

ES

Executive Summary



FORWARD **50**

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Introduction

Transportation planning is a cooperative process designed to foster involvement by all users of the system. Businesses, community groups, environmental organizations, the traveling public, and freight operators, all benefit through a proactive public participation process.

In [urbanized areas](#), the transportation planning process is conducted by a Metropolitan Planning Organization in cooperation with the State Department of Transportation and transit providers. In [rural areas](#), transportation planning processes are carried out by the state in cooperation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas. FTA and FHWA jointly administer the federally required transportation planning processes in metropolitan areas, as set forth in Federal law.

The Permian Basin Metropolitan Planning Organization (PBMPO) was formed in early 1965 as approved by the Governor of Texas. Over the decades the boundary has changed but the membership of the agency has largely remained the same. In 2015 a portion of Martin County was added with a voting representative, and the Midland Odessa Urban Transit District (MOUTD) became a voting member in late 2014. Currently there are seven member agencies representing the cities of Midland and Odessa, Martin, Ector and Midland counties, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the MOUTD.

The Forward50 MTP

The Permian Basin MPO is pleased to deliver the Forward50 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a regional transportation plan covering the period 2025-2050. This plan will update and replace the *Forward 45* MTP. The plan is mandated under federal law to be updated every five years; this has been accomplished.

What has changed since the preparation of the previous plan through the year 2045? To answer that question, one must start by stating that a new federal transportation bill was approved in November 2021, about mid-way between the completion of the older 2045 plan and the new plan for 2050. This landmark bill, known as the Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA), includes an unprecedented financial commitment to many efforts that will directly affect the PBMPO:

- Funding to repair and rebuild the nation's roads and bridges with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity, and safety for all users.
- Improved transportation options for millions of Americans and reduced greenhouse emissions through the largest investment in public transit in U.S. history.
- Upgraded airports and ports to strengthen our supply chains and prevent disruptions that have caused inflation. This will improve U.S. competitiveness, create more and better jobs at these hubs, and reduce emissions.

Funding from the passage of IIJA is currently being realized in the PBMPO region and the future funding scenario is included within this plan and is in part tied to the bill.

Planning Studies

The PBMPO has participated in numerous studies led by TxDOT. These included the following:

- Texas Legislature mandated Ports-to-Plains corridor study resulting in the future alignment of I-27
- Texas Delivers 2050 – Texas Freight Mobility Plan
- I-20 and Corridor Studies
- Loop 338 Study
- Truck Parking study for West Texas

The PBMPO has performed a lead role in the following studies:

- Wildcatter Trail bicycle and pedestrian corridor
- Resilience Improvement Plan
- Planning & Environmental Linkage study for an Outer Loop

PBMPO staff have also participated in numerous committees and associations as follows:

- Border Trade Advisory Committee
- Association of Texas MPOs
- Texas Public Health Association mobile workshop
- Governor's appointed Advance Air Mobility Advisory Committee
- Texas Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan

Planning Emphasis Areas

Within the Forward50 MTP, eight chapters cover the history of the region, it's demographic make-up, the importance of freight movement, highway and non-highway transportation modes, project selection and scoring, financial planning, system performance, challenges and threats to the region's transportation system.

It is important to note that the MPO has considered the USDOT's Planning Emphasis Areas that were delivered in a letter December 30, 2021. The emphasis areas that should be considered in metropolitan and statewide planning include the following.

Tackling the Climate Crisis

The PBMPO has programmed Category 10 funds from federal sources in FY 2025 to provide an eight-unit electric vehicle charging station near I-20 in Odessa.

Equity and Justice⁴⁰ in Transportation Planning

The PBMPO has supported planning efforts by Ector, Midland, and Martin Counties; the Cities of Midland and Odessa; and the Midland Odessa Urban Transit District (MOUTD) to improve infrastructure for non-motorized travel, reduce public transit fares where applicable, and complete Comprehensive Safety Action Plans that affect all agency members of the MPO and the public. The implementation phase of the Action Plans may result in successful grant applications to expedite priority projects in the region.

Complete Streets

The PBMPO has continued to support the construction of the Wildcatter Trail, which is a proposed 19-mile corridor connecting Midland to Odessa on land mostly absent of automobiles. The City of Midland received a TxDOT Category 9 Transportation Set-Aside Program grant for the construction of a portion of the trail. The MPO is prepared to support similar efforts when funding opportunities arise.

Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)

PBMPO has worked with the TxDOT Odessa District as well as the cities of Midland and Odessa and both affected counties to plan for the construction of I-27 and I-14. I-14 is known as the Forts-to-Ports corridor since it connects major military facilities stretching from Fort Stewart in Savannah, Georgia to Fort Bliss in El Paso.

Public Involvement

The PBMPO has utilized its consulting assistance firms to assist with public involvement during the Wildcatter Trail plan development, the PEL study to outline the potential location of an outer loop, the MPO's web page to share TxDOT and other agency media information, and to allow for remote involvement pursuant to the Texas Governor's directive experienced during the COVID-19 lockdown period and afterward.



Federal Land Management Agency Coordination

No tribal lands exist in the PBMPO boundary or the outlying region. The closest tribal government is in El Paso. The state of Texas has three federally recognized tribes: Alabama-Coushatta in Polk County, Kickapoo Traditional in Maverick County, and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo in El Paso County.

Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL)

The PBMPO has a long record of preparing PEL studies. The first such study was completed in 2014 and resulted in the acquisition of right-of-way and subsequent construction of a 2-lane road by Midland County to connect Loop 250 W to SH 158 on the southeast side of the MAB. This corridor relieves traffic on I-20 and provides a safe and convenient route for SE/NW travel. A second PEL was completed in early 2024 for the potential outer loop construction.

Data in Transportation Planning

The PBMPO has welcomed data sharing to improve policy and decision making. Recent additions to the data sets used by the MPO include the COMPAT tool developed by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. It is used for congestion analysis and management since the shared data ties directly to PM3, system reliability. The PBMPO also relies on the TxDOT Crash Records Information System for data related to safety on all surface modes of transportation.

Final Analysis

Finally, the PBMPO exists by federal mandate to move people and goods in the safest and most efficient manner. Decisions made by the MPO Policy Board have historically overlapped with federal and state directives and policies. The MPO has a long-standing record of addressing the needs of the traveling public in and throughout the region. Mandates and laws have changed over the years but the basic tasks of providing a continuous, comprehensive and cooperative planning process have continued since 1965.

With the Forward50 MTP in place, the PBMPO stands ready to plan for two new interstate systems, expand the transit fleet, give greater focus on non-motorized travel and complete streets, and increase participation by stakeholders to ensure that the region's quality of life is improved through transportation planning and implementation.

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