BENCHMARK
STEP	CATEGORY	ACTION					
P.	TRANSPORTATION	IDENTIFY ONE (1) OR MORE (MULTI-USE TRAIL) CATALYST ROUTE SEGMENTS FOR WHICH THE ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION WILL TAKE A PROMINENT ROLE IN SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #1: (PAGE 3.5)	FOCUS DESIGN, RIGHT-OF-WAY, CONSTRUCTION, AND MARKETING EFFORTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONE (1) OR TWO (2) CATALYST ROUTE SEGMENTS TO AVOID COMPETITION FOR SPECIFIC FUNDING SOURCES.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, LAND TRUST COMMITTEE	YEAR 2 (MONTHS 1 - 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONCEPTUAL ENGINEERING PLANS EASEMENT/RIGHT-OF-WAY COMMITMENTS
Q.	TRANSPORTATION	INCORPORATE LRGV REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS (CATALYST ROUTES) INTO LOCAL POLICY DOCUMENTS AND CAPITAL BUDGETS.	TRANSPORTATION GOALS #1, #2, AND #3: (PAGES 3.6 - 3.8)	WORK WITH TXDOT (PHARR DISTRICT OFFICE), THE BROWNSVILLE MPO, AND HARLINGEN-SAN BENITO MPO TO INCORPORATE CATALYST ROUTE SEGMENTS INTO TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND WORK PROGRAMS. WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO INSERT ACTIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS INTO CIPS.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	YEAR 2 (MONTHS 1 - 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPDATED TRANSPORTATION PLANS
R.	TOURISM	DEVELOP AN ACTIVE TOURISM CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.	TOURISM GOAL #2: STRATEGY 2.1 AND 2.2 (PAGE 4.8)	ASSESS ACTIVE TOURISM POTENTIAL IN EACH INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY AND IDENTIFY BUSINESSES THAT COULD SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM SECTION. INITIATE STEPS TO CREATE A BUSINESS CERTIFICATION PROCESS UTILIZING ONE (1) OR MORE PILOT BUSINESSES.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, PROGRAMS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE	YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS
S.	TRANSPORTATION	PREPARE UNIFORM TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE STANDARDS.	CHAPTER 3 (PAGE 3.31)	DEVELOP PREFERRED MULTI-USE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE STANDARDS. SOLICIT LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUY-IN THROUGH THE USE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS. MODIFY LOCAL LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS ACCORDINGLY.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS DOCUMENT MAINTENANCE STANDARDS DOCUMENT ADOPTED INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS (NUMBER)
T.	TOURISM	WORK WITH COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS TO APPLY THE LRGV REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK BRAND TO EXISTING FACILITIES.	CHAPTER 3: (PAGE 3.31) & TOURISM GOAL #4: (PAGE 4.12)	DEVELOP AGREEMENTS THAT ESTABLISH TERMS OF USE. PROVIDE ACCESS TO LOGOS AND WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, PROGRAMS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE	YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRADEMARK USE AGREEMENTS WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE AND MATERIALS USING TRADEMARK (AMOUNT)
U.	TRANSPORTATION	PREPARE AN LRGV PADDLING TRAIL PLAN.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #3: ACTION 3.1.2 (PAGE 3.7)	FINALIZE TRAIL ROUTE - INCLUDING LAUNCH FACILITIES, WAY-FINDING PLAN, CONCEPTUAL SITE PLANS, AND DETAILED CONSTRUCTION COSTS.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FINAL ROUTE MAP (WITH GPS COORDINATES) CONCEPTUAL SITE PLANS WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE AND MATERIALS USING TRADEMARK (AMOUNT)

¹ Time frames shown are approximate and start with the adoption of the Active Plan by at least one (1) participating local government.

FIGURE CONTINUED ON PAGE 5.18

FIGURE 5-6: ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM¹

ACTION (YEAR 2)			PLAN GOAL (PAGE)	DESCRIPTION	ENTITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	METRIC/BENCHMARK
STEP	CATEGORY	ACTION					
V.	TRANSPORTATION	SOLICIT TXDOT SUPPORT FOR USBR APPLICATION.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #2: ACTION 3.1.2 (PAGE 3.6)	AMEND MPO BIKE-PED PLANS. ENLIST CCRMA AND TXDOT (PHARR) DISTRICT OFFICE SUPPORT TO PETITION THE STATE TXDOT OFFICE TO SUPPORT USBR APPLICATION TO AASHTO.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, LAND TRUST COMMITTEE	YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMPLETED APPLICATION TXDOT DISTRICT ENDORSEMENT (WRITTEN) TXDOT SUBMITTED APPLICATION
W.	TRANSPORTATION	PREPARE A USBR MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT.	CHAPTER 3 (PAGE 3.31)	DEVELOP UNIFORM MAINTENANCE STANDARDS AND SCHEDULE. SOLICIT LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS THROUGH THE USE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	YEAR 2 (MONTHS 6 - 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAINTENANCE STANDARDS DOCUMENT ADOPTED INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS (NUMBER)
X.	TRANSPORTATION	DEVELOP FIRST CATALYST MULTI-USE TRAIL SEGMENTS.	CHAPTER 3	DEVELOP ONE (1) TO TWO (2) CATALYST TRAIL SEGMENTS BASED ON PRIOR ACTIONS (SPECIFICALLY, YEAR 1, STEP F; AND, YEAR 2, STEP P.)	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS, ACTIVE PLAN BOARD	YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMPLETED SEGMENTS (MILEAGE, PERCENT OF TOTAL SEGMENT, FACILITIES)
Y.	ADMINISTRATION	CONDUCT AN ANNUAL ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW.	CHAPTER 5	ANNUAL TASK WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION BOARD (ASSUMING ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN FORMED)	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD	(ANNUALLY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANNUAL RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
ACTION (YEAR 3)			PLAN GOAL (PAGE)	DESCRIPTION	ENTITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	METRIC/BENCHMARK
STEP	CATEGORY	ACTION					
Z.	TOURISM	TRAIN COMMUNITIES TO USE ACTIVE TOURISM ASSESSMENT TOOLS.	TOURISM GOAL #3: STRATEGY 3.1 (PAGE 4.10)	LED BY THE ACTIVE TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION COALITION (ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE).	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, PROGRAMS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE	YEAR 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS BUSINESSES TRAINED (NUMBER)
AA.	TRANSPORTATION	INCORPORATE LRGV PADDLING TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS INTO LOCAL POLICY DOCUMENTS AND CAPITAL BUDGETS.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #3: ACTION 3.1.3 & 3.2.2 (PAGE 3.7)	WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO INSERT ACTIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS INTO CIPS.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	YEAR 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPDATED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANS
BB.	TRANSPORTATION	PARTICIPATE IN THE TEXAS PADDLING TRAIL PROGRAM.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #3: ACTION 3.2.3 (PAGE 3.7)	APPLY TO THE TPWD FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	(ONGOING)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APPROVED APPLICATION

¹ Time frames shown are approximate and start with the adoption of the Active Plan by at least one (1) participating local government.

FIGURE CONTINUED ON PAGE 5.19



FIGURE 5-6: ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, SHORT-TERM WORK PROGRAM¹

