



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Phase II Implementation Grants

El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area Application

Chihuahuan Desert Carbon Mitigation Beltway

Workplan

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1. Overall Project Summary and Approach

A. Description of GHG Reduction Measures

The Chihuahuan Desert Carbon Mitigation Beltway” (“Project”) will deliver a multi-faceted, inclusive, regional approach to greenhouse gas and air pollutant reduction while simultaneously producing direct benefits for residents. **Nearly 65% of El Paso County and 100% of Hudspeth County are considered low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACs)** as per CJEST. The project is designed to be responsive to the specific vulnerabilities and benefits identified by those communities as priority climate actions. In addition to facing burdens like linguistic isolation and poor health, the MSA faces a variety of climate risks that exacerbate regional vulnerability including drought, flash flooding, air pollution, extreme heat, and extreme cold. The PCAP proposes measures to address these challenges with equity and inclusiveness at the forefront. The project incorporates priority benefits and multiple measures in communities ranging from the rural territories at the far east and west to heavily urbanized neighborhoods abutting the busiest international ports of entry in the region to the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, one of the largest tribal territories residing in an urban environment in the nation. The geography of the project spans over 5,500 square miles of urban and rural desert environment from the Texas / New Mexico border to the eastern edge of Hudspeth County, sharing the entirety of the southern border with urban and rural communities of Mexico.

This carbon removal, alternative transportation and energy efficiency project extends over 100 miles—the full length of El Paso County from the Texas—New Mexico border at Anthony south along the Rio Grande, past the spine of the Franklin Mountains and Sunland Park, New Mexico through the heart of Downtown El Paso, the Medical Center of the Americas and Chamizal National Memorial, following regional canals and waterways, then southeast into the rural communities of the Mission Valley, woven through the historic missions, to the farmlands beyond, expanding to San Elizario and west into the desert terrain of Hudspeth County culminating at the foot of the Guadalupe Mountains State Park. The project effectively targets the region’s two largest emissions sources (El Paso MSA PCAP, 2024): transportation (40%) and stationary energy use (58%) while acting as a carbon sequestration corridor at a regional scale. Figure 1 illustrates the entire proposed and future planned beltway. The entire length of the trail including segments not

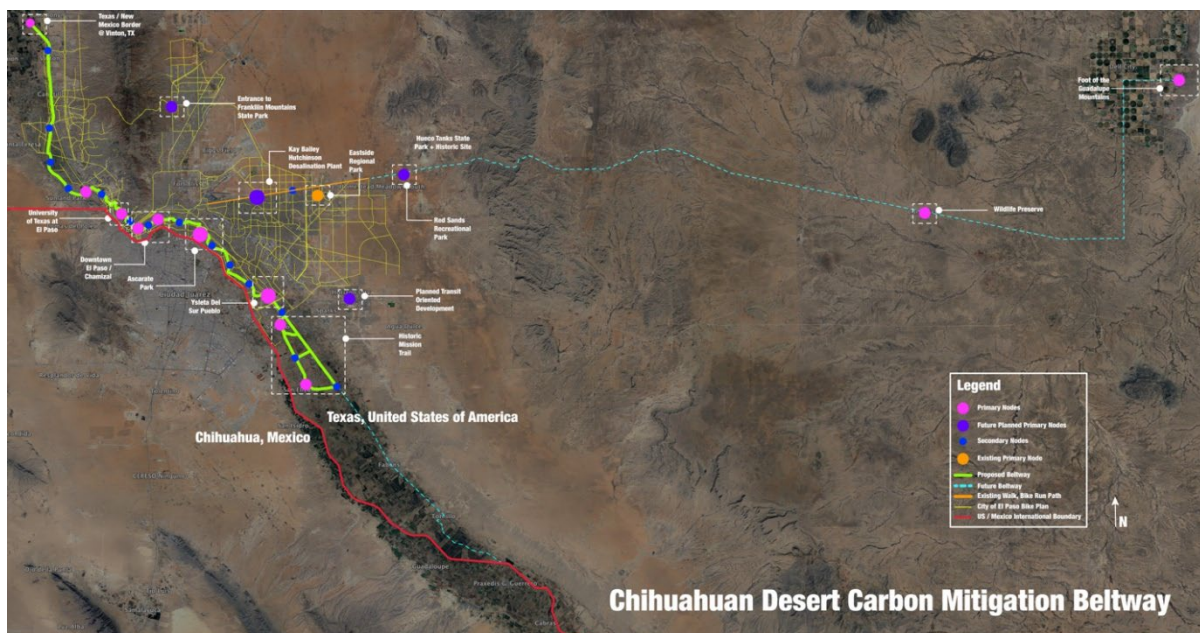


Figure 1 Project overview

adding significant enhancements targeted at intensively addressing GHG emission reduction. **One of the project’s core**

proposed for construction in this application is over 180 miles long.

The project leverages over a decade of planning and engagement invested in what is locally referred to as the Paso Del Norte Trail: A Trail for Everyone. This application allows for an accelerated construction of the trail while

strengths is its direct connection with other regional plans addressing mobility, housing, economic development, quality of life and regional resilience. Those plans include: City of El Paso Strategic Plan, Resilient El Paso, 2012 Comprehensive Plan, Downtown/Uptown Plan and Onward Alameda Plan (Transportation and Housing Oriented); City of Socorro Comprehensive Plan; El Paso County Multiyear Capital Plan and Parks Masterplan; El Paso MPO Transportation Improvement Plan; Village of Vinton Micromobility Plan; among others. The City of El Paso Bike Plan is a critical standout among related initiatives. Figures x and y illustrate the connectivity established by the bike plan from northern areas of the proposal to the southernmost segments. The Bike Plan and existing Montana Corridor bike trail and rapid transit route allow for the critical connection to Hudspeth county and ultimately the Guadalupe Mountains.

Another key strength lies in the **overwhelming regional support for the project and the benefits it will provide**. (see Letters of support) By aligning multiple plans the project draws climate action to the core of regional investments, unlocking exponential and compounding co-benefits for the some of the most vulnerable communities in the nation. The project is positioned to significantly mitigate GHG emissions and air pollutants not in one community, but across 2 counties, 10 municipalities and 15 unincorporated Areas of west Texas. Beyond that, the Beltway provides co-benefits long identified as critical for regional resilience and supportive of improved human health and prosperity as they relate to the Chihuahuan Desert environment. As demonstrated in projects such as the Atlanta Beltline, the Highline in New York or the Trinity River Project in Dallas, this concept carries with it a deep return on investment for the communities it serves. The scale of this project is larger and longer than any of the aforementioned examples, the longest of those being 22 miles. It holds the potential to transform over 100 miles of extremely underserved community embedded at the heart of three states and two countries. Our collaborative is already incorporating the lessons of past projects of similar nature in terms of maximizing climate impact while mitigating issues of potential gentrification and displacement. The decade long widespread support for this project, alongside years of planning, design and coordination supported by community, philanthropy and local government provides a clear target for both environmental and human outcomes as a map to regional resilience.

The project originated in the early 2000s as a vision for a recreational trail along the Rio Grande River as it passes into Texas from southern New Mexico. It was ultimately championed by then County Judge Veronica Escobar as a County Line to County Line trail project. It 2015 it was picked up by the City of El Paso Office of Resilience and Sustainability as a Resilience Advisory Panel Project supported by the Urban Land Institute and ultimately published as a critical initiative in the 2018 Resilient El Paso document.

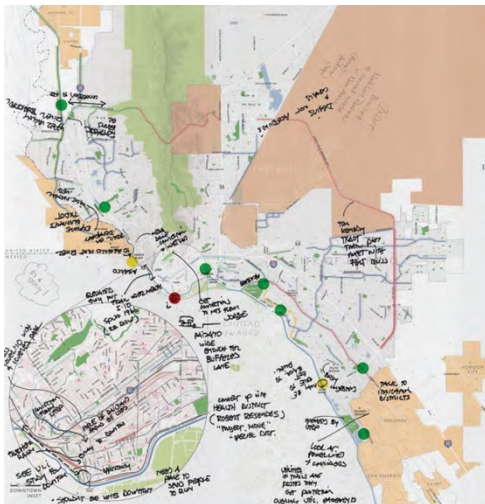


Figure 2. Project detail

Almost 10 years later, the Paso Del Norte Community Health Foundation successfully expanded the concept at a county wide scale. The masterplan was adopted by regional governing entities by resolution in 2019. It's popularity and current success is attributable to the extensive engagement and community feedback that informs the nature of the project itself. (Figure 2, left) Today the trail exists in various stages of completion due to insufficient funding to implement more than one segment at a time; 1) completed sections, 2) in design and pre-design segments but unfunded for construction and 3) location identified but unfunded for design and construction. CPRG II allows for 1) robust enhancement of completed sections focused on GHG Emissions and other climate action measures, 2) enhancement and build out of those segments currently under design and 3) extension through communities across the region who otherwise would not see construction for years to come. The original masterplan for the trail can be found at <https://www.pasodelnortetrail.org/>.

