

# Memorandum

**DATE:** March 4, 2024  
**TO:** Victoria MPO  
**CC:**  
**FROM:** ATG|DCCM  
**RE:** Victoria MPO MTP Update Plan Review

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On behalf of the Victoria MPO, Alliance Transportation Group, LLC (ATG) conducted a plan review to better understand the existing conditions for the Victoria MPO planning area in support of the development of the 2050 MTP. This plan review collected and examined current plans and reports that involve transportation projects and topics at federal, state, regional, and local levels. This review provides a consistent foundation to understand the current and future transportation investment activities and priorities in the region, and ensure consistency with regional planning efforts and ongoing state and local planning activities.

## Victoria MPO

### 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Adopted in 2020, the Victoria 2045 MTP was developed over a 12-month period, during which several rounds of public and stakeholder meetings were conducted, technical data was analyzed, existing plans and studies were compiled and reviewed, and potential projects were evaluated according to community goals and performance-based criteria. The resulting product is a comprehensive blueprint for the future of the transportation system that considers all modes and the needs of all users.

The goals of the 2045 plan are as follows:

1. Work towards future I-69 corridor design.
2. Improve safety and security.
3. Increase connections and access.
4. Support land use goals.
5. Encourage environmental stewardship and resilience.
6. Preserve the existing system.
7. Improve public transportation.
8. Encourage cycling.
9. Encourage walking.

10. Enhance economic development.
11. Guarantee equitable transportation improvements.
12. Promote efficient system management and operation.

During the public involvement process of the 2045 MTP update, participants identified several deficiencies with the existing transportation system, including congested roadways, connectivity and transit cooperation throughout the region, mobility and accessibility barriers for older adults and individuals with disabilities, safety and security concerns, and a shortage of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. In addition to identifying transportation system deficiencies, participants completed activities to determine the most important focus areas for prioritizing projects in the MTP. These factors included increasing multimodal options, improving safety and quality of life, connecting modes of travel, and improving access.

Major funding priorities for roadway projects identified in the 2045 plan are categorized into three categories: Roadway, Public Transportation, and TxDOT Grouped Projects. Roadways projects total \$259,290,870 and Public Transportation projections total \$76,849,147. Grouped projects are not given cost estimates. Projects from the 2045 MTP that have not yet been let or programmed will be brought forward into this 2050 MTP update for reevaluation and assessment.

### **2023 - 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Updated every two years and covering a period of four years, the 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) provides a guide to Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration (FHWA), Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and local officials for coordinating the programmatic details of planned projects within available funding levels. The programming of projects includes details such as design, engineering, and construction of transportation and transit improvements for the near future. In collaboration with local planning partners, projects included in the TIP have been allocated funds for implementation, accounting for approximately \$10,352,254 in transit and \$104,092,142 in roadway improvements. The TIP was adopted in June 2022.

### **2025 - 2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The 2025 TIP is the updated version of the 2023 TIP. Projects from the updated TIP include \$630,392,000 in funding projects for freeway operational improvements, widening non-freeways, and creating a railroad grade separation.

### **2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is updated yearly to provide an annual account of the activities taken by the MPO, and the resources used to accomplish each activity. This provides a series of tasks, which will be accomplished during the fiscal year, regarding MTP projects, special studies, planning efforts, etc. within the community. For 2024, the UPWP allocated approximately \$358,000 in funds across four tasks.

## **2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The 2025 UPWP is the updated version of the 2024 UPWP. For 2025, the UPWP allocated approximately \$160,000 in funds across four tasks, with \$407,000 in carryover funds.

## **2021 Thoroughfare Master Plan**

The City of Victoria's Thoroughfare Master Plan (TMP) is a long-range planning document adopted by the Victoria City Council on June 15, 2021, for use in guiding the development of the community's transportation network. The TMP's purpose is to ensure that the transportation network in and around Victoria meets the current and future needs of the growing region for all modes of surface transportation.

This plan serves as a guideline intended to help city officials plan for the future of the transportation system through the recommendation of new and enhanced roadway alignments, typical design cross-sections, and policy updates. Rather than focusing solely on maximizing vehicle travel, the plan emphasizes the importance of context-sensitive solutions that consider a variety of factors affecting multimodal mobility, accessibility, and quality of life.