ACTION (YEAR 3)			PLAN GOAL (PAGE)	DESCRIPTION	ENTITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	METRIC/BENCHMARK
STEP	CATEGORY	ACTION					
CC.	TRANSPORTATION	APPLY FOR GRANTS TO SUPPORT LRGV PADDLING TRAIL DEVELOPMENT.	TRANSPORTATION GOAL #3: (PAGE 3.7)	APPLY TO THE TPWD FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	(ONGOING)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SUCCESSFUL TPWD GRANTS
DD.	TOURISM	ESTABLISH ACTIVE DESTINATION CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING.	TOURISM GOAL #2: STRATEGY 2.2 (PAGE 4.8)	RECRUIT BUSINESSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM. IMPLEMENTED ONLY AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM MARKETING TOOLS.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, PROGRAMS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS	YEAR 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMPLETE PROGRAM TOOLKIT ANNUAL INVENTORY NEW PARTICIPANTS AND RENEWALS
EE.	TOURISM	EXPAND ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK BRAND TO THE TOURISM MARKETING PROGRAM.	TOURISM GOAL #4: STRATEGY 4.1 (PAGE 4.12)	ENSURE THAT ORGANIZATION, NETWORK, AND MARKETING BRAND EASILY RECOGNIZABLE AND CONSISTENT.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, PROGRAMS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS	YEAR 4 AND 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USE OF BRANDING MATERIALS IN MARKETING EFFORTS
FF.	TRANSPORTATION	DEVELOP SECOND ROUND OF CATALYST MULTI-USE TRAIL SEGMENTS.	CHAPTER 3	DEVELOP ONE (1) TO TWO (2) CATALYST TRAIL SEGMENTS.	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS, ACTIVE PLAN BOARD	YEAR 3 - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COMPLETED SEGMENTS (MILEAGE, PERCENT OF TOTAL SEGMENT, FACILITIES)
GG.	TOURISM	MONITOR ACTIVE TOURISM PROGRAM PROGRESS.	TOURISM GOAL #5: STRATEGY 5.2 (PAGE 4.14)	SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY EFFORTS TO SOLICIT PARTICIPATION IN MARKETING AND BUSINESS CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS.	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD, PROGRAMS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE	(ANNUALLY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANNUAL RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS
HH.	ADMINISTRATION	CONDUCT AN ANNUAL ACTIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW.	CHAPTER 5	ANNUAL TASK WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE ACTIVE PLAN ORGANIZATION BOARD (ASSUMING ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN FORMED)	ACTIVE PLAN BOARD	(ANNUALLY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANNUAL RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

¹ Time frames shown are approximate and start with the adoption of the Active Plan by at least one (1) participating local government.



APPENDIX

THE ACTIVE PLAN

APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER LISTS

Legacy Foundation Grant
LRGV ATATP

Kick-off Meeting Invitation List

Aug. 11, '15 @ 1pm
UT School of Public Health

- Combes
 - Aida Gutierrez aidagutierrez@combespolice.com
- Laguna Vista
 - Rolando Vela rm@lvtexas.us
 - Maria Leos healthworker@lvtexas.us
 - Alma Deckard adeckard@lvtexas.us
- Port Isabel
 - Jared Hockema jared.hockema@frontera-rgv.com
 - Susie Alcocer citysecretaryofpi@yahoo.com
 - Celina Zamora czamora@copitx.com
- South Padre Island
 - Ron Pitcock ronpitcock@earthlink.com
 - Julie Lamure spilamure@gmail.com
 - Barry Patel barryspi@gmail.com
- Rio Hondo
 - Ben Medina bmedina@cityofriohondo.com
- Los Fresnos
 - Mark Milum mmilum@citylf.us
 - Celina Gonzales cgonzalez@citylf.us
 - Christine De La Rosa cdelarosa@citylf.us
- Harlingen
 - Ramiro Gonzales rgonzales@myharlingen.us
- Los Indios
 - Yolanda Isasi cityoflosindios@gmail.com
- San Benito
 - Rodrigo Davila davilar@cityofsanbenito.com
 - Sandee Alvarez salvarez@cityofsanbenito.com
- Brownsville
 - Rose Gowen, City Commissioner rmzgm@me.com
 - Ramiro Gonzalez, Redevelopment Manager ramiro.gonzalez@cob.us
 - Art Rodriguez, Public Health Director art.rodriguez@cob.us
 - Sarah C. Dierlam, Grant Writer sarah.dierlam@cob.us
 - Stephanie Reyes, Assistant City Manager stephanie.garza@cob.us
 - Miriam Suarez, Planner Miriam.suarez@cob.us
- UT School of Public Health
 - Belinda Reininger Belinda.M.Reininger@uth.tmc.edu
 - Stephanie Castellanos Stephanie.P.Castellanos@uth.tmc.edu
 - Leslie Meyer Leslie.d.meyer@uth.tmc.edu
 - Lisa Mitchell-Bennett Lisa.Mitchell.Bennett@uth.tmc.edu
 - Miriam Garcia Miriam.Garcia@uth.tmc.edu
- Bike Texas
 - Fernando Martinez fernando@biketexas.org
- National Park Service
 - Mark Spier mark_spier@nps.gov
 - Doug Murphy douglas_murphy@nps.gov

Visioning Workshop Invitation List

- National Park Service
 - Palo Alto Battlefield
 - Mark Spier, Superintendent Mark_Spier@nps.gov
 - Doug Murphy, Chief of Management douglas_murphy@nps.gov
 - South Texas Refuges Complex
 - Robert Jess, Refuge Manager Robert_Jess@fws.gov
 - Sonny Perez, Refuge Manager sonny_perez@fws.gov
 - Texas Wildlife Services Program
 - David S. Trevino, Wildlife Management Specialist david_s.trevino@aphis.usda.gov
- Convention and Visitors Bureaus
 - Harlingen Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Emeralds Martinez, Events Manager emartinez@myharlingen.us
 - Brownsville Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Mariano 'Bean' Ayala, President/CEO mayaia@brownville.org
 - SPI Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Keith Arnold, Executive Director karnold@sonadis.com
- Chambers of Commerce
 - Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Chris Gonzalez, President & CEO cgonzales@harlingen.com
 - Brownsville Chamber of Commerce
 - Melinda Rodriguez, President & CEO melinda@brownvillechamber.com
 - Andrea Benton, Vice President of Marketing andrea@brownvillechamber.com
 - Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce
 - Betty P. Wells, Executive Director/President director@portisabel.org
 - SPI Chamber of Commerce
 - Roxanne Guenzel, President/CEO rguenze@trouchamber.com
- Museums/Directors
 - Children's Museum of Brownsville
 - Felipe Pena III, Executive Director felipa@cmofbrownville.com
 - Brownsville Museum of Fine Art
 - Rene Van Haften, Executive Director rene.vanhaften@brownsville.mfa.org
 - A & E Museum
 - Joel Humphries, Museum Director joel@myharlingen.us
 - Costumes of the Americas Museum
 - admin@costumesoftheamericas.museum.net
 - Museums of Port Isabel (Lighthouse & Historical)
 - 956.943.7602 museumdirector@mnps.com
 - Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum
 - 956.216.4901
 - Little Graceland
 - 956.233.5482
- Economic Development Councils
 - Harlingen Economic Development Council
 - Rauldel Garza, CEO rgarza@harlingenedc.com
 - San Benito Economic Development Corporation
 - Salomon Torres, Executive Director storres@cityofsanbenito.com
 - Brownsville Economic Development Council
 - Jason Hills, President/CEO jhills@edc.com
 - Gilbert Salinas, Executive Vice President gsalinas@edc.com
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
 - Brownsville MPO
 - Mark Lund, MPO Director mlund@rbtv.org
 - Harlingen/San Benito MPO
 - Joel Garza Jr., MPO Director garza@myharlingen.us
- Texas Department of Transportation
 - Pharr District
 - Steve Walker, Stephen.Walker@txdot.gov
 - Homer Bazan, Homer.Bazan@txdot.gov

Visioning Workshop Invitation List

- Texas Parks & Wildlife
 - Resaca de la Palma State Park
 - Lauren Acevedo laura.acevedo@tpwd.state.tx.us
- Local Advocates (i.e. Surfrider Foundation, Friends of the West Rail Trail, etc.)
 - Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership
 - Jaime Flores, Program Coordinator jflores@ag.tamu.edu
 - Friends of the West Rail Trail
 - Katy Youker kyouker@gmail.com
 - Surfrider Foundation South Texas Chapter
 - No contact info.
- Cycling/Running/Walking Groups/Clubs
 - 7 @ 7 Bike Ride
 - Fred Tamez, Founder ftamez@ford.us
 - Bike Rangers
 - Edgar Gaucin, Founder edgar.gaucin@gmail.com
 - Footworks
 - 956.423.3131
 - Velocitators Cycling Team
 - 956.592.4753
 - Event Organizers (i.e. 2 Run Crew, mid-valley events, etc.)
 - 2 Run Crew
 - 956.621.7567 runcrew2@gmail.com
 - Mid Valley Events
 - Midvalleyevents@gmail.com
 - Glow Dash
 - glowdash5@gmail.com
 - Historic Enclaves
 - Brownsville Historical Association
 - Tara Putznat, Executive Director tputznat@brownvillehistory.org
 - Downtown Harlingen
 - Cheryl LaBerge, Downtown Manager cherylalaberge@myharlingen.us
 - Brownsville Heritage Preservation Division
 - Roman McAllen, Heritage Officer roman.mcallen@cob.us
 - Historic Brownsville Museum
 - Athena Bournakis, Museum Manager historichm@gmail.com
- 'Active' Businesses (i.e. paddle boarders, kayak, bike renters, etc.)
 - South Texas Paddlers
 - 956.371.6242 SouthTexasPaddlers@gmail.com
 - Stand Up Paddle Rancho Viejo
 - 956.518.0792 rodolijan@hotmail.com
 - Wheels on Padre
 - 956.299.4562 info@sator.com
 - Beach Bikes on Padre
 - 512.658.3766
- Air Padre Kiteboarding
 - 956.299.9463 sales@airpadre.com
- Parrot Eyes Watersports
 - 956.761.9457 peo@myparroteyes.com
- UB Captain Kayaks
 - 956.761.1669