The scope of this project program builds upon the strength of the design in the original masterplan and incorporates measures in four sectors applicable to the specific goals of this grant:

1) Transportation Sector:

- a. Transportation modality shift from private vehicles to pedestrian and bike options for more than recreational purpose resulting in reduction in vehicle miles traveled.
- b. Connection directly to major public transportation investments including the El Paso BRIO (Bus Rapid Transit) encouraging park and ride behavior and destination based connectivity.

2) Electric Power Sector:

- a. Behind-the-meter solar rooftop installations for critical facilities;
- b. Solar streetlight retrofit program along the trail and nearby arterials
- c. Mitigation of extreme heat conditions in heavily urban environments ultimately reducing emissions through energy demand mitigation.

3) Building Sector:

- a. Unprecedented financial incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy uptake for the commercial building sector in proximity to trail amenities.

4) Carbon Removal Measures:

- a. Urban afforestation inclusive of desert specific shrubbery such as specific species of cacti with greater capacity to sequester carbon;

Major features, tasks, milestones and risks are defined below on Tables 1 to 4.

Table 1. Transportation sector - Transportation mode shift				
Major Features	Tasks	Milestones	Risks	Risk mitigation measures
Achieve VMT reduction via implementation and renovation of the Paso del Norte Trail and improving connections with current rapid transportation corridors (BRIO routes); community health and commercial assets; schools; and first-mile last-mile access to transit.	Procurement for Design + Construction	Completed March 2025	Procurement bottlenecks can cause delays in the timeline for implementation.	Early engagement with Procurement Process and jurisdictional legal counsel in concert with identified Program manager
	Design	Completed March 2026	Right of way coordination with land owner agencies can cause delays and/or trail route modification	Strong Coalition with existing working relationships, plans and procedures for Trail development in addition to robust community support of the project.
	Construction	Completed November 2028		
	Monitoring of GHG emission reduction	Up to 2030 and 2050		

Table 2. Electric Power Sector – Installation of renewable energy systems				
Major Features	Tasks	Milestones	Risks	Risk mitigation measures

<p>A. Behind the meter solar rooftop installations at i) Ysleta del Pueblo Sur Health Clinic and Cultural Center providing electric generation to critical facilities of the Tribe; and ii) Ascarate Park</p> <p>B.Solar street lights along the trail</p>	Procurement for Design + Construction	Completed March 2025	Procurement bottlenecks can cause delays in the timeline for implementation.	Early engagement with Procurement Process and jurisdictional legal counsel in concert with identified Program manager
	Design	Completed March 2026	Right of ways coordination with land owner agencies can cause delays and/or trail route modification	Strong Coalition with existing working relationships and procedures for Trail development
	Construction	Completed November 2028	Solar PV supply chain constraints	Reserve Solar PV as early as Q2 2025
	Monitoring of GHG emission reduction	Up to 2030 and 2050		

Table 3. Building Sector – Energy Efficiency program

Major Features	Tasks	Milestones	Risks	Risk mitigation measures
<p>Energy Efficiency incentive program for commercial sector to reduce end-use energy consumption and regional peak demand. Comprehensive program including HVAC, lighting, envelope and control Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) and renewable energy.</p>	Roll out of incentive program to external entities	Completed March 2025	Timing and specificity of program requirements could impact timeliness of program activation	Early engagement with stakeholders such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and El Paso Electric to streamline deployment and implementation
	IGAs development	Completed October 2026	Access to utility data	Coordination with electric, natural gas and water utilities.
	ECMs implementation completed	Completed November 2028	Supply chain delays	Eligible ECMs defined and selected to avoid supply chain challenges
	Monitoring of GHG emission reduction	Up to 2030 and 2050		

Table 4. Carbon removal measures – Urban afforestation

Major Features	Tasks	Milestones	Risks	Risk mitigation measures
Tree and shrub planting measure to act as regional carbon removal corridor,	Procurement for Design + Construction	Completed March 2025	Procurement bottlenecks can cause delays in the timeline for implementation.	Early engagement with Procurement Process and jurisdictional legal counsel in concert with identified Program manager

aiming at reducing GHG emissions, improve air quality and reduce urban heat.	Design	Completed March 2026	Right of ways coordination with land owner agencies can cause delays and/or trail route modification	Strong Coalition with existing working relationships and procedures for Trail development
	Construction	Completed November 2028	Supply of such an extensive quantity of plant material	Early coordination through program manager to work with suppliers to plant seedlings where supply gaps exist resulting in availability of specific species critical to the goals of the project.
	Monitoring of GHG emission reduction	Up to 2030 and 2050		

The four measures will be implemented along the trail in three different installation types: 1) Existing trail climate related upgrades; 2) Implementation of planned and designed trail segments with new climate related upgrades 3) Planning and design of future segments inclusive of climate mitigation measures 4) Primary Nodes; and 5) Secondary Nodes as described below:

1. **Existing Trail Climate Related Upgrades:** There are a number of segments in the trail path that have been built out to varying levels of amenity. This application includes the revisiting of those under amenitized areas of the trail adding climate related upgrades including additional tree and shrub planting and water management where necessary. Activating connection to existing segments of the trail is also critical to achieving the goal of reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Intense tree and shrub planting will take place along the trail (one tree every 20 ft and three shrubs per tree). Existing lights will be replaced with solar powered high efficiency lights with new systems to be installed where no illumination currently exists.
2. **Implementation of planned and designed trail segments with new climate related upgrades:** Segments of the trail are fully planned and are in varying stages of design, but not yet constructed. These segments will be enhanced with increased vegetation and connectivity as described above in order to realize the full impact and benefit of the climate related upgrades. the full implementation of the trail will produce a transportation shift, reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Additionally, as improved air quality through monitoring of key air quality variables such as PM10, PM2.5 and CO is a critical outcome for this project, four (4) Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) approved T640X monitors will be installed in key areas across the trail.
3. **Primary Nodes:** Primary nodes are large multi acre areas directly on or very near to the trail path itself. Primary nodes have been selected for their ability to activate transportation connectivity and secure demand for access to services. For example, several primary nodes proposed are defined as entertainment or retail centers. A key Primary node identified in the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo segment is centered on a newly constructed health clinic and cultural center in the midst of a large LIDAC. The site is also immediately connected to three separate retail centers providing opportunity for public / private partnership. All primary nodes were evaluated for factors supporting transportation connectivity, LIDAC impact and VMT reduction. These become major transportation nodes connecting communities through heavily native landscaped property and right of way. Significant heat mitigation and energy demand reduction is anticipated at Primary node areas. Ten (10) primary nodes have been identified and budgeted as detailed on Table 5.
4. **Secondary GHG reduction nodes:** these nodes will act as mini carbon sink installations inclusive of installed climate data monitoring inclusive but not limited to air quality. Purple Air monitors measuring PM2.5, Pressure, Temperature and VOC will be installed at all 15 secondary nodes A key point of feedback from our community at large as well as academic professionals in the area is the need for additional data for the purpose of research as well as policy making. In addition to this direct climate intervention, the secondary nodes also provide co-benefits including wire-less connectivity addressing the deep digital divide in our community. 15 secondary

nodes are planned (see figure 3) along the trail, Basic amenities to be installed are solar lights, vegetation; and bio-swales. All 15 nodes include EP Helps Kiosks¹, making the trail an a resource to access information and emergency assistance for everyone. Secondary Nodes are representative of an effort to leverage climate monitoring investment for dual purpose simultaneously serving community directly.

