



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Phase II Implementation Grants

El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area Application

Chihuahuan Desert Carbon Mitigation Beltway

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Applicant Information

City of El Paso, Texas

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Type of Application:

Coalition Application

The application presented here is representative of 13 regional governing entities led by the City of El Paso. At the onset of work on CPRG I, the City of El Paso engaged regionally to establish legally binding connections between coalition partners for the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan and ultimately to submit a comprehensive and regionally holistic CPRG II application. Coalition members bound by Interlocal Governmental Agreements include: Town of Anthony, Village of Vinton, Town of Horizon City, City of Socorro, City of San Elizario, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Community, Town of Clint, El Paso County, Hudspeth County, El Paso MPO, El Paso Water and the Rio Grande COG. It is through these agreements that this application draws its authority to implement at a regional scale. Should this grant be awarded, additional agreements will be pursued with the following entities directly related to project implementation: El Paso Water Utilities, El Paso Electric, the International Boundary and Water Commission and the Paso Del Norte Community Foundation. These entities have included letters of support in this application. The EPA required MOA will be inclusive of all of the above and be submitted by the July 1, 2024 deadline.

Funding Requested: \$433,229,471.72

Application Title:

Chihuahuan Desert Carbon Mitigation Beltway

Brief Description of GHG Measures: Describe each GHG reduction measure contained in the application (1-2 sentences each).

1. **Alternative Mobility / Transportation:** The beltway creates more than a recreational trail environment. It activates connection between currently divided communities, establishes critical destination points which already draw large numbers of people for various purposes including education, retail, entertainment, healthcare and cultural heritage. Reducing vehicle miles traveled is the primary outcome anticipated through this part of the investment.
2. **Energy Efficiency / Renewable Energy:** As a significant portion of regional emissions are generated from electric power and commercial buildings, this measure invests in deep energy retrofits and renewable energy generation in communities across the MSA in the form of grants to commercial property owners and public institutions currently pushing regional energy demand upward. Additionally, the Beltway itself invests in renewable powered lighting and amenities. Reduced demand aims to reduce emissions.
3. **Urban Afforestation:** The Beltway proposes to plant 60,539 trees across the MSA. The benefit is threefold, 1) urban heat mitigation resulting in reduced energy demand primarily in LIDAC areas 2) Carbon Sequestration leveraging exponentially increased quantity of native trees and shrubs inclusive of native cacti with higher sequestration potential as compared to other shrub typologies and 3) Enhanced quality of life with access to open space, active living opportunity and alternative modality primarily of LIDAC residents.

Sector(s):

GHG reduction measures included in the application primarily address the following sectors: transportation, electric power, commercial buildings, and carbon removal through urban afforestation. As indicated in the PCAP, approximately 97% of regional emissions result from the transportation, electric power and commercial buildings sectors.

Expected Total Cumulative GHG Emission Reductions:

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

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

Location(s):

The project is fully inclusive of the entire Metropolitan Statistical Area following over 100 miles of the US / Mexico International Border. GHG reduction measures will be implemented from the Texas / New Mexico border through the eastern edge of Hudspeth County. Governing entities from across the region have been bound together through adopted Interlocal Governmental Cooperation Agreements in support of the breadth of this application including community outreach, design, construction and maintenance of the Beltway itself in addition to the proposed energy efficiency and climate monitoring initiatives aimed at reducing carbon across 5,500+ square miles of west Texas. While the City of El Paso is the lead applicant, measures will be located in the Town of Anthony, Village of Vinton, Town of Horizon City, City of Socorro, City of San Elizario, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Community, Town of Clint, City of El Paso, El Paso County and Hudspeth County in the state of Texas. The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribal Community elected to participate in this collaborative as opposed to pursuing the set aside for tribal communities as a demonstration of regional collaboration and community impact affected by this project.