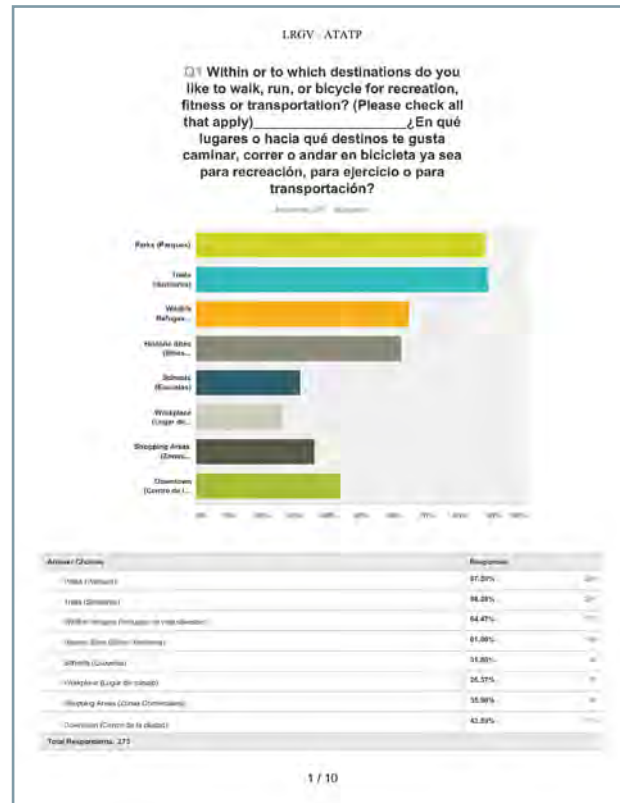
- Park Directors/City Staff
- Cameron County Parks & Recreation Department
 - Joe E. Vega, Parks Director jvega@co.cameron.tx.us
- Brownsville Parks and Recreation Department
 - Damaris McClone, Director damarin.mclone@cob.us
- Harlingen Parks Department
 - Javier Mendez, Director jmendez@myharlingen.us
- Irrigation Districts
- Cameron County Drainage District #1
 - Carlos C. Ayala Jr., General Manager ayala59@yahoo.com
- Harlingen Irrigation District
 - Wayne Halbert, General Manager wynehalbert@hisco1.org
- Bus Systems
- The Wave
 - Jesse Arriaga, Transit Director jarriaga@MYSO.gov
- B-Metro
 - Norma Zamora, B Metro Director norma@cob.us
 - Monica Tellam, Transit Planner monica.tellam@cob.us
- San Benito Historical Society
- 956.399.9991 sgoriamasden@yahoo.com
- 956.350.2920 tootiemadsen@sanbenitohistory.org

Visioning Workshop Invitation List

- Valley Metro Transit Center
 - 956.969.5761
- Student Union/Organizations
 - Gorges Science Foundation/Sabal Palm Sanctuary
 - Larry Lof, President/CEO llof@mgj.com
 - TSTC Dept. of Engineering, Design & Technology
 - Dr. Murad Abusalam, Architecture Instructor murad.abusalam@tsc.edu
 - Texas State Technical College
 - Harlingen, General Information 956.364.4000
- Other
 - Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority
 - Pete Sepulveda Jr., Executive Director sepulveda@ccrma.org
 - SPI Birding & Nature Center
 - Thor Lassen, Conservation & Development Director lassen@spbirding.com
 - Community Development Corporation of Brownsville
 - Nick Mitchell-Bennet, Executive Director 956.541.4955 nmitchell@cob.org
 - bcWorkshop
 - Jesse Miller jesse@bcworkshop.org
 - Erich Melville, Community Planner | National Park Service; Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance; Austin, Texas (512) 688-0652; erich_melville@nps.gov
 - San Benito - Economic Development Corporation - Solomon Torres. Phone: 956-821-5005 -- Phone: (956) 361-3800; Ext. 307 / Salomon Torres, Executive Director; storres@cityofsanbenito.com
 - Nydia Tapia-Gonzales, RGV tourism director RGVtourism.com; nydia@rgvtourism.com
 - Betty P. Wells, President, Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce, 302 E. Queen Isabella, Suite C, Port Isabel, TX 78578, (956) 943-2262; Email: director@portisabel.org (talking to today)
 - Daria Lapeyre - spiedc@aol.com - South Padre Island EDC (talking to today)
 - Valerie Bates, Marketing Director, City of Port Isabel; 956-867-7002; info@portisabel-texas.com
 - Board Member, Texas Tropical Trail, val@valeriegale.com
 - Nancy Deviney, Texas Tropical Trail
- San Benito Chamber of Commerce: <http://www.chamberofsanbenito.com/> info@chamberofsanbenito.com
- Brenda Jayas, Historic Downtown Coalition
- Kristin Howard, SPI Birding & Nature Center
- Mark Spier; NPS Superintendent - South Texas Group; Padre Island National Seashore; (361) 949-8173 x 222; Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park; (956) 541-2785 x 222; mark_spier@nps.gov
- Suzanne Dixon; NPCA Regional Director; 2201 Main Street, Suite 600; Dallas, TX 75201; Office: 214.370.9735; Fax: 214.370.8527; sdixon@npca.org

- South Padre Island:
- Doyle Wells - Action Park - 956-761-4677
- Bill Dillbeo city manager is cyclist. Wind surfer. 761-8108
- Mayor Barry Patel. Mobile 373-2377

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY



LRGV - ATATP

Q2 To what other destinations in Cameron County would you like to be able to walk, run or bike? ¿Hacia que otros destinos en el Condado de Cameron te gustaría poder llegar ya sea caminando, corriendo o en bicicleta?

LRGV - ATATP

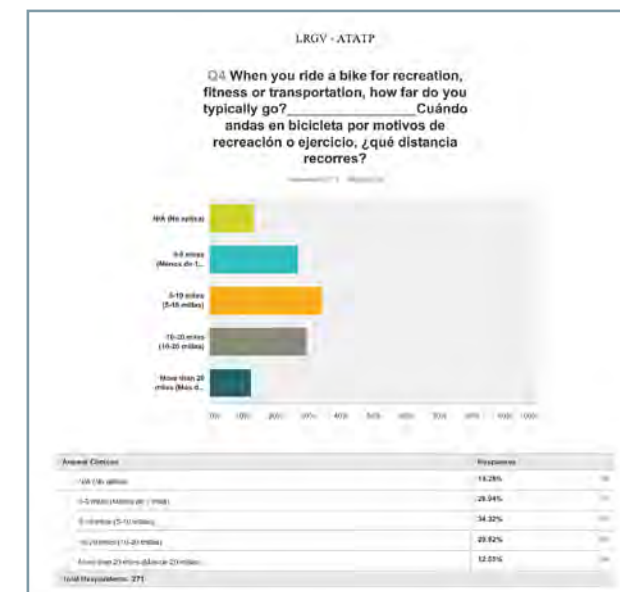
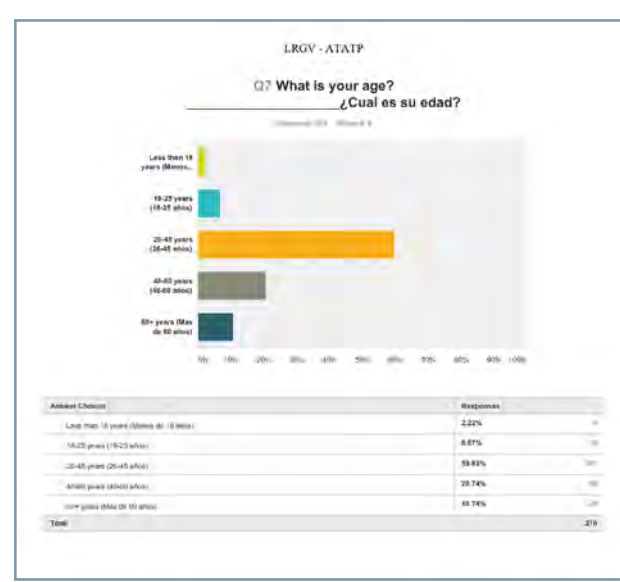
Q3 What is the Zip Code of where you live? (¿Cual es el código postal donde vive?)

LRGV - ATATP

Q4 If you have any additional comments not addressed by this survey, please provide those comments here: Comentarios Adicionales

LRGV - ATATP

Q5 If you would like to be informed about upcoming events related to the Cameron County Active Transportation and Tourism Plan, please leave your email below: Correo Electrónico

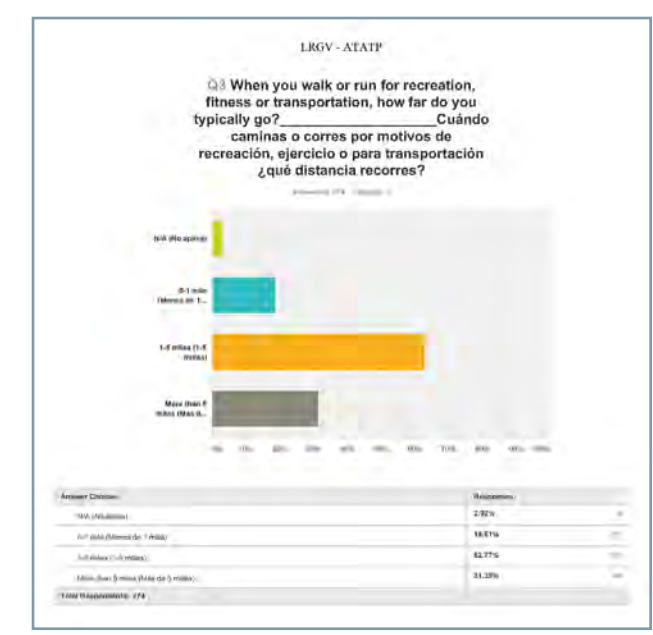
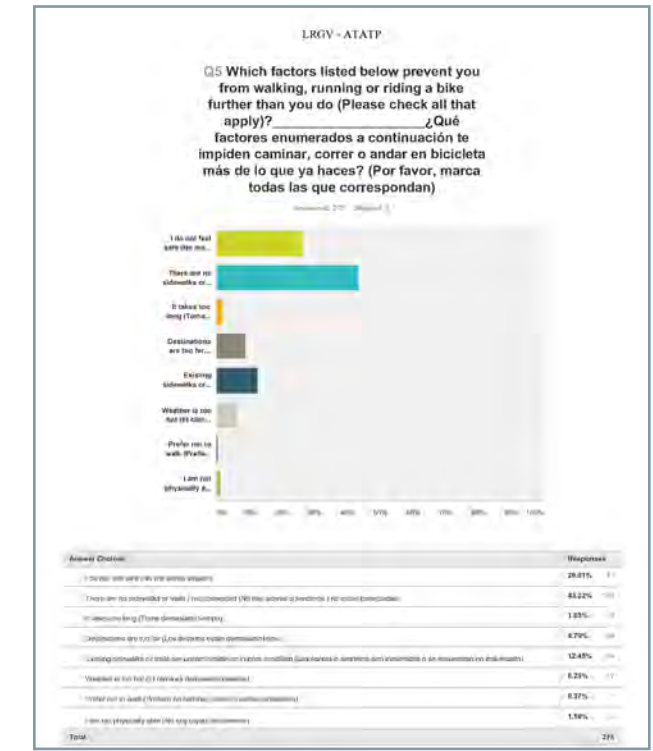


LRGV - ATATP

Q6 Some Lower Rio Grande Valley communities have begun developing networks of bicycle paths and bicycle lanes to link neighborhoods with area attractions (ex. Arroyo Colorado Trail, Battlefield Trail, Gulf Boulevard, Heavin Trail, etc.) Would you be inclined to ride a bicycle on these types of facilities if there were bicycle rental options for you, a family member, or friend? Algunas comunidades del Valle Bajo del Rio Grande han comenzado a desarrollar redes de ciclovías y carriles bici para enlazar los barrios con zonas de interés (por ejemplo, el Sendero del Arroyo Colorado, el Sendero Battlefield, el Bulevar Gulf, el Sendero Heavin, etc.) ¿Estarias dispuesto a andar en bicicleta en este tipo de instalaciones si hubiera opciones de alquiler bicicletas para ti, tu familia o tus amigos?

Answer Choice	Response
Yes	81.40%
No	18.60%
Total Responses: 271	

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APPENDIX C: TOURISM DESTINATIONS BY CATEGORY / LRGV CAMPING

	NATURE & OUTDOORS	TRAILS	HERITAGE, HISTORY & EDUCATION	SPORTS FACILITIES	BUSINESS DISTRICTS
Acacia Organic Farm	●				
Adolph Thomae, Jr. County Park	●				
Arroyo Colorado Bicycle Trail		●			
Arroyo Colorado Campsite					
Arroyo Colorado State Park	●				
Arroyo Colorado/Hugh Ramsey Nature Park	●				
Bahia Grande	●				
Belden Trail		●			
Blues on the Hill (Harlingen)					
Bobz World Mini Golf and Laser Tag				●	
Boca Chica Beach	●				
Boca Chica State Park	●				
Brazos Santiago Pass					
Brownsville Briding Center at Resaca de la Palma	●				
Brownsville Cemetary			●		
Brownsville Heritage Trail		●			
Brownsville Museum of Fine Art			●		
Brownsville Sports Park				●	
Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport					

	NATURE & OUTDOORS	TRAILS	HERITAGE, HISTORY & EDUCATION	SPORTS FACILITIES	BUSINESS DISTRICTS
Brownville Ship Channel					
Camp Perry, Boy Scout Camp	●				
Charro Days					
Citrus Orchards	●				
Clayton's Beach Bar and Event Venue					
Coastal Studies lab			●		
CycloBia					
Dean Porter Park	●				
Dolphin Cove	●				
Dolphin Research & Sealife Nature Center			●		
Dolphin Watch	●				
Downtown Brownsville					●
Downtown Harlingen					●
Flea Market					●
Fort Brown			●		
Gladys Porter Zoo			●		
Harlingen Downtown Murals					●
Harlingen Half-Marathon					
Harlingen Hike and Bike Trail		●			

APPENDIX C: TOURISM DESTINATIONS BY CATEGORY / LRGV CAMPING

	NATURE & OUTDOORS	TRAILS	HERITAGE, HISTORY & EDUCATION	SPORTS FACILITIES	BUSINESS DISTRICTS
Harlingen Soccer Complex				●	
Heaven Amphitheater and Park	●				
Heavin Resaca Trails		●			
Historic Battlefield Trail		●			
International Crossing					
Isla Blanca Park	●				
Isla Blanca Park Campsite					
Island Adventure Park				●	
Iwo Jima Memorial at the Marine Military Academy			●		
Jackson Street					●
Jalapeno 100 bike race					
Jetties (Boca & SPI)					
John F. Kennedy Park & Pavilion	●				
Kayak Tours on Laguna Madre		●			
La Feria City/ Community Park	●				
Laguna Atascosa	●				
Laguna Atascosa Trails		●			
Laguna Madre	●				
Landfill					
Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area	●				

	NATURE & OUTDOORS	TRAILS	HERITAGE, HISTORY & EDUCATION	SPORTS FACILITIES	BUSINESS DISTRICTS
Little Graceland Museum			●		
Long Island Swing Bridge			●		
Longest Causeway Run & Fitness Walk					
Longhorn Cattle Company					
Los Fresnos Rodeo Grounds				●	
Matamoros					●
Military Highway Historical Markers			●		
Mitte Cultural District and Historical District					●
Monte Bella Mountain Bike Trail		●			
Montezuma Trails Bridge					
Mouth of Rio Grande					
Padre Island Brewing Co.					
Palmito Ranch Battlefield			●		
Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park			●		
Paragraphs Book Store					
Paseo De La Resaca Trail		●			
Pirates Landing					
Port Isabel Downtown					●
Port Isabel Historic Lighthouse			●		