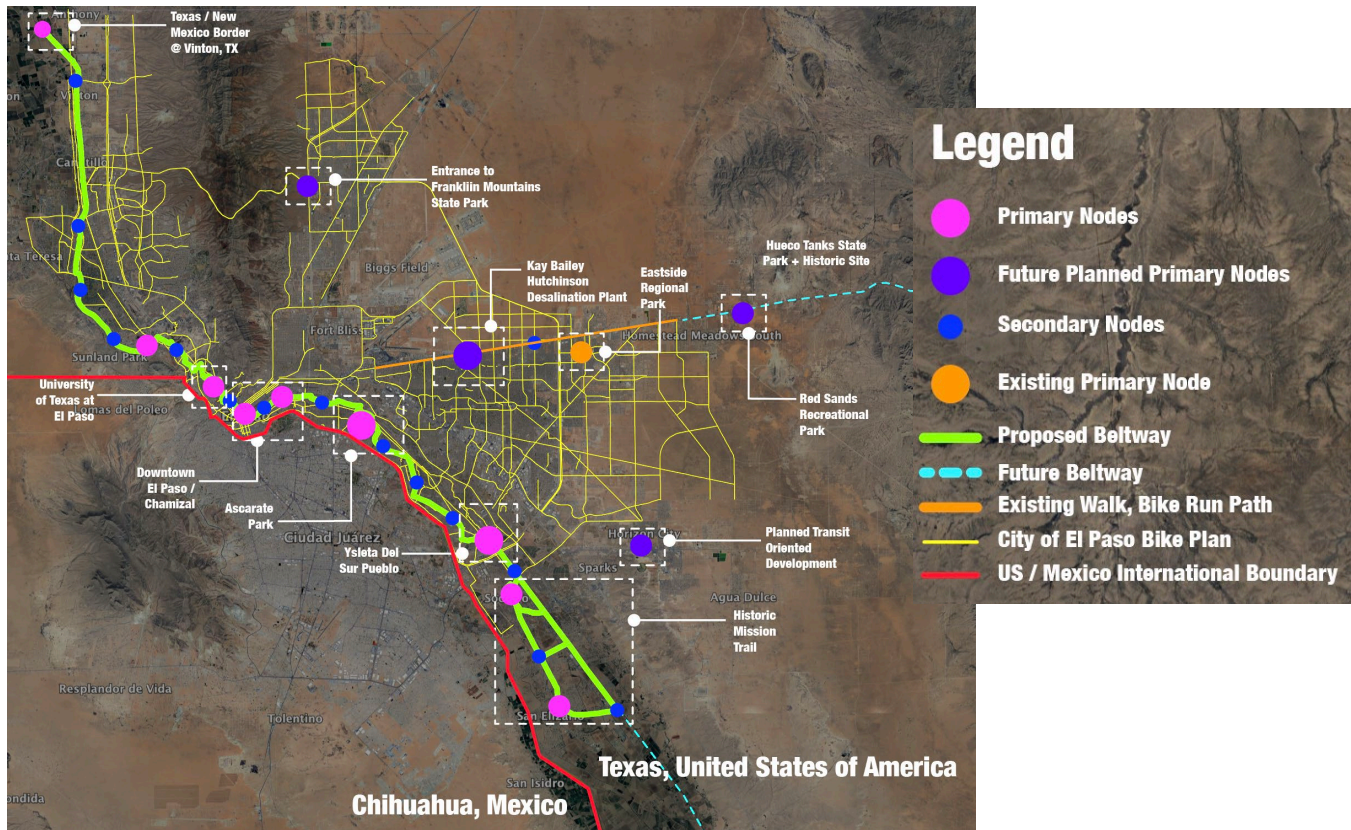


Figure 3. Project detail

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EP Helps monitors are stations where individuals and families are able to access on-site support. This collaborative organizational effort helps to drive community stability for those in crisis and seeking assistance at the moment it is needed. This program ensures that families and individuals experiencing homelessness are connected to services via a virtual office, where they are connected immediately with an agency that may be able to help.

Table 5

Primary	Description	Features	Description
Vinton	Carbon removal hub. North-western part of trail, Rio Grande landing	Vegetation; air quality and weather stations; EP Helps monitor; benches	Develop the Northwest entrance to the trail with future Transit-Oriented Development ² in mind. Current scope includes the node as a carbon removal hub.
Sunland Park	Transportation shift node connecting Sunland Park, New Mexico, with El Paso's educational and business centers	Tree and shrub planting, trail development, transportation center plan	Develop the Sunland Park section of the trail connecting the more rural communities and sections with UTEP and the Downtown area of El Paso. This node will catalyze future Transit-Oriented Development as it is centered on an entertainment district.
UTEP	Transportation shift node connecting for students	Trail development and transportation center plan	Develop the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) section of the trail connecting the more rural communities and sections with UTEP and the Downtown area of El Paso. This node will catalyze future Transit-Oriented Development as it is centered on an institution of higher education, the largest in the region.
Energy Efficiency: commercial and government	Energy efficiency incentive	HVAC, lighting, envelope and controls incentive program for commercial businesses	The Energy Feature Incentive Program for downtown commercial businesses and governmental entities across the MSA offers substantial financial incentives to promote the adoption of energy-efficient practices in four critical areas: HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning), lighting, building envelope improvements, and advanced controls systems. With a total funding allocation of \$50,000,000 the program aims to support businesses in upgrading their energy infrastructure to achieve significant cost savings and environmental benefits. Eligible businesses can receive grants or rebates covering up to 90% of the total project costs, with maximum funding amounts varying based on the scope and impact of the proposed energy improvements. By incentivizing investments in energy-efficient technologies such as high-efficiency HVAC systems, LED lighting retrofits, insulation upgrades, and smart building controls, the program empowers businesses to reduce energy consumption, lower operating expenses, and enhance overall sustainability. Through this initiative, downtown commercial districts can

² Transit-Oriented Development: includes: Integration of transportation infrastructure with educational facilities, promoting sustainable transit options such as bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and access to public transit hubs.. Car-Free Zones: Designation of areas within the node where motorized vehicles are restricted, creating safe and pedestrian-friendly spaces for walking and biking.

			become more resilient, competitive, and environmentally responsible, contributing to the long-term prosperity and vitality of the community. The initiative is also inclusive of renewable energy installations.
Ascarate Park	Carbon removal hub	Vegetation; air quality and weather stations; EP Helps monitor; benches	Carbon offset projects: Initiatives like tree planting or ecosystem restoration that capture and store carbon from the atmosphere. Renewable energy installations: Such as solar panels or small-scale wind turbines to generate clean energy for trail amenities, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Educational displays: Signage or exhibits informing visitors about climate change, carbon sequestration, and sustainable practices in outdoor recreation. Sustainable trail construction and maintenance: Techniques to minimize erosion and environmental impact, enhancing carbon sequestration within the trail ecosystem. Ascarate Park is the largest non federally or state owned open space asset in El Paso County.
Ysleta	Solar rooftop, trail development and carbon removal hub	Solar panels; Vegetation; air quality and weather stations; EP Helps monitor; benches	<p>Pathway and Pedestrian-Friendly Path Along Franklin Canal:</p> <p>This plan outlines the development of a pathway and pedestrian-friendly path along the Franklin Canal, with trees and vegetation aimed at carbon capture. This initiative serves two purposes: i) it connects the Tribal Community to the new clinic development, enhancing accessibility to healthcare facilities and promoting community well-being, and ii) the inclusion of trees and vegetation aligns with sustainability goals, contributing to carbon capture efforts and enhancing the environmental impact of the project.</p> <p>Installation of Solar Panels at the Tribe Clinic: in response to the high energy requirements of the clinic, the plan includes the installation of solar panels. With the clinic spanning 77,000 square feet, the energy demand is significant, making renewable energy sources key to sustainability, reducing the carbon footprint through renewable energy adoption, aligning with environmental objectives of the Project. This node will catalyze future Transit-Oriented Development as it is centered on retail, healthcare and cultural amenities.</p>

Socorro	Transportation shift mode, complete streets connection between Alameda and Socorro Rd	Trail development and complete streets projects implementation	<p>Two (2) Complete Streets development to connect Socorro Rd and Alameda Rd</p> <p>Transit-Oriented Development: Integration of transportation infrastructure with educational facilities, promoting sustainable transit options such as bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and access to public transit hubs. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: Installation of charging points for electric vehicles, encouraging the use of low-emission transportation methods and reducing reliance on fossil fuel-powered vehicles. Bike Sharing Program: Implementation of a bike-sharing system, providing convenient access to bicycles for short-distance travel and promoting active transportation as an alternative to cars. Car-Free Zones: Designation of areas within the node where motorized vehicles are restricted, creating safe and pedestrian-friendly spaces for walking and biking.</p>
San Elizario	Trail connection from Socorro to San Elizario and up to Alameda Rd	Trail development	<p>Park-and-Ride Facilities: Provision of parking facilities near transit nodes, enabling commuters to park their cars and easily transfer to public transit for the remainder of their journey, reducing traffic congestion and emissions. Community Bike Repair Station: Installation of bike repair stations equipped with tools and air pumps, encouraging bicycle use by providing resources for maintenance and repair.</p>
Cornudas/Dell City	Carbon removal and transportation hub	Tree and shrub planting, trail development, transportation center plan	<p>Creation of two carbon removal nodes in Hudspeth County that will serve as key amenities for future plan expansion from Montana Rd in El Paso to Dell City. By creating these two nodes, future access to implementation funds will be accessible. This node is directly adjacent to a west Texas desert wildlife preserve. It also activates connection to the Guadalupe Mountains State Park.</p>

Critical to the implementation of this project is the structure of the multi jurisdictional coalition bound together through Interlocal Governmental Cooperation Agreements. Led **by the City of El Paso (CoEP)** the coalition is inclusive of the Town of Anthony, Village of Vinton, City of Socorro, Horizon City, City of San Elizario, Ysleta del Pueblo Sur Tribe, Town of Clint, El Paso County, Hudspeth County, El Paso MPO and the Rio Grande Council of Governments. Additional support and cooperation has been organized with the Paso Del Norte Community Foundation, the International Boundary and Water Commission, El Paso Water Utilities, El Paso Electric and the Texas Department of Transportation. Partners will be responsible to assure authority to implement portions of the project under their jurisdiction as well as ongoing maintenance and operation activities. The Paso del Norte Community Foundation will continue to act in a coordinating capacity among stakeholders and partners leveraging the work already completed over the past seven years. Fiscal and federal compliance will be the responsibility of the City of El Paso. All engaged parties will enter into an additional MOA as required by the EPA as of July 1, 2024.