Applicable PCAP Reference(s):

The City of El Paso is the lead applicant in the coalition application representing 13 regional governing bodies bound by executed Interlocal Governmental Cooperation Agreements supporting a single CPRG II application. These entities, identified as the Leadership Steering Committee have worked collaboratively through community engagement and data sharing to produce the region's first PCAP. The El Paso Regional Climate Action Plan, Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) #02F38901, March 2024, is used as an applicable reference. The PCAP included not only an inventory of GHG emission sources within El Paso and Hudspeth Counties, but also through deep community engagement focused

on LIDAC includes identification of priority benefits and resulting priority measures. Every city, county and unincorporated community in the MSA is represented in the PCAP. This is the first coalition of its kind intended solely for the purpose of affecting climate action in West Texas.

Working together, sharing data at a regional scale allows our community to establish a baseline for climate action moving forward, enabling specific goals to be set and metrics to provide long term accountability. The PCAP Executive Summary indicates metric tons of carbon dioxide (MTCO₂e) for 2019 along with identification of the four largest emission sources. (PCAP, page V) Tables 3 and 4 illustrate GHG Emissions Inventory by Sector and Subsector. (PCAP page 15 and 17)

Evaluation of GHG emission sources within El Paso and Hudspeth Counties reveals that 58% are generated from stationary energy use and 40% from the transportation sector. Emissions from stationary energy use included commercial, industrial and residential facilities. The data reported in the PCAP was developed using empirical data and modeled data from 2019, following the US Community Protocol inventory guidance. Table 1 (Emissions Sectors and Activities) (page 13, PCAP) listing all emission sectors and their activities included. GHGs included are; carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). The formula used to calculate GHG emissions was: Activity Data x Emissions Factor x 100-year GWP (100 yr global warming potential) = Total Emissions in MTCO₂e. Table 2 (PCAP, page 14) reports emissions inventory data sources and concludes that **both transportation and stationary energy use generate 97% of a total emissions generation of ~ 8,500,000 MTCO₂e.**

In order to understand how to better address emissions and community benefit simultaneously, direct input from the community was gathered across the MSA with a specific focus on meeting LIDAC residents where they are, allowing for ease of access to the process and the complex data surrounding climate action. Community engagement sessions were conducted one on one with stakeholder groups from environmental advocates to business associations, utilities, industry and neighborhood associations. Additionally, a public work session was conducted as a formal convening of the City Council so that community members had an opportunity to directly address their elected officials regarding climate action in general, their priorities for the plan and feedback on the concept for the Chihuahuan Desert Carbon Mitigation Beltway application. Engagement resulted in over 200 unique project ideas gathered directly from the voice of our community. Those ideas are represented in the breadth of this application. The PCAP organizes these ideas by emissions sector and measure type and further sorted into 10 priority measure categories:

1. Increase Native Trees and Natural Spaces
2. Expand and Improve Active Transportation Infrastructure
3. Utilize Sustainable Land Use Planning
4. Expand and Improve Transit Service
5. Increase Energy Efficiency and Decarbonize Buildings
6. Install Renewable Energy Systems
7. Evaluate Sustainable Waste Management Practices
8. Support the Electric Vehicles Transition
9. Optimize Freight Transportation
10. Promote Sustainable Food Production and Distribution

Each priority measure has been evaluated for:

- its ability to reduce GHG emissions and provide benefits to LIDACs,
- its potential implementation tracking metrics, and
- the authority of local entities to implement projects within each measure.

Cumulative GHG Reductions potential are quantified by measure to better understand where the most significant impact can be achieved. (PCAP, Page 26, Table 7) This baseline information directly

informed the nature of this application and the overall project initiative. However, it was primarily the community identified priorities that ultimately drove the design of the program toward addressing not one concern or vulnerability, but multiple areas of impact and co-benefit. This strategy is not new to our community. Dating back over a decade, stakeholders and community leaders have articulated the need to better leverage regional investments that address environment, health, economy and social justice simultaneously. Our community does not have the luxury of investing in a single challenge at a time. The concept was solidified in the publication of Resilient El Paso in 2018 (Figure 1). Over 70,000 El Pasoans were engaged during the development of the Resilience Strategy.