APPENDIX C: TOURISM DESTINATIONS BY CATEGORY / LRGV CAMPING

	NATURE & OUTDOORS	TRAILS	HERITAGE, HISTORY & EDUCATION	SPORTS FACILITIES	BUSINESS DISTRICTS
Port of Brownsville Ship Breaking Tour			●		
Port of Brownsville Shrimp Basin			●		
Rancho Viejo Golf Course				●	
Resaca de la Palma Battlefield			●		
Rio Hondo Lift Bridge			●		
Sabal Palms Sanctuary	●				
Sabal Palms Sanctuary Walking Trails		●			
Sand Castle Trail		●			
Schlitterbahn Water Park				●	
Sea Turtle, Inc.	●				
Sky Dive South Padre Island				●	
South Bay, Laguna Madre					
South Padre Island Beach	●				
South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center	●				
South Padre Island Convention Center					●
South Padre Island Golf Course				●	
Southern Pacific Linear Park	●				
SpaceX			●		

	NATURE & OUTDOORS	TRAILS	HERITAGE, HISTORY & EDUCATION	SPORTS FACILITIES	BUSINESS DISTRICTS
SPI Fireworks					
Stand Up Paddle Boarding at Rancho Viejo Resort		●			
Sugar Refinery Tour			●		
Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame and Museum			●		
Texas International Fishing Tournament					
The Inn at Chachalaca Bend					
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley			●		
Valley International Airport					
Veterans Park			●		
Windmills	●				

APPENDIX C: TOURISM DESTINATIONS BY CATEGORY / LRGV CAMPING

SITE	ADDRESS	CAMP SITES	RV SITES	CABINS	WEBSITE
Adolph Thomae Jr. Park	37844 Marshall Hutts Rd, Rio Hondo, TX 78583	●	●		http://www.co.cameron.tx.us/parks/thomae_park.htm
River Ranch Resort RV Park <i>(55+ RV and camp site)</i>	20054 Reynolds Ave, Rio Hondo, TX 78583	●	●		http://rvcampingresort.com/
Breeze Lake Campground	1710 N Vermillion Ave, Brownsville, TX 78521	●	●		http://breezelakervcampground.com/
Paul's RV Park	1129 N Minnesota Ave, Brownsville, TX 78521	●	●		http://paulsrvpark.com/
Rio Mobile Home & RV Parks Inc	8801 Boca Chica Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78521	●	●		n/a
Rod N Reel RV Court	1059 S Indiana Ave, Brownsville, TX 78521		●		http://www.rodreelrvcourt.com/
South Padre Island KOA	1 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX 78597	●	●		http://koa.com/campgrounds/south-padre/
Isla Blanca Park	33174 State Park Rd 100, South Padre Island, TX 78597	●	●	●	http://www.co.cameron.tx.us/parks/isla_blanca.htm
Resaca Bend RV Park	251 Line O Rd, San Benito, TX 78586		●		elranchitoatresacabend.com
Fun N Sun RV Resort	1400 Zillock Rd, San Benito, TX 78586		●	●	http://www.rvonthego.com/texas/fun-n-sun-rv-resort/
Paradise Park RV Resort	1201 N. Expressway 77, Harlingen, TX 78552		●	●	http://www.rvonthego.com/texas/paradise-park-rv-resort/
Tropic Winds RV Resort	1501 N Loop 499, Harlingen, TX 78550		●	●	http://www.rvonthego.com/
Lakewood RV Resort	4525 Graham Rd, Harlingen, TX 78552		●	●	http://www.rvonthego.com/texas/lakewood-rv-resort/

SITE	ADDRESS	CAMP SITES	RV SITES	CABINS	WEBSITE
Sunshine RV Resort	1900 Grace Ave, Harlingen, TX 78550		●		http://www.rvonthego.com/texas/sunshine-rv-resort/
Palm Gardens Home & RV Park	3401 U.S. 83 Business, Harlingen, TX 78552		●		http://palmgardensresort.com/
Honeydale Mobile Home & RV Park	505 Honeydale Rd # 22, Brownsville, TX 78520		●		http://www.honeydalepark.com/
Port Isabel Park Center	702 Champion Ave, Port Isabel, TX 78578		●		http://www.campsouthtexas.com/portisabel/
Port Isabel Marina & RV	504 TX-100, Port Isabel, TX 78578		●		n/a
Pelican Point Marina and RV Park	40 Tarpon Ave, Port Isabel, TX 78578		●		pelicanpointrvp.com
Tarpon RV Park & Marina	226 Basin St, Port Isabel, TX 78578		●		tarponrvpark.com
Kenwood RV Resort	1201 N Main St, La Feria, TX 78559		●		https://www.sunrvresorts.com/
Holiday Out RV Park	400 E 3rd St, Los Fresnos, TX 78566		●		http://www.holidayoutrv.com/
Seaway Village @ Arroyo City	35375 FM 2925, Rio Hondo, Texas 78585		●	●	http://seawayvillage.com/Amenities.php
Hummingbird Cove RV Park	32637 FM2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583		●		http://www.hummingbirdcove-rvpark.com/
Circle L RV Park	32781 FM2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583		●		n/a
Twin Palms RV Resort (55+)	107 Colorado Ave, Rio Hondo, TX 78583		●		http://www.twinpalmsrvresort.net/

APPENDIX D: TXDOT BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS MEMORANDUM



MEMORANDUM

TO: District Engineers **DATE:** March 23, 2011
FROM: John A. Barton, P.E. *John A. Barton, P.E.*
SUBJECT: Guidelines Emphasizing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

A recent federal policy statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations Regulations and Recommendations by USDOT signed on March 11, 2010, emphasizes an increased commitment to, and investment in, bicycle facilities and walking networks to help meet goals for cleaner, healthier air; less congested roadways; and more livable, safe, cost-efficient communities. This USDOT policy encourages the incorporation of safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects.

With this stronger emphasis for multimodal transportation facilities, TxDOT is committed to proactively plan, design and construct facilities to safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. It is critical that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations be considered and discussed as the need and purpose of a project is defined during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, taking into consideration existing and anticipated bicycle and pedestrian facility systems and needs. In the NEPA document, the managing office should include a discussion in the project description of proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities and linkages to transit stops and corridors. If no bicycle or pedestrian facilities are planned, the managing office shall state why no such facilities are planned. Plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&Es) shall also ensure that proposed designs include these accommodations, if applicable, and are constructed according to Texas Accessibility Standards and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (TAS/ADAAG), AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO Bike Guide) and TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual (RDM).

The inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities shall be considered when the project is scoped. Public input, when applicable, as well as local city and metropolitan planning organization bicycle and pedestrian plans shall be considered.

For all urbanized settings, regardless of the type of improvement, the following guidance is provided:

District Engineers

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March 23, 2011

1. For construction projects within existing right-of-way and when the scope of work is limited to within the roadway typical section, the project plans should:
 - remove barriers to accommodate pedestrians according to TAS/ADAAG and TxDOT's Pedestrian Facilities (PED) standard sheets, and;
 - accommodate for bicyclists by restriping the existing roadway typical section to provide a 14-foot wide curb lane for shared use when practical.
2. For construction projects within existing right-of-way, but when the scope of work involves pavement widening, the project plans should:
 - accommodate bicyclists by widening the pavement to either provide a 14-foot wide curb lane for shared use or a 5-foot wide bicycle lane;
 - include necessary work to ensure all existing ADA curb ramps comply with current standards; and
 - reconstruct or add sidewalks and crosswalks to ensure a continuous ADA compliant pedestrian route.
3. For full reconstruction or new construction projects, where new right-of-way is acquired, the project plans should provide the desired roadway, bicycle and sidewalk geometric values shown in the RDM, AASHTO Bike Guide and TAS/ADAAG for each facility type.
4. On new construction projects, and where practical on reconstruction projects, which construct a raised median, a 6 foot median width should be provided for pedestrian refuge in accordance with the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

The usable lane width for shared use in a wide curb lane is 14 feet and is measured from the edge stripe to the lane stripe or from the longitudinal joint of the gutter pan to lane stripe (the gutter pan should not be included as usable width). The curb offset is not included as part of the usable lane width for a shared use in a wide curb lane. When restriping or widening existing pavement to achieve a wide curb lane for shared use, the appropriate lane widths for the remaining lanes and curb offsets as defined in RDM should be maintained. The dimensions shown above for a wide curb lane or a bicycle lane are minimum values. Where traffic volumes or speeds are high, wider lanes for bicycles may be needed.

For projects in a rural setting, the following guidance is provided:

For off-system roadways greater than 400 ADT and all on-system roadways, where bridges are being replaced or bridge decks are being replaced or rehabilitated, a 5-foot shoulder (4' shoulder and 1' barrier offset) shall be provided on the structure and along the adjacent barrier.

District Engineers

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March 23, 2011

These guidelines apply to all projects which are currently in the planning and design stages and projects whose environmental documents are approved after August 31, 2011. For projects whose environmental documents are approved on or prior to August 31, 2011, the use of these guidelines is at the option of the district.

Questions related to the use of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations may be directed to Maria Burke, Design Division at (512) 416-2703 or Tom Beeman, Design Division at (512) 416-2673. Future manual(s) updates will reflect this bicycle and pedestrian accommodation guidance as appropriate.

cc: Amadeo Saenz, Jr., P.E., ADM
 David B. Casteel, P.E., ADM
 Regional Directors
 Owen Whitworth, AUD
 Mark A. Marek, P.E., DES
 Maria G. Burke, P.E., DES
 Thomas D. Beeman, P.E., DES
 Aurora (Rory) Meza, P.E., DES
 Dianna F. Noble, P.E., ENV
 Toribio Garza, Jr., P.E., MNT
 John P. Campbell, P.E., ROW
 James L. Randall, P.E., TPP
 Paul Douglas, TPP
 Carol T. Rawson, P.E., TRF
 Mark E. Tomlinson, P.E., TTA
 Janice W. Brown, FHWA

APPENDIX E: TXDOT SURFACING MEMORANDUM



DEWITT C. GREER STATE HIGHWAY BLDG • 125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 • (512) 463-8565

May 8, 2009

Mr. Robin Stallings
Executive Director
Texas Bicycle Coalition
Post Office Box 1121
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Stallings:

As per my letter dated, September 25, 2008, the Texas Department of Transportation has completed its research into current seal coat design and construction practices. Our research has indicated that certain practices may reduce the impact to the bicycling community. To that end, we have issued a memorandum to our district engineers (attached). This memorandum also stresses the importance of sweeping travel lanes and shoulders after rock application.

We look forward to working with bicyclists across Texas to improve shoulders for use by the cycling community. If you have any further comment or questions, please contact Paul Douglas at 466-5112 or by email at pdouglas@dot.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

John A. Barton, P.E.
John A. Barton, P.E.
Assistant Executive Director
Engineering Operations

Attachment

cc: James L. Randall, P.E., Director, Transportation Planning and Programming Division, TxDOT
Jennifer Moczygemba, P.E., Transportation Planning and Programming Division, TxDOT
Paul Douglas, Transportation Planning and Programming Division, TxDOT



MEMORANDUM

TO: District Engineers DATE: April 13, 2009
FROM: John A. Barton, P.E. *John A. Barton, P.E.*
SUBJECT: Accommodating Bicycles in Seal Coat Construction

Seal coating is a cost effective and widely used maintenance technique. However, seal coats may not always be ideal for modes of transportation other than automobiles. In particular, seal coats can, in some cases, present difficulties for bicyclists. To promote the accommodation of bicycle traffic, in accordance with the TxDOT mission, I am providing guidance to address the needs of the bicycle-riding public while supporting the use of seal coats for low cost preventive maintenance.

We should consider bicyclists' needs as we develop our PS&E and contracts. In particular, we should give a high priority to planning for bicycle traffic for routes with high numbers of either commuter or recreational bicyclists. You are encouraged to also work with local bicycle groups to identify the safest routes in your district. It is important to consider the availability of shoulders, horizontal alignments, intersection traffic, and traffic volumes in the selection of these routes. You can use this planning to create specific corridors for bicyclists to use. Road signs may be installed to mark these corridors and of impending roadwork.

Past research has shown that smoother surfaces are desirable for bicyclists. When placing a seal coat as a final driving surface, consider one of the following low cost options to provide an improved riding surface for bicycles:

- use a smaller seal coat aggregate,
- use a smaller seal coat aggregate on the shoulders,
- use fog seal on existing seal coated shoulders rather than a new seal coat, or
- use smaller aggregate for the top course of multiple course seal coats.

For high bicycle traffic areas, consider installing advanced signage and notices of construction activities that could affect bicycling activities. Coordinate construction and maintenance work that could affect bicycle events with local sponsors and bicycle groups. We should be diligent about sweeping excess aggregate from seal coat projects one to two weeks after completing the work, and performing additional sweeping of shoulders if necessary to remove loose aggregate or debris after the job is completed.

District Engineers

-2-

April 13, 2009

In addition, signing and pavement markings for bicycle lanes or designated bicycle routes should follow Part 9 of the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Bicycle routes and lanes that are affected due to construction, should be treated the same as pedestrian walkways or roadways that are under construction. Accommodations should be made to provide alternative routes if any of these routes are disrupted or closed due to construction. A black on orange detour plaque should be installed on bike route signs when providing a detour as shown on the attachment.

Attachment

cc: District Directors of Construction
District Directors of Maintenance
District Directors of Transportation Planning and Development
Thomas R. Bohuslav, P.E., Director, Construction Division
Mark A. Marek, P.E., Director, Design Division
Toribio Garza, Jr., P.E., Director, Maintenance Division
Carlos A. Lopez, P.E., Director, Traffic Operations Division


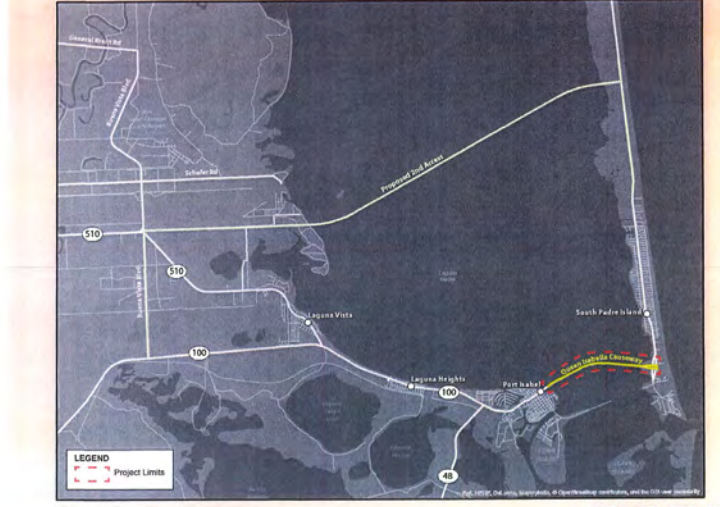


Example of detour sign placed on a bike route sign.


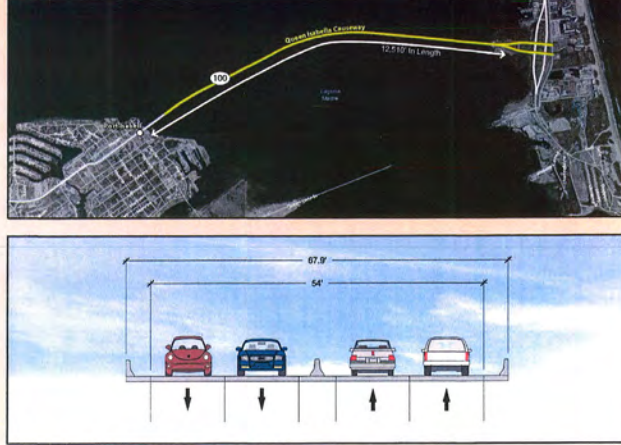
APPENDIX F: QUEEN ISABELLA CAUSEWAY STUDY

**Queen Isabella Causeway
Bicycle and Pedestrian Study**

July 9, 2015


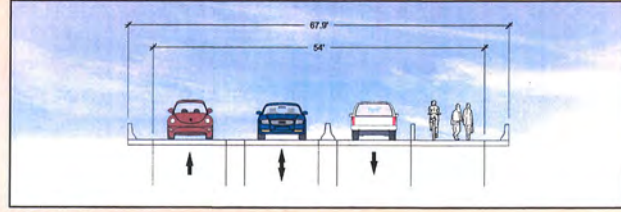



Regional Map
Queen Isabella Causeway Bicycle/Pedestrian Study

EXISTING CONDITIONS: TYPICAL SECTION


Queen Isabella Causeway Bicycle/Pedestrian Study

OPTION 1: TYPICAL SECTION


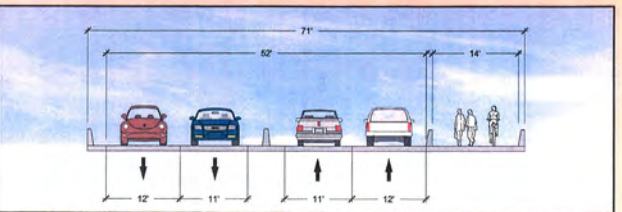
KEY POINTS

- Maintains Existing Bridge Width
- Converts One Lane Into a Two-Way Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility
- Three Lanes For Cars
 - Two One-Way Lanes
 - One Reversible Center Lane
- **Approx. Cost = \$5.6 Million**