As the PCAP was published as a regional cooperative document representing the interests of all coalition stakeholders and communities, the project has been designed to reflect the conclusions and priority recommendations included therein. A critical takeaway from the community driven PCAP is to implement a broadly reaching project / initiative that addresses emissions sources and aligns with improved human health outcomes as well as various social and environmental justice concerns such as energy affordability and access to open space. The top five priority measures resulting from the PCAP included in this project application are:

- Increase Native Trees and Natural Spaces
- Expand and Improve Active Transportation Infrastructure
- Utilize Sustainable Land Use Planning
- Expand and Improve Transit Service
- Increase Energy Efficiency and Decarbonize Buildings

B. Demonstration of Funding Need (10 possible points)

CPRG implementation funding is imperative for the El Paso MSA, a historically disinvested border region with virtually no access to state funding in support of climate action. While much advocacy has taken place through the region's state delegation, many restrictions remain.

This binational Bordexpex region bears the burden of heavy transnational commercial (USA-Mexico), industrial and personal traffic without access to significant GHG reduction investments. CPRG funding will play a much-needed role in addressing the long standing inequities of access to funds aimed at climate action. This is particularly true for the smaller cities and unincorporated communities outside of the City of El Paso. Our coalition recognizes that an investment in only one city in the region does not move the needle for deep climate action and mitigation. Mid and small size cities such as those in the El Paso MSA are disadvantaged in that local revenue is extremely limited as compared to larger more affluent cities specifically in Texas such as Houston, Dallas, San Antonio or Austin. These facts drive the necessity for this to be fully inclusive and deeply collaborative in order to leverage the strength of 10 municipalities and 2 counties. Small-sized MSAs like El Paso with a mix of urban, peri-urban and rural communities are well positioned to activate CPRG funding to fill the economic disparity gap with larger more affluent MSAs around climate action. CPRG becomes a once in a generation investment for a community like ours.

To date, securing funds for the design and construction for the Paso del Norte Trail has been an arduous, but collaborative effort between government and nonprofit organizations. Since the Paso del Norte Trail masterplan was completed in 2019, approximately \$49M has been secured for the design and construction of specific trail segments by the City of El Paso, the County of El Paso, and the Texas Department of Transportation. Specific funding sources include:

- Texas Department of Transportation Alternatives \$20,623,706
- US Department of Transportation RAISE \$24,154,505
- Congressional Community Project Funding \$1,000,000
- Paso del Norte Health Foundation \$3,506,234

Most of the funding has covered the design and construction of portions of the trail, while not allowing for full amenities or appropriate landscaping. Funding has been insufficient to achieve the full benefits of the trail particularly in LIDACs. This gap can be bridged by EPA's CPRG implementation funding.

C. Transformative Impact

This project represents an unprecedented investment in the MSA. Never before has there been a project of this scale that actively addresses the needs of multiple communities across the region. The area currently stands as one of the lowest scoring communities in Texas for tree equity. (Tree Equity Score) The project leverages multiple priority measures, listed above in Section A of this application, to reduce GHG emissions and reduce pollutants through physical and programmatic investment in carbon mitigation. The project will not only change the visual aesthetic of the entire region, but set the standard for how to comprehensively address climate, vulnerability and environmental justice in a desert environment of the Southwest.

The first tangible impact is to increase urban canopy density and preserve natural spaces to act as carbon removal nodes. By conducting basic transformative work such as planting native trees and increasing natural spaces this project will not only mitigate climate change but will also introduce natural carbon sinks that will absorb tons of CO₂ each year. Over the years as the vegetation increases so too will the amount of CO₂ removed. This will also increase natural spaces to bring in natural desert ecosystems that will include plants and wildlife. The majority of the trail extends along the U.S.A. and Mexico border and near ports of entry. By planting native trees and vegetation we will create a natural filtration that will reduce GHG emissions in hard to abate LIDAC areas. This measure will create a lasting natural impact to not only reduce emissions but to also address those underserved within our community, generating co-benefits as improved health and heat mitigation. The project proposes the planting of over 65,000 native trees over 100 miles of desert landscape.

West Texas has historically been geographically widespread and heavily reliant on private vehicles for transportation. The second priority measure in this project is to expand transportation and infrastructure by expanding trails and greenways as well as creating destination and connectivity. Increasing availability of choice in methods of transportation will reduce vehicle travel miles (VMT) and overall GHG emissions. Providing the community alternative safe routes to travel will transform how individuals conduct simple daily tasks. Completing street designs off the trail will allow the community to have full access to amenities that were not easily accessible. The majority of neighborhoods are located in LIDAC and has historically been overburdened and underserved in terms of clean air, access to open space and healthier lifestyles. By creating safe infrastructure for the community to go outside and peacefully walk, bike and run errands we will be deploying an active sector in a hard to abate sector. Creating alternative modality options around existing centers of public service and entertainment provides incentive for residents to choose to leave their car behind. Behavior change is as important as infrastructure in this case.

Since a large majority of emissions in the region are generated by the built environment, a third priority measure targets an increase in regional energy efficiency and decarbonization of buildings. This will be done by increasing both commercial and governmental buildings energy efficiencies and improving building envelopes as well as encouraging renewable energy uptake. Buildings use energy for lighting, cooling, heating, ventilating, and several different systems that consume electricity and/or natural gas. The building envelopes include roofs, windows, doors, floors, foundations and insulation. As time progresses buildings deteriorate and may not have properly functioning roofs, windows or insulation. Buildings must undergo upkeep to remain functional and to decrease their GHG emissions. These upgrades include design, construction, retrofitting and overall operations. By converting older buildings to being more energy efficiency less GHG emissions will be detected. Policies will be a driving force in creating energy efficient buildings and systems for established buildings.

In addition to wide spread, publicly available energy efficiency incentives, the fourth priority measure focuses on installation of renewable energy systems known as photovoltaic (PV) systems on public buildings at the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and Ascarate Park Primary Nodes. Solar is an energy source that comes from unlimited, natural replenishing resources and does not emit GHG. The El Paso region is the third sunniest region in the country. By implementing solar energy in an area that is able to capture this renewable energy on an average of 297 days out of the year is

transformative. Transitioning our region to rely on solar energy as opposed to fossil fuels will benefit not only LIDAC but our entire bi-national communities overall public health and environmental conditions.

2. Impact of GHG Reduction Measures

D. Magnitude of GHG Reductions from 2025 through 2030

The project includes GHG reduction measures under four (4) sectors as described in section 1.A of this proposal. GHG reduction measures are grouped as follows:

- I. Trail expansion Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction
- II. Carbon removal: Tree and Shrub Planting
- III. Solar Lighting, Rooftop Solar
- IV. Commercial Energy Efficiency

All measures included in the application are expected to have a durability beyond 2030 and up to 2050. The trail expansion will last beyond 2050; trees planted under this program will live, at least, up to 2050; shrubs will have a shorter life-span until 2042 but the coalition MOAs will stipulate replacement and maintenance responsibilities and expectations for all partners; solar panels and solar light have an operational life between 25 and 30 years, beyond 2050; and energy conservation measures (ECMs) also have a similar life span. Again, the MOAs due on July 1st, 2025 will stipulate operation and maintenance (O&M) responsibilities and tasks. Expected replacements of LED lights, shrubs, HVAC parts, irrigation systems, etc. will be included in the MOAs.

GHG Reductions by measure 2025 through 2030

- I. Trail expansion Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction: 1,255 MTCO₂e
- II. Carbon removal: Tree and Shrub Planting: 5,911 MTCO₂e
- III. Solar Lighting, Rooftop Solar: 3,239 MTCO₂e
- IV. Commercial Energy Efficiency: 319,228 MTCO₂e

TOTAL GHG reductions 2025 through 2030: **329,633 MTCO₂e**

B. Magnitude of GHG Reductions from 2025 through 2050

The durability of the measures is explained in Section 2.B. All measures are assumed to yield GHG reductions after implementation through 2050.