## **2023 Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP)**

The Victoria Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP), adopted by the Victoria City Council on November 7, 2023, provides a shared vision for the community's priorities for safe and convenient walking, bicycling, wheelchair use, and other means of non-motorized travel for recreation and transportation. The ATMP identifies a network that, when implemented, will provide residents opportunities to walk and bike between neighborhoods and access the existing greenway trails from points throughout the city.

The plan goals are as follows:

1. Safety.
2. Connectivity.
3. Health.
4. Equity.
5. Economy.
6. Resiliency.

## **2050 Socioeconomic Forecast for the TDM**

The 2050 Socioeconomic Forecast identifies future socioeconomic and demographic trends for the Victoria, Texas area. The forecast predicts a 13% increase in population from 2022 to 2050 and a 19% increase in employment. The data from the forecast is used for the MPO's Travel Demand Model (TDM). The TDM is a tool used to predict future demand for transportation facilities and estimate the impacts of programming on behavior and travel demand.

## City of Victoria

### **2016 City of Victoria's Plan 2035 Comprehensive Plan**

The City of Victoria's Plan 2035 Comprehensive Plan highlights key planning considerations through 2035. The plan has four focus areas: Land Use and Development; Mobility; Growth Capacity and Management; Economic Opportunity; and Recreation and Amenities. Most relevant to the MTP, the Comprehensive Plan identifies pavement quality, traffic signal timing, sidewalks/trails, traffic congestion and safety, railroad crossings, and bus operations as high concerns of residents and stakeholders.

## Regional Plans

### **GCRPC Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, 2022-2026**

The Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission oversees transit services in Victoria and surrounding areas. The GCRPC actively participates in Victoria MPO's operations. The 5-year plan identifies needs and potential solutions for regional transportation planning. The plan has three goals: policy and planning projects, operation and capital improvements projects, and finance projects. The plan includes the following goals for transit in the region:

1. Services that are affordable to all special groups.
2. Increase availability of transportation services.
3. Improve fare collection processes.
4. Increase public awareness by using several medians and use of website.
5. Shelters.
6. Accessible bus stops.
7. Increased public involvement in regional planning.
8. Transportation for veterans.
9. Cost share routes for job access.

### **Victoria Transit – Transit Asset Management Plan**

The Federal Transit Administration requires transit agencies to maintain a transit asset management plan (TAM), which outlines the agency's strategy for procuring, operating, inspecting, maintaining, rehabilitating, and replacing capital assets. The agency responsible for the TAM plan for Victoria Transit is the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC), the operator of the transit agency.

The GCRPC TAM plan identifies a goal of keeping at least 72.5% of assets in a State of Good Repair. The Victoria MPO TIP is a resource the GCRPC might use to maintain assets in good repair.

## **Victoria Transit – Public Transit Agency Safety Plan**

The FTA also requires certain operators of public transportation systems to develop a Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) that includes the processes and procedures to implement a Safety Management System, a comprehensive, collaborative, and systematic approach to managing safety. The GCRPC is also the responsible party for creating this document for Victoria Transit.

This plan includes many aspects of the current TAM plan to ensure a systematic and companywide approach to safety and risk management is undergone, and similar levels of coordination will occur between Victoria Transit, the MPO, and TxDOT in establishing performance targets according to FTA's final rule on PTASPs.

## **State Plans**

### **Unified Transportation Program (TxDOT, 2024)**

TxDOT's Unified Transportation Program is a 10-year plan to guide the development of transportation projects across the state.

The UTP lists three projects in or near the study area:

- Freeway operational improvements on US 77
- Widen FM 236 from US 77 to FM 622
- Widen FM 236 from FM 622 to FM 237

When the 2025 UTP update is released, any updated priorities and projects will be incorporated into the MTP update.

### **Transportation Asset Management Plan (TxDOT)**

The Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for Texas assesses the conditions of bridges and pavement. Keeping the transportation network in a state of good repair is essential to public safety and long-term structure operation. TxDOT coordinates with MPOs across the state in order to achieve the goals of 90% of bridges and roads in good condition, deliver the right projects, foster stewardship, optimize system performance, and preserve infrastructure assets.

### **Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2022-2027 (TxDOT)**

The goal of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) is to prevent crashes, reduce crash severity, and enhance emergency response. While the SHSP does not specifically mention Victoria, it is important in that the vision is a future with zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries. MPOs play an important role in implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and work to realize

Vision Zero within their planning area and within the state. Some examples of safety strategies from the plan are to keep vehicles from encroaching on the opposite lane, reduce speeding, expand intersection safety practices through planning and design, and increase public education and outreach efforts.