Example: Barrier Divided Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility

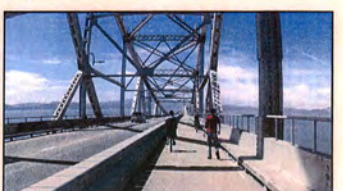
Queen Isabella Causeway Bicycle/Pedestrian Study

OPTION 2: TYPICAL SECTION


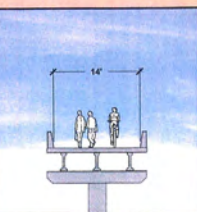
KEY POINTS

- Widen Bridge Deck 4 Feet
- Relocate Median Barrier and Restripe
- Add AASHTO Compliant Two-Way Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility
- **Approx. Cost = \$9.3 Million**



Example: Barrier Divided Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility


Queen Isabella Causeway Bicycle/Pedestrian Study

OPTION 3: TYPICAL SECTION


KEY POINTS

- Construct New Bridge for Two Way Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility
- Environmental Process
- **Approx. Cost = \$27 Million**



Example: Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge

Queen Isabella Causeway Bicycle/Pedestrian Study



APPENDIX G: ARTHUR RAVENEL JR. BRIDGE ARTICLE

Bridge pedestrian lane raises activity levels, study reports



[David Quick Email @davidquick](mailto:davidquick@berkeley.edu)

May 12 2008 12:01 am Mar 22 11:17 am



Cooper River Bridge Wade Speers/The Post and Courier

As the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge approaches the third anniversary of its opening, preliminary results of a survey prove what most of us who drive, bike, run and walk the bridge probably suspect: People are exercising more because of the bridge's bike and pedestrian lane.

In a recent survey of 393 local users by the College of Charleston, 67 percent said their activity levels had increased since the opening of the bridge.

That number is even more impressive among "nonwhites" (most of whom were African-Americans). Of the nonwhites, 85.4 percent reported increased activity levels. Whites reported a 64 percent increase.

The survey, conducted in accordance with strict National Institutes of Health guidelines, was performed within the last year by the College of Charleston sociology and

anthropology department. It was initiated by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The final results are expected to be released this fall.

"The idea for the Ravenel Bridge study came after an elected official requested information on the impacts of adding of bike and pedestrian facilities to an existing bridge," says Vonie Gilreath, senior planner at COG. "The preliminary results of this survey clearly show that if sidewalks and bike lanes are included in roadway design, residents will increase their physical activity as part of their daily routine — be it recreation or commuting to work."

Gilreath adds that the biggest surprise in the study was the positive impact improving the built environment had on motivating the "vulnerable," those prone to obesity-related diseases, and minority populations to walk and bicycle. She speculates that the number of users will rise with the opening of Charleston's East Bay Street multiuse path in June and Mount Pleasant's waterfront park in 2009.

Dr. Patrick O'Neil, director of the Weight Management Center at the Medical University of South Carolina, says the survey's data supports the value of and need for more such paths for walkers, runners and cyclists throughout the tri-county area.

Officials already have plans to add a bike-ped lane on the Ben Sawyer Bridge replacement and unfunded plans for retrofitting the Ashley River bridge and are talking about what can be done with the north bridge on S.C. Highway 7 between West Ashley and North Charleston.

"This (survey) verifies my daily observations that the path is used by people of all fitness levels, and is not just another venue for the highly fit to work out," says O'Neil. "It is gratifying to see the significant numbers of African-American users, men and women of all ages, and to see the substantial numbers of users of all races who clearly are trying to get fit but not there yet."

The results also underscore what he has heard from patients of the Weight Management Center, who "speak enthusiastically about walking the bridge, either as an accomplishment or as an aspiration."

O'Neil adds, "It's good to hear the tone of these descriptions, as fun or a personal achievement rather than exercise drudgery."

While most of the users do so at their own convenience, at least one local health initiative has used the bridge as an integral part of its overall program.

The Lean Team is a collaborative effort of the Medical University of South Carolina and the Charleston County School District. Since November 2007, 180 different people, from groups as small as four to as big as 30 have met at 9 a.m. Saturdays on the Charleston side of the bridge to walk it. At last count, the team had logged nearly 3,200 miles combined.

Mary Joan Oexmann, the Lean Team organizer, says the original plan was for the team to meet until the Cooper River Bridge Run and Walk. But the effort has become a Saturday morning custom for many.

"As long as people are coming out, we'll keep doing it," says Oexmann. "The wonderful thing is that people from all walks of life are forming relationships at the same time they are getting exercise."

The Lean Team includes doctors, college students, minorities and senior citizens.

One of the seniors has become symbolic of the bridge and the change it has made in lives.

Virginia Huff, who is 81, started walking the bridge to lose weight. She walks with a walker, which during the Christmas holiday was decorated, and beams a smile as she says hello to every passer-by. Since she started walking, she has logged 200 miles and lost 32 pounds.

Oexmann says that Huff is an inspiration to her, other Lean Team participants and the thousands of strangers she greets on the bridge.

"She is teaching us that you have to be intentional. Every one of us can follow her example and take one step at a time," says Oexmann. "If you are having a bad day and you're listening to all those excuses — no time, no money, no energy, no way — you simply think about Virginia walking the bridge three times a week, one step at a time."

Bridge survey

--Of 476 users approached, **17 percent** were tourists. While the tourists were not interviewed, the statistic points to the lane as a catalyst for tourism.--Of the 393 interviewed, **67 percent** indicated that their activity levels had increased since the opening of the bridge path.--**85.4 percent** of nonwhites reported increased activity levels versus **64 percent** of whites.--**10.4 percent** are using the bridge to commute to work.--**72.8 percent** drove to a parking area near the bridge in order to use the lane.--Bike commuters ranked "the chance to be outside" and "scenery" as strong reasons for commuting.--All users rated the following bridge path qualities in terms of importance: The median ranked safety, lighting, scenery, parking, convenience, location and access as "very important" (the highest ranking).

APPENDIX H: ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2016-044

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS A PART OF THE IMAGINE BROWNSVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the City; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

- (1) Include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- (2) Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
- (3) Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

Be it resolved by the City of Brownsville:

PART 1. That the City of Brownsville accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".

PART 2. That the City of Brownsville use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

Adopted by the City Commission of the City of Brownsville on the 20th day of September, 2016.

Attest:
City Secretary



Mayor

Approved as to form and legality:
City Attorney

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2016-045

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS, TO ENDORSE AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VISITOR'S CENTER AND A HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL THROUGH THE BAHIA GRANDE UNIT OF THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE'S LAGUNA ATASCOSA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

WHEREAS, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, the Active Plan, was recently adopted; and

WHEREAS, the Active Plan recommends a multi-use trail to connect the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge to the Palo Alto National Historical Battlefield Park; and

WHEREAS, this trail route will also link cities of Port Isabel, Laguna Heights, and Laguna Vista, to Brownsville and Los Fresnos through an extension of the City of Brownsville's existing Historic Battlefield Trail, providing a safe passageway for bicycle riders, walkers, and runners; and

WHEREAS, the project connects people to parks and green space, expands outdoor education opportunities for health and well-being and improves access to close-to-home recreation; and

WHEREAS, the project supports several national efforts and programs, such as the *America's Great Outdoors* initiative, the *Let's Move* program, and the National Park Service's *Call to Action*.

Be it resolved by the City of Brownsville:

PART 1. That the City of Brownsville hereby supports the development of a visitor's center and a hike and bike trail through the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.

Adopted by the City Commission of Brownsville on the 20 day of September, 2016.

Attest:

City Secretary



Mayor

Approved as to form and legality:
City Attorney

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2016-7

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF COMBES, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS A PART OF THE TOWN OF COMBES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the City; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

- (1) Include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- (2) Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
- (3) Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

Be it resolved by the Town of Combes

PART 1. That the Town of Combes accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".