GHG Reductions by measure 2025 through 2050

- I. Trail expansion Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction: 9,315 MTCO₂e
- II. Carbon removal: Tree and Shrub Planting: 63,163 MTCO₂e
- III. Solar Lighting, Rooftop Solar: 9,324 MTCO₂e
- IV. Commercial Energy Efficiency: 1,161,328 MTCO₂e

TOTAL GHG reductions 2025 through 2050: **1,243,130 MTCO₂e**

C. Cost Effectiveness of GHG Reductions

Costs associated with the project have been estimated in a conservative manner, with third party estimations used to define design and implementation costs. This approach will ensure that, to the best of the Coalition's ability, and assuming that economic uncertainties are to be expected, the costs associated with the project are responsible and realistic. Detailed information can be found under Section 7.A and on the attached budget spreadsheet.

Cost effectiveness of GHG reductions = (Requested CPRG funding) / (Sum of Quantified GHG reductions from CPRG funding from 2025-2030)

Using the above formula:

Cost effectiveness of GHG reductions = \$433,142,288.52 / 1,243,130 MTCO₂e = \$348.43 / MTCO₂e

D. Documentation of GHG Reduction Assumptions

Documentation and methodological explanations for the calculation of GHG reductions can be found on the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Technical Appendix and the calculation spreadsheet. For each measure, the Baseline case, Proposed case, Uncertainties and Durability of Reductions are demonstrated and explained.

3. Environmental Results – Outputs, Outcomes, And Performance Measures

A. Expected Outputs and Outcomes

The project fully supports EPA’s FY2022-2026 Strategic Plan, in particular Goal 1 “Tackle the Climate Crisis”; Objective 1.1. “reduce the emissions of GHG of all sectors while increasing resource efficiency and the use of renewable energy”. The transportation, building, energy and carbon removal/natural spaces sectors are part of this application as described in previous sections. Below specific outputs, outcomes, and short and long-term activities are defined.

A general output are the semi-annual and final reports. The CoEP will produce those reports summarizing, technical progress, milestones, outputs and outcomes for each measure. Also, will be included planned and tentative activities for the next reporting period as well as budgetary progress. The CoEP will comply will reporting requirements as specified in Section VI.B of the grant guidelines, including complying with deadlines set by the EPA to submit semi-annual and final reports.

Table 6

GHG Reduction Measure	Expected Outputs	Outcomes	Short-Term Activities	Long-Term Activities
Increase Native Trees and Natural Spaces	Number of trees planted, number of shrubs planted, number of air quality monitors installed, number of stations installed, number of solar lights installed, number of LIDAR workers hired for installation	GHG Reductions from 2025-2030 and 2025-2050, Decrease heat index in urban areas, Increase natural ecosystem	Create, design and install vegetation with irrigation systems.	Operation and maintenance of the vegetation.
Expand Active Transportation and Infrastructure	Improve air quality and community health, Increase access to public transportation and	GHG Reductions from 2025-2030 and 2025-2050, Save money for those that use public transportation,	Create, design and install trail.	Operation and maintenance of the trail.

	walking/biking infrastructure, Improve access to services/amenities, Reduce noise pollution	Reduce the number of automobiles on highways		
Increase Energy Efficiency and Decarbonize Buildings	Improve air quality and community health, Decrease energy costs Improve quality, comfort and safety	GHG Reductions, Decrease utility bills for consumers.	Upgrade businesses and offer immediate financial incentives.	Identify areas where tax incentives, as Direct pay can be applied.
Install Renewable Energy Systems	Create high-quality jobs, Improve access to services/amenities, Increase safety with solar lighting along the trail, Provide energy improvements to critical infrastructure that belongs to the tribe.	GHG Reductions, Complete utilization of a natural carbon free”energy, Expanding solar energy to be included in tribal communities.	Create, design and install solar energy.	Operation and maintenance.

B. Performance Measures and Plan

The performance measures plan has been meticulously crafted to monitor activities and outcomes across various key areas:

- **Subrecipients and Contractors Oversight:** The Department of Community and Human Development (DCHD) is highly proficient in managing projects that entail coordination with subrecipients and contractors. Leveraging this expertise, we will conduct a meticulous assessment of their progress, ensuring that they adhere to the timelines stipulated in the agreements.

We will establish clear benchmarks and criteria against which we will evaluate the progress of subrecipients and contractors. This structured approach will enhance accountability and transparency throughout the project's implementation phase.

- **Expenditure Monitoring:** Senior Accountants within our team will assume responsibility for monitoring all expenditures associated with subrecipients and contractors. Their role will involve conducting regular audits and reviews to ensure that expenses are aligned with the project budget and comply with funding regulations.

By maintaining a diligent watch over expenditures, we aim to prevent budgetary overruns and discrepancies, thereby facilitating seamless reimbursement and disbursement processes. This proactive approach will contribute to the efficient financial management of the project.

- **Milestone Evaluation:** Program milestones represent crucial checkpoints in our project timeline, and their adherence is paramount to the project's success. Both the Project Manager and compliance staff will be actively involved in evaluating these milestones to gauge progress and identify any deviations from the planned schedule.

Agreements and contracts established with subrecipients and contractors will include robust provisions aimed at addressing and mitigating potential delays. By promptly addressing any issues that arise, we can ensure that the project stays on track and meets its objectives within the specified timeframe.

- **Monthly Reporting:** To maintain transparency and accountability, subrecipients and contractors will be required to submit monthly reports detailing their budget expenditures and programmatic responsibilities. These reports will provide essential insights into the progress of various project activities and facilitate informed decision-making by project stakeholders.

By implementing a structured reporting mechanism, we can promptly identify any challenges or bottlenecks and take corrective actions as necessary to keep the project moving forward. This regular exchange of information will foster collaboration and coordination among all parties involved in project implementation.

Leveraging the methodologies outlined in Section 1 of our proposal, the City of El Paso will diligently track expected outcomes and outputs, including greenhouse gas emissions reductions associated with both vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and non-VMT measures. Additionally, we will align our efforts with the development of the region's Climate Action Plan (CCAP), integrating our project measures into the CCAP's comprehensive monitoring framework for enhanced effectiveness and impact assessment.

Also emphasize the indispensable role of the program manager we will select for this project in establishing robust tracking measures and ensuring accountability for data capture. This individual will play a pivotal role in overseeing the implementation of our performance measures plan, which has been meticulously crafted to monitor activities and outcomes across various key areas.

C. Authorities, Implementation Timeline, and Milestones

The CoEP, as lead entity, will receive the funding from EPA and will contract with a Program Management company to manage the implementation of the project as described below. Coalition members have the authority to implement the GHG measures in their respective jurisdictions. The current Inter-Local Agreement, signed by all regional governments involved in the project, will facilitate the implementation process.

Contract

- The CoEP will conduct a procurement process to select a Program Management firm to perform management, procurement, compliance and quality assurance of the whole project. This firm will be pivotal in assisting with establishing tracking measures and accountability.
- Five (5) to (7) competitive procurement processes will take place to contract companies for: i) trail design and construction; ii) Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Primary node; iii) Socorro Complete Streets Primary node; iii) Ascarate Park Primary node; iv) Hudspeth County and Tornillo trail extension design; v) Secondary nodes construction; and vi) other Primary nodes construction.
- One (1) to (3) contracts to implement the energy efficiency incentive program.

Implementation timeline

The CoEP will start working on the competitive procurement process to secure the services of a Program Management Company as early as July 2024, acknowledging that the warding might still be pending but looking at maximizing timelines. This procurement process will last 60-90 days, using CoEP's Capital Improvement Department's processes.

Assuming funds will be available October/November 2024, by June 2025 contractors will be selected. Program design will take place from June 2025 to October 2025. Implementation of projects will be completed by November 2028. As early

as January 2026 a monitoring and quality assurance plan will be in place to track GHG reductions and project performance. Semi-annual reporting will commence 6 months after the signing of the contract, tentatively March 2025.

Entities necessary for implementation Energy Incentive program

Local electric utility, El Paso Electric (EPE); Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; El Paso Chamber of Commerce; Water Utilities.

Entities necessary for implementation trail design and construction (including solar panels and lights)

- Governmental entities, Texas Department of Transportation, International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) , Texas Department of Transportation
- Local electric utility, El Paso Electric (EPE); Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; El Paso Chamber of Commerce; Water Utilities.

Table 7

Measure	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Management	RFP for Program Management firm selection	Management and compliance Semi-annual reports	Management and compliance Semi-annual reports	Management and compliance Semi-annual reports	Management and compliance Semi-annual reports	Management and compliance Semi-annual reports
Trail construction, solar PV, solar lights		RFP to select implementation contractors Program design Start implementation	Implementation	Implementation	O&M	O&M
Energy Efficiency program		RFP to select implementation contractors Program design	Implementation	Implementation	Implementation	

4. Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities

A. Community Benefits

The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) was used to identify disadvantaged areas in the region. Communities within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes are also considered disadvantaged. CEJST Census tract IDs can be found on the Attachment section of this proposal.