### **Texas Delivers 2050 (TxDOT)**

The Texas Delivers 2050 Plan is TxDOT's statewide freight mobility plan. The plan provides the blueprint for facilitating economic growth through movement of goods. The plan identifies the Port of Victoria as a key port for the region, with over a half million tons of sand and gravel shipping from the port in 2019 alone.

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### **Texas Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) FY 2023-2026**

The 2023-2026 STIP for Texas is an extensive document that outlines information for each individual current and near-term transportation project in the state. There are seven strategic goals that guide the STIP: (1) promote safety, (2) deliver the right projects, (3) focus on the customer, (4) foster environmental stewardship, (5) optimize system performance, (6) preserve assets, and (7) value employees. The Victoria MPO has the four following projects listed in the STIP:

- Widen a portion of FM 236 from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane divided highway.
- Widen a portion of BU-59T from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane divided highway.
- Widen another portion of BU-59T from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane divided highway.
- Widen a portion of US 77 from a 2-lane highway to a 4-lane facility.

Projects from the STIP will be reviewed for concurrence to ensure that they are still included in the full list of projects pulled forward from the 2045 MTP. Where applicable, new projects will be added to the full list of projects.

## **Federal Plans/Legislation**

Beyond the federal legislation that mandates specific components of a metropolitan transportation plan, additional federal plans and legislation will impact the 2050 MTP update.

### **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (2021)**

The IIJA, also referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), authorized billions of dollars in spending for transportation and infrastructure projects. The IIJA also provided additional funding for existing programs, created new programs, and established new regulations and requirements for how funding is utilized. Through the IIJA, there have been some changes to the regulations and guidance relevant to MPOs. MPOs now have a requirement to set aside 2.5% of the annual budget for investment in alternative transportation modes. Additionally, MPOs are now required to take state and local housing patterns into consideration during the planning process. Other changes include allowing social media to be used for public participation and requiring MPOs to consider representation of the population of the planning area when initially designating officials for board representation. MPOs are also eligible to apply for numerous IIJA grant programs, such as the sample ones described below. The FHWA and the US DOT have resources that identify all grant programs authorized by the IIJA, with funding amounts, categorization, and applicant information that is useful for MPOs. Projects in the 2050 MTP update can be tailored to ensure eligibility for these programs.

### **PROTECT Grant**

The PROTECT Discretionary Grant program is available to MPOs to improve the resilience of surface transportation infrastructure to natural hazards through projects and planning activities. There are three categories of PROTECT Grants: planning, resilience improvements, and evacuation route/community resilience.

### **Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG)**

The IIJA continues the STBG funding opportunities from the FAST Act with a few different features. For instance, the STBG is now required to set aside 10% of funds for alternative transportation projects. Projects that are eligible for the alternative transportation set aside include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, along with trails and environmental mitigation projects. Moreover, multiple new activities are now eligible for funding through the STBG, such as the maintenance and restoration of existing trails or the creation of dedicated bus lanes.

### **National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)**

NHPP funds are continued as a provision of the IIJA, so that the National Highway System can meet the established performance targets. In addition, NHPP funds can also be used to increase the resilience of the National Highway System and mitigate the cost of natural hazards to the system.

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## **National Highway Freight Program**

The National Highway Freight Program aims to support the efficient movement of freight on the National Highway network. The IIJA continues this program and adds new eligibility for intermodal freight projects.

## **Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program**

The Reconnecting Communities Pilot discretionary grant program was established by the IIJA and aims to reconnect communities that have been cut off by transportation infrastructure. MPOs are eligible to apply for this program, which can be used for projects that remove or retrofit existing facilities to improve connectivity and economic opportunity.

## **Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program**

The IIJA has a significant amount of new funding for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. One of these programs is the CFI discretionary grant program, which is available to MPOs. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure as well as other alternative refueling infrastructure projects along the Alternative Fuels Network are eligible uses of funding.

## **Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 (U.S. DOT)**

The Strategic Plan from the U.S. DOT is a long-term strategy for actions and goals related to the operation, maintenance, and development of the American transportation network. Goals in this plan include safety, economic strength and competitiveness, equity, climate and sustainability, transformation for the future, and organizational excellence. This plan focuses primarily on agencies at the federal level. However, many of the goals, strategies, and objectives are applicable at the state and regional level, as well. For example, customer service and workforce development, safe designs, and accessibility are important focus areas at all agency levels.