PART 2. That the Town of Combes use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

Adopted by the Board of the Town of Combes on the 26th day of September, 2016.

Attest:

Town Secretary

Marco Sanchez
Mayor

APPENDIX H: ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. R2016 - 38

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ADOPTION OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, "THE ACTIVE PLAN."

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments;

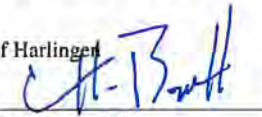
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF HARLINGEN, TEXAS:


Section One. That the City of Harlingen accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".

Section Two. That the City of Harlingen use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval as provided by law.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HARLINGEN, TEXAS AT A REGULAR MEETING ON THE 3RD DAY OF OCTOBER, 2016.

City of Harlingen
By: 
Chris Boswell, Mayor

ATTEST:

Amanda Elizondo, City Secretary
City of Harlingen, Texas



HARLINGEN – SAN BENITO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Resolution 2016-08

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN

WHEREAS, pursuant to federal law, the Governor of the State of Texas designated the Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization (HSBMPO) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Harlingen Urbanized Area; and

WHEREAS, the Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee provides direction and certifies the coordination, comprehensiveness, and continuity of the regional transportation planning process; and

WHEREAS, the HSBMPO's Transportation Policy Committee is currently the forum for cooperative decision-making regarding regional transportation issues; and

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments;


NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Harlingen San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Committee, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for this area, agree by a majority vote to support a resolution to accept the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan and use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

Hereby orders the recording of this resolution in the minutes of the Transportation Policy Committee; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board delegates the signing of necessary documents to the Board Chair.

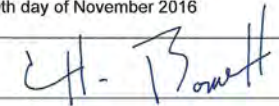
"Working together for better a mobility"
● 502 E. Tyler St Harlingen, TX 78550 ● Voice (956) 216-5240 ● Fax (956) 430-6640

TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE
Chris Boswell, Chair
Mayor
City Of Harlingen
Celeste Sanchez, Vice Chair
Mayor
City Of San Benito
Mark Sanchez
Mayor
City Of Combes
Rick Cavazos
Mayor
City Of Los Indios
George Rivera
Mayor
City Of Palm Valley
R. Dave Kusch
Mayor
City Of Primera
Gustavo Olivares
Mayor
City Of Rio Hondo
Olga H. Maldonado
Mayor
City Of La Feria
Andres Contreras
Mayor
City Of Santa Rosa
Manny De La Rosa
City Manager
City Of San Benito
Dan Serna
City Manager
City Of Harlingen
David Garza
Cameron County
Commissioner, Pct. 3
Gus Ruiz
Cameron County
Commissioner, Pct. 4
Toribio Garza Jr.
District Engineer
TxDOT-Pharr District



HARLINGEN – SAN BENITO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Approved this 9th day of November 2016

Signature: 

Printed Name: Chris Boswell

Title: Harlingen-San Benito MPO Chairperson-City of Harlingen Mayor

TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE
Chris Boswell, Chair
Mayor
City Of Harlingen
Celeste Sanchez, Vice Chair
Mayor
City Of San Benito
Mark Sanchez
Mayor
City Of Combes
Rick Cavazos
Mayor
City Of Los Indios
George Rivera
Mayor
City Of Palm Valley
R. Dave Kusch
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City Of Primera
Gustavo Olivares
Mayor
City Of Rio Hondo
Olga H. Maldonado
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City Of La Feria
Andres Contreras
Mayor
City Of Santa Rosa
Manny De La Rosa
City Manager
City Of San Benito
Dan Serna
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Commissioner, Pct. 4
Toribio Garza Jr.
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TxDOT-Pharr District

"Working together for better a mobility"
● 502 E. Tyler St Harlingen, TX 78550 ● Voice (956) 216-5240 ● Fax (956) 430-6640

APPENDIX H: ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2016-15

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS A PART OF THE TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the City; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

- (1) Include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- (2) Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
- (3) Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA THAT:

PART 1. That the Town of Laguna Vista accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".

PART 2. That the Town of Laguna Vista will use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

Adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Laguna Vista on the 13th day of September, 2016.

PASSED, AND APPROVED by the Town Council of the Town of Laguna Vista, Texas this 13th day of September 2016.

Attest:



Alma Deckard, City Secretary




Susie Houston, Mayor

RESOLUTION NO. 15-2016

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS FRESNOS, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS A PART OF THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

This Resolution was introduced and submitted to the City Council for passage and adoption. After presentation and discussion of the Resolution, a motion was made by Mayor Narvaez that the Resolution be finally passed and adopted in accordance with the City's Home Rule Charter. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Mendez and carried by the following vote:

Mayor Polo Narvaez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Yolanda H. Cruz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Swain Real	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Javier Mendez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Bibi Garza	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilmember Gary Minton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the City; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

- (1) Include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- (2) Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
- (3) Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

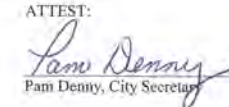
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS FRESNOS, TEXAS:

PART 1. That the City of Los Fresnos accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".


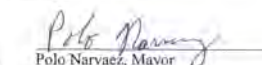
PART 2. That the City of Los Fresnos use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the City Council on this 13th day of September, 2016.

ATTEST:



Pam Denny, City Secretary

Polo Narvaez, Mayor

RESOLUTION NUMBER 09-27-2016-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF PORT ISABEL, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS A PART OF THE PORT ISABEL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the City; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

- (1) Include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- (2) Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
- (3) Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.
- (4)

Be it resolved by the City Commission of the City of Port Isabel:

PART 1. That the City Commission of the City of Port Isabel accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".

PART 2. That the City Commission of the City of Port Isabel use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

Adopted by the City Commission of the Port Isabel on the 27th day of September, 2016.

City of Port Isabel



Juan Jose "JJ" Mayor

Attest:



Susie Alcocer, City Secretary

Approved as to form and legality:

Gilbert Hinojosa, City Attorney

APPENDIX H: ADOPTION RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 286

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF RANCHO VIEJO, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS A PART OF THE RANCHO VIEJO'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the Town to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the Town; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

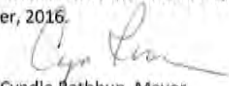
1. Include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
2. Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
3. Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF RANCHO VIEJO, TEXAS, that:


PART 1. That the Town accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".

PART 2. That the Town use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED, by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Rancho Viejo, Texas at a Regular Meeting on this the 13th day of September, 2016.


 Cyndie Rathbun, Mayor

Attest:


 Fred Blanco, Town Secretary

STATE OF TEXAS §
 COUNTY OF CAMERON § Resolution 2016-20
 CITY OF SAN BENITO §

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF SAN BENITO, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS A PART OF THE CITY OF SAN BENITO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the City; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

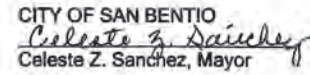
- (1) Include provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- (2) Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
- (3) Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

Be it resolved by the City of San Benito:

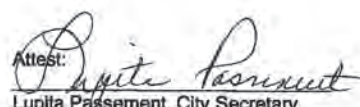
PART 1. That the City of San Benito accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, here attached as Exhibit "A".

PART 2. That the City of San Benito use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

Adopted by the City Commission of the City of San Benito on the 18th day of October, 2016.


CITY OF SAN BENITO

 Celeste Z. Sanchez, Mayor

Attest:


 Lupita Passemont, City Secretary

Approved as to form and legality:

 City Attorney


 RESOLUTION NO. 2016-28

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS, TO ADOPT THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN, THE ACTIVE PLAN, AS PART OF THE SOUTH PADRE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

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 consists of organizational strategies and opportunities for the development of the region; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this plan will attract visitors to the County and South Padre Island; and provide amenities to permanent residents through area-wide active transportation investments; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the City to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the City; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive plan may:

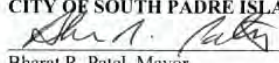
1. Include provision on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
2. Consists of a single plan or coordinated set of plans organized by subject matter and geographic area; and
3. Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of South Padre Island, Texas:


Section 1. That the City of South Padre Island accepts the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan.


Section 2. That the City of South Padre Island use the Plan as a resource of guidance.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED on this the 5th day of October, 2016

CITY OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS

 Bharat R. Patel, Mayor

ATTEST:


 Susan M. Hill, City Secretary



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THE ACTIVE PLAN

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY | ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE TOURISM PLAN