LIDACs are, and will continue to be, disproportionately impacted by climate change. The El Paso MSA is a binational border region with a large proportion of low-income, socially vulnerable, and non-English-speaking residents. Vulnerable residents are not only more likely to be more deeply affected by the impacts of climate change, but also have fewer resources to help them respond and recover from these impacts. In addition, it will also be important to consider the impact of climate change on the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Nation and their climate-related challenges and priorities. According to the **CEJST, nearly 65% of El Paso County and 100% of Hudspeth County are considered Justice40 disadvantaged communities.** El Paso County and Hudspeth County have social vulnerability scores of 0.98 and 0.99, respectively, on the CDC Social Vulnerability Index, where 1 is the highest vulnerability. These high social vulnerability scores indicate that residents in the El Paso MSA region are likely to face greater challenges in accessing resources,

preparing for climate impacts, and recovering from disasters than the rest of the U.S. Many residents spend a large portion of their income on housing, transportation, and electricity alone, leaving little leftover for food, emergencies, or leisure. The percentage of income spent on these three necessities is even higher for those living below the federal poverty line. The implementation of measures included in this proposal are anticipated to provide significant benefits to LIDACs.

The proposed enhancements to and extension of the Paso del Norte trail will span the length of the MSA and provide neighborhoods and communities with access to alternative transportation modes and linkages to a variety of community destinations. The alignment has been determined through community and agency input and is intended to maximize connectivity via existing and proposed trails.

The proposed project is a community-driven, collaborative effort to develop a trail that will become a regional and national reference by connecting communities, promoting alternative transportation options, health and active living, and catalyzing economic development. Completing a trail network has many benefits to residents, visitors, and the local economy. It will provide healthy opportunities for walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized transportation for users of all abilities, offer connections from communities to local businesses, places of employment, and other destinations, allowing residents to commute to work and use for daily errands, encourage additional economic development and investment in areas adjacent to the trail.

For more than last 150 years, the communities that make up the Paso del Norte Region—including the City of El Paso, Hudspeth County, the rural towns up and down the Rio Grande Valley, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua—have developed around the unique border culture created by the relationship between the United States and Mexico. In the last 30 years, the region has grown rapidly, with international trade, manufacturing, and an influx of new residents driving both economic and population growth; these forces have led to significant changes in the region, and spurred new investments in physical infrastructure, community amenities, and revitalization of downtown El Paso and neighborhoods.

El Paso MSA is a predominately Hispanic area, with 82.8 percent of individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino. In terms of race, 92 percent of individuals identified as “White”; 3.9 percent identified as “Black or African American”; 1 percent of individuals identified as “American Indian and Alaska Native,” “Asian,” or “Two or More Races”; and persons identifying as “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” were fewer than 1 percent.¹³ An estimated 70 percent of residents more than five years old speak Spanish (in addition to English), with 30.8 percent of the population (approximately 235,000 people) over five years old speaking English “less than very well.” In addition, an estimated 212,112 people (about one-quarter of the population) are foreign-born. Children made up 28.0 percent of El Paso’s County population in 2017. Young adults make up 25.8 percent of the population and are beginning to enter the workforce, attend college, and start families. About 34.4 percent of residents are middle age and still active and working. Seniors make up a growing percentage of the population and accounted for 11.8 percent of the MSA’s population.

In 2010, there were 256,557 total households in El Paso County, with an average household size of 3.06 people.¹⁴ Of these households, 19.8 percent were single-person households, 24.9 percent were households with two people, and 55.3 percent were households with three or more people, including married couples and those with children. In addition to a younger population, El Paso is home to many families with children. Of all families, 60.6 percent had children living with them in 2010. Areas with higher percentages of families with children are primarily located in newer neighborhoods on the eastern edge of the El Paso City limits, as well as on and around Fort Bliss. The few exceptions are the Chamizal and Segundo Barrio neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown and a few pockets in the Mission Valley, including Socorro and San Elizario. As expected, areas with a higher percentage of families with children correspond to Census Tracts with a higher youth population, as well as higher population densities. The opposite is true for areas to the east, north, and south of downtown, which in general have fewer households with children.

Median household income in El Paso County is \$42,779, which is lower than the state of Texas median of \$57,227. The lower median income also corresponds to higher poverty rates for families— an estimated 43,655 families (or 20.6 percent) are below the federal poverty line. This is substantially higher than the state of Texas average of 13.7 percent.¹⁵ Areas with higher poverty rates are concentrated along neighborhoods close to the Rio Grande . Areas with higher

incomes and lower poverty rates are predominantly in the Upper Valley, to the northeast and in East El Paso neighborhoods, as well as in Horizon City.

People with disabilities include residents who have difficulties hearing, seeing, ambulatory difficulties, cognitive difficulties or difficulties with self-care and independent living. In El Paso County, the estimated number of people with a disability of any type is 106,925 people or about 13.3 percent of the total population—slightly higher than the national average (12.4 percent). About 60 percent of County residents over the age of 75 and 34 percent of residents between 65 and 74 have a disability, which shows that the needs of persons with disabilities are important to address in trail alignment and design, including safety considerations, access to trails, and access to trail facilities.

B. Community Engagement

The CoEP and its regional partners prioritize the engagement of the community to best serve the needs of its unique constituents including those across the entire MSA. As a border community tremendous obstacles to equity and inclusion are presented in the form of income inequality as well as language and education barriers. Engagement and empowerment of underrepresented community voices have been placed at the forefront of coalition efforts.

They key driving force for the proposed project was to prioritize measures to reduce GHG emissions in the region, while providing additional benefits such as improving air quality and overall quality of life in LIDAC. Input from community members, particularly LIDAC residents was solicited through bilingual surveys, open house events inclusive of direct access to subject matter experts in climate action as well as government officials. All of the information collected was also posted in full transparency on the City of El Paso website in both English and Spanish. For residents that were unable to attend any of the events, material including fully accessible education videos were uploaded to the City's website and made publicly available. Outreach occurred by meeting people and stakeholders where they are and not expecting them to engage first. Meetings were specifically held in LIDAC public places at both large and small scale. Direct access to the climate action team responsible for this work was provided to key non profit advocacy groups and small business stakeholders. By engaging outside of traditional channels and established power structures, feedback became more comprehensive and representative of underserved populations. All formal sessions were scheduled after business hours, served refreshments and provided activities for children.

More than 640 responses with 595 responses in English and 47 responses in Spanish were collected from the community during the CPRG specific survey. The City has since posted the survey responses on a dashboard for the public to view. In addition to sharing project ideas, community members provided their preference among a varitey of project categories through a voting exercise. The results of the exercise indicated that the top three project categories were waste, water and materials management. Followed by removing carbon from the air by planting trees and finally wanting renewable energy projects. When also surveyed to prioritize community benefits 395 community members voted for improved air quality to create a more healthy community, and 338 individuals voted to increase access to public transportation and biking/walking infrastructure.

Results from community engagement meetings and surveys were the foundation of this application. The project is the result of a combined effort to address multiple vulnerabilities, priorities and community needs articulated directly from the community itself. Once the project was identified, direct outreach to the same stakeholders and community was deployed in order to assure widespread community support and understanding of the targeted outcomes. This effort is where accountability to the people begins. Measurement and benchmarking of the project is where public accountability will continue. Attached are letters of support from stakeholders, community groups, academic institutions, governing entities and elected officials at the state, local and federal level.

5. Job Quality

To align with Executive Order 14082 and ensure that the Chihuahuan Desert Carbon Mitigation Beltway project creates high-quality, family-sustaining jobs with a focus on diversity, skilled workforce development and labor practices, the following strategies will be implemented as part of the project:

Diverse workforce recruitment will be performed in partnership with Workforce Solutions Borderplex and the existing Supply El Paso initiative. Supply El Paso is a multigovernmental initiative designed to support local businesses compete for public and private contracts and grow. The El Paso Procurement Economy is composed of nearly \$2.4 billion in annual public contracts. The City of El Paso, Workforce Solutions Borderplex, and other partners provide technical support services for local businesses to better compete for local, state, and federal procurement contracts.

In addition to procurement training, Supply El Paso partners provide incentives for local businesses that commit to hire local candidates with pay, benefits, and incentives that meet the U.S. Department of Labor Good Jobs Principles. This includes outreach programs targeting underrepresented communities, including low-income and disadvantaged populations (LIDAC), to ensure diverse participation in the project's workforce. Training and skills development funds for job training programs that equip workers with the skills needed for construction, landscaping, solar panel installation, and other relevant tasks. Partners include local vocational schools, community colleges, and apprenticeship programs to provide certification and skill-building opportunities for workers that would be employed by the program.

As part of federal compliance included in 2 FCR 200 and the Davis Bacon Act, compliance systems will be implemented to ensure that all workers involved in the project receive fair wages, benefits, workplace protections, and fair compensation, including healthcare coverage, retirement benefits, and paid leave. Labor standards compliance will be extended to contractors, subcontractors, and sub-awardees, who will be required to provide evidence of strong labor practices, including safety regulations, anti-discrimination policies, and fair labor practices. Transparent hiring practices will be implemented promoting equal opportunity and preventing discrimination in the recruitment and selection of workers. This include establishing clear guidelines for job postings, interviews, and hiring decisions to ensure fairness and impartiality in the hiring process.

The City of El Paso will monitor compliance with these standards throughout the project's duration and hold partners accountable for maintaining high labor standards. The effectiveness of job quality strategies implemented within the project will be reassessed regularly, and adjustments will be made as needed to address emerging challenges or opportunities for improvement. This includes soliciting feedback from workers, labor unions, community stakeholders, and other partners to inform ongoing efforts to enhance job quality and labor standards.

6. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

The City of El Paso, as lead applicant, will administer CPRG implementation funds under the supervision of the Department of Community and Human Development (DCHD) The DCHD is currently administering multiple federal grants including \$11.37 million in formula grants) and \$71.6 million in federal discretionary grant projects under several other departments and has received more than \$1 billion in grant funding from 2017 – 2022. In September 2023, the City of El Paso was awarded and started implementation of EPA's CPRG Phase I grant to develop a regional climate action plan.

A. Past Performance

Below can be found a list of federal assistance agreements directly handled by the DCHD of the City of El Paso. This department not only has managed federal entitlement funds for over 49 years, but also was responsible for administering \$ 72.8 million from COVID relief programs such as Delta Welcome Center for the homeless, transportation for the homeless, childcare services, food security, emergency rental assistance, and utility assistance.

Table 8

Program/Fiscal Year	Assistance Agreement Number	Funding Agency/Assistance Listing Number (formerly CFDA number)	Description	Contact from organization that funded the assistance agreement

ARPA CDFLRF: Project Amistad – Street Outreach/2023-2024	21-1056-098.003.003	Treasury/21.027	Programs help support, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 public health emergency. This includes homeless assistance, childcare, resources navigation etc.	Treasury
CDBG-Community Development Block Grant ENT: Opportunity Center for the Homeless – Resource Center and Emergency Shelter/2021-2023	23-1009	HUD-Department of Housing and Urban Development/14.218	CDBG programs help develop viable urban communities, including decent housing, suitable living environments and the expansion of economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. Services, programs and projects must meet a HUD national objective and be an eligible activity.	HUD
Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) 1 & 2/2021-2024	21-103902014	Treasury/21.023	ERA programs have provided support for housing stability throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.	Treasury
HOPWA-Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS: City of El Paso Department of Public Health – HOPWA Program/2021-2023	HQ 23-1301	HUD/14.21	HOPWA programs provide low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families assistance such as rental assistance and supportive services.	HUD
Treasury CARES: YWCA – Childcare Services/2020-2021	20-105201069.065	Treasury/21-0.19	Programs assisted the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, including housing, childcare, homeless shelters, etc.	Treasury

The DCHD has had great success in managing these grants. This was done through a variety of ways, including fully understanding Grant guidelines, closely following the budget and timeline of the set forth proposal to stay on track and meet reporting requirements; and being aware of any reporting and compliance obligations associated with the grant.; keeping meticulous records and meeting all reporting deadlines; maintaining open and transparent communication with the grant provider; seeking clarification when needed and keeping them informed of your progress and any challenges;

collect data and metrics to demonstrate how the grant funds are achieving the intended outcomes; and keep accurate financial records and ensure that grant funds are used as specified in the budget.

B. Reporting Requirements

Table 9

Program	Reporting
ARPA	DCHD has consistently upheld its commitment to meet reporting requirements under the agreements, conducting reporting activities every quarter. Our reporting history demonstrates a steadfast dedication to accountability. This ARPA grant is ongoing.
CDBG	DCHD has consistently upheld its commitment to meet reporting requirements under this agreement and have conducted yearly reporting. Our reporting history demonstrates a steadfast dedication to accountability. This CDBG grant is ongoing.
ERA 1&2	DCHD has consistently upheld its commitment to meet reporting requirements under this agreement. We conduct monthly and quarterly reporting. Our reporting history demonstrates steadfast dedication to accountability. Progress has been consistent with no concerns. ERA 1 has since been completed and ERA 2 remains ongoing.
HOPWA	DCHD has consistently upheld its commitment to meet reporting requirements under this agreement and have completed yearly reporting. Progress has been consistent. Our reporting history demonstrates dedication to accountability. There have been no concerns. This grant is still ongoing.
Treasury CARES	DCHD has consistently upheld its commitment to meet reporting requirements under the agreement and conduct quarterly reporting for this grant. There have been no concerns. This grant has been closed.

C. Staff Expertise

The DCHD has the organizational experience and procedures in place to successfully manage the Paso del Norte Trail Project. The structure of the department is in itself designed to manage federal funding, both competitive and formula-based grants. Staff has the expertise and knowledge to create contract/sub-awards, perform compliance and monitoring activities with sub-recipients and perform accounting tasks as required by the federal government and other funding entities. The core team assigned to this project will consist of professionals listed below. Biographical sketches for key staff and managers are included in Attachment XX.

- Executive lead: Nicole Alderete-Ferrini; Climate and Sustainability Officer and DCHD Director, CoEP.
- Finance and Economic lead: Abraham Gutierrez; DCHD Assistant Director, CoEP.
- Capital projects and planning lead: Joaquin Rodriguez; CID Grant Funded Programs Director, CoEP
- GHG reduction technical lead: Fernando Liano; Senior Climate Program Manager, Office of Climate and Sustainability, CoEP.
- LIDAC and Climate Justice lead: Dora Hernandez, Climate Program Manager, Office of Climate and Sustainability, CoEP.
- Capital Projects Manager: Ismael Cepeda, Capital Projects Manager, CID, CoEP
- Forestation lead: Andrea Silva-Brown, Sustainability Program Specialist, Office of Climate and Sustainability, CoEP.
- Institutional Collaboration Lead: Tracy Yellen
- Trail Project Manager: Jana Renner, Senior Program Officer, Paso del Norte Health Foundation

Below the proposed administrative and compliance structure for this project. This team will be supported by DCHD and CID own structures.

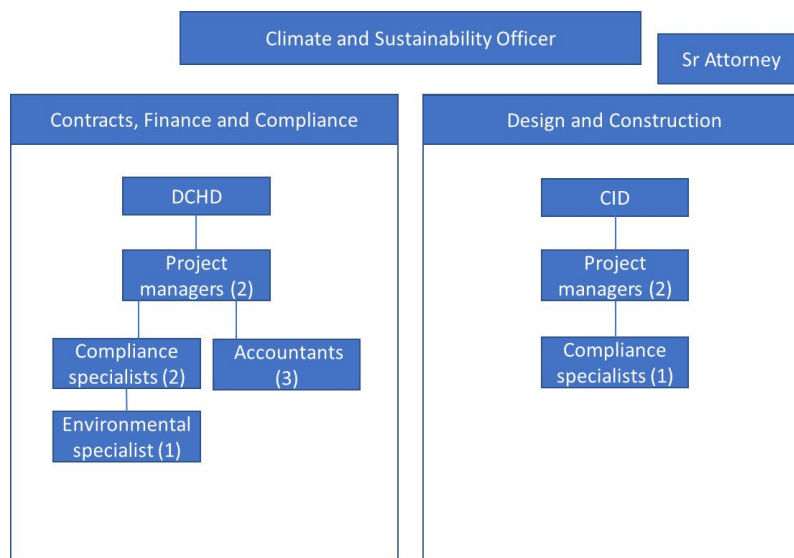


Figure 4. Administrative Org Chart

The structure of the department is designed to handle federal funds, both competitive and formula-based grants, with staff equipped to create contract/sub-awards, perform compliance and monitoring activities, and manage accounting tasks as required by funding entities. This team will be further supported by DCHD and CID's own structures, ensuring comprehensive oversight and management of the project.

The City of El Paso also possesses extensive organizational experience and well-established procedures, Internal Services Departments such as the Office of Management & Budget, Office of the Comptroller, Purchasing, and Strategic Sourcing will also play integral roles in administering this grant.

7. Budget

A. Budget Detail

The funds allocated for the Project will be distributed across various relevant categories, ensuring its successful implementation. The categorization of funds includes project management, planning, compliance and implementation costs, equipment purchases and installation, operation and maintenance costs. More details are provided below in the Categories sub-section and in the Budget narrative attachment and spreadsheet.

The overall budget under this project is **\$433,229,471.72**. The project is divided into two components: i) Trail implementation, including forestation and transportation elements, and ii) Energy efficiency program, as explained in previous sections. The project team has budgeted costs across the 5 years of the program (see Budget narrative attachment and spreadsheet.). Direct Costs amount for **\$432,878,889.02** and Indirect Costs for **\$350,582.7**. Direct Costs include detailed line items for i) personnel, ii) benefits, iii) travel, iv) equipment, v) supplies, vi) contractual, and vi) other.

Budget Categories

Detailed breakdown of the budget can be found in the Appendix section. Below is a description of the main components of each category and how those costs were estimated.

- I. **Personnel:** The annual cost for Personnel is \$747,950 and the total cost is \$3,739,750. Estimations for these personnel expenses come from the City of El Paso's Job Specifications.
- II. **Fringe Benefits:** The annual cost for fringe benefits is \$224,385 and the total cost is \$1,121,925.

- III. **Travel** The annual cost is \$15,438 and the total cost is \$77,190.
- IV. **Equipment:** The annual cost is \$520,120.6 for Year 2 and \$417,120.6 for Year 3 and the total cost is \$937,241.2.
- V. **Supplies:** Total is \$33,000.0
- VI. **Contractual:** Total for the Contractual category is \$426,669,782.82.
- VII. **Other:** the development of a project website, and its maintenance, is budgeted at a total of \$300,000. Year 1 cost is \$80,000 and Years 2-5 are budgeted at \$55,000/year.
- VIII. **Indirect Charges:** total of \$352,582.7. Annual cost is \$52,679.9.

B. Expenditure of Awarded Funds

Although the CoEP will contract the project management of the project, as application lead and being responsible for the funds received by the EPA, strong compliance and expenses controls are in place to guarantee the correct use of funds as per EPA's or other federal regulations. A complete explanation of these procedures can be found below.

2 CFR 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements Compliance: The City of El Paso ensures proper management of grant funds in accordance with the 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements to ensure effective controls over Federal programs. The City of El Paso has developed internal policies and procedures to reduce risk of mismanagement of funds and efficient expenditure of grant funds.

City of El Paso City Attorney's Office and Office of the Comptroller (OTC) Oversight: Prior to execution of any agreements involving a Federal grant funding, The City of El Paso's Attorney's Office provides legal review and interpretation of grant agreements and contracts to ensure agreements are legally enforceable and that the agreement does not include any clauses that could result in liability issues for the City of El Paso. The City Attorney's Office staff will review the terms and conditions of the award as the initial step in accepting a grant award.

Furthermore, The City of El Paso's Grants Administration Division (GAD) of the Office of the Comptroller (OTC) serves as a clearinghouse of grant activity that generates reporting and tracking of grant submittals, awarded grants and grant reporting requirements. The GAD is responsible for general oversight of the City's grant application, award acceptance and reporting process.

Verification of Eligible Expenses Unless not logistically feasible or posing a compromise in successfully achieving the Federal grant's objective, the City of El Paso conducts a robust and thorough verification of eligible expenses that are made from the Federal grantee prior to disbursing any grant funding. The grantee must ensure that any expenses made under the federal grant provided must be in accordance with the agreement, scope, budget, and eligible activities provided specifically under the federal grant. The grantee will provide reporting documentation to the City of El Paso on expenses made for purposes of carrying out the grant's objectives. Upon, verification and reconciliation of eligible expenses provided for the given reporting period, the City of El Paso will reimburse grant funding for the amount reported. Any expenses made by grantee not considered eligible will be not be reimbursed.

Timeliness Grantees are required to maintain a spend-to-time ratio in accordance with the Federal grant agreement's period of performance. The spend-to-time ratio is implemented as part of the City of El Paso's Policies and Procedures in order to ensure timely use and disbursement of funds. In the case that the grantee fails to maintain the adequate spend-to-time ratio, the grantee will be required to submit a remediation plan detailing how the program/project will return to compliance. The City will further assess the remediation plan and decide on any actions needed to ensure timely expenditure of funds.

C. Reasonableness of Costs

The total budget of \$433,142,288 is a reasonable one that will significantly impact and improve GHG emissions and air quality while addressing historic disinvestment and inequalities in this Border region.

The budget detail provided above outlines the comprehensive allocation of funds for the implementation of our visionary project aimed at GHG emissions. Through planning and strategic resource allocation, the project addresses key environmental challenges while fostering community resilience. This breakdown underscores our commitment to transparency, accountability, and efficiency in achieving our project objectives. This project includes more than 100 miles of trail development, 60,500 trees planted and a \$50M energy efficiency program to address the needs of the region, including El Paso and Hudspeth Counties.

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: The allocation for personnel expenses is appropriate, covering salaries for indispensable staff members crucial to project management, compliance, and technical oversight. These positions are meticulously aligned with the project's scope and objectives, ensuring that individuals with requisite expertise are recruited to fulfill their roles efficiently. Salaries are meticulously determined based on comprehensive job specifications and competitive market rates, ensuring equitable compensation within budgetary constraints. Including fringe benefits demonstrates prudent fiscal planning, accounting for additional costs associated with employee compensation beyond base salaries. Fringe benefits are meticulously calculated at a standard percentage of salaries, consistent with organizational policies.

Travel and Equipment: Budgeting for travel expenses reflects a strategic investment in staff development and project efficacy, facilitating participation in pertinent conferences, meetings, and training sessions. These trips are essential for fostering knowledge dissemination, networking opportunities, and staying abreast of emerging industry trends and best practices. The allocation for mileage and associated expenses is justifiable, considering the imperative of local travel for seamless project coordination and execution. Procuring equipment exemplifies prudent resource allocation, bolstering data collection, analysis, and outreach efforts vital to project implementation. Specific items, such as air quality monitors and EP Helps kiosks, are indispensable for meeting project requirements and regulatory mandates. Costs associated with equipment procurement are meticulously vetted against prevailing market rates and vendor quotations, ensuring optimal value while meeting project specifications.

Supplies: Allocating funds for supplies underscores a proactive approach to project support, encompassing the acquisition of essential items essential for sustained operational efficacy. Items like laptops and additional equipment empower staff to execute their duties with efficiency and precision. The cost estimates for supplies are diligently crafted, factoring in market dynamics and the requisite quantity to sustain project operations.

Contractual: Budgeting for contractual expenses reflects a commitment to rigorous procurement practices, facilitating fair and transparent selection processes for vital project services. These costs are meticulously assessed to secure qualified contractors and vendors capable of meeting the project's diverse needs. Our project encompasses various initiatives aimed at advancing sustainability and reducing GHG emissions within our community.

In the section below, an overview is provided of how each component contributes to the overarching goal of reducing GHG emissions. From trail expansion to energy efficiency measures, each aspect of the project plays a vital role in mitigating climate change and promoting environmental stewardship.

Trail Expansion Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Reduction: Personnel: Dedicated staff overseeing project management and planning streamline trail expansion efforts, ensuring efficient development while minimizing environmental impact. Equipment: Acquisition of essential equipment, including air quality monitors, supports sustainable trail construction by monitoring environmental factors. Contractual: Engaging contractors committed to sustainable construction practices facilitates the creation of environmentally friendly trails, contributing to reduced carbon emissions and improved ecological outcomes.

Travel: Staff participation in relevant conferences and meetings drives knowledge sharing and collaboration, informing the development of transportation policies aimed at reducing VMT and promoting eco-friendly modes of travel.

Contractual: Investment in trail design and construction contracts promotes active transportation options, such as walking and cycling, thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuel-powered vehicles and decreasing associated GHG emissions.

Carbon Removal: Tree and Shrub Planting: **Equipment:** Utilization of monitoring equipment aids in assessing carbon sequestration benefits of tree and shrub planting initiatives, supporting the quantification of environmental benefits and contributing to carbon removal efforts.

Contractual: Implementation of contracts for trail expansion and green infrastructure development includes provisions for tree and shrub planting, enhancing carbon sequestration capacity and mitigating GHG emissions from nearby sources.

Solar Lighting, Rooftop Solar: **Equipment:** Investment in solar lighting systems reduces reliance on conventional energy sources, promoting energy independence and resilience while mitigating GHG emissions associated with electricity production.

Contractual: Contracting for the installation of rooftop solar panels enhances energy efficiency and renewable energy integration, displacing GHG emissions from fossil fuel-based electricity generation and advancing sustainability goals.

Commercial Energy Efficiency: **Contractual:** Engaging contractors for energy efficiency retrofits in commercial buildings along the trail corridor improves building performance and reduces energy consumption, resulting in lower carbon emissions and enhanced sustainability outcomes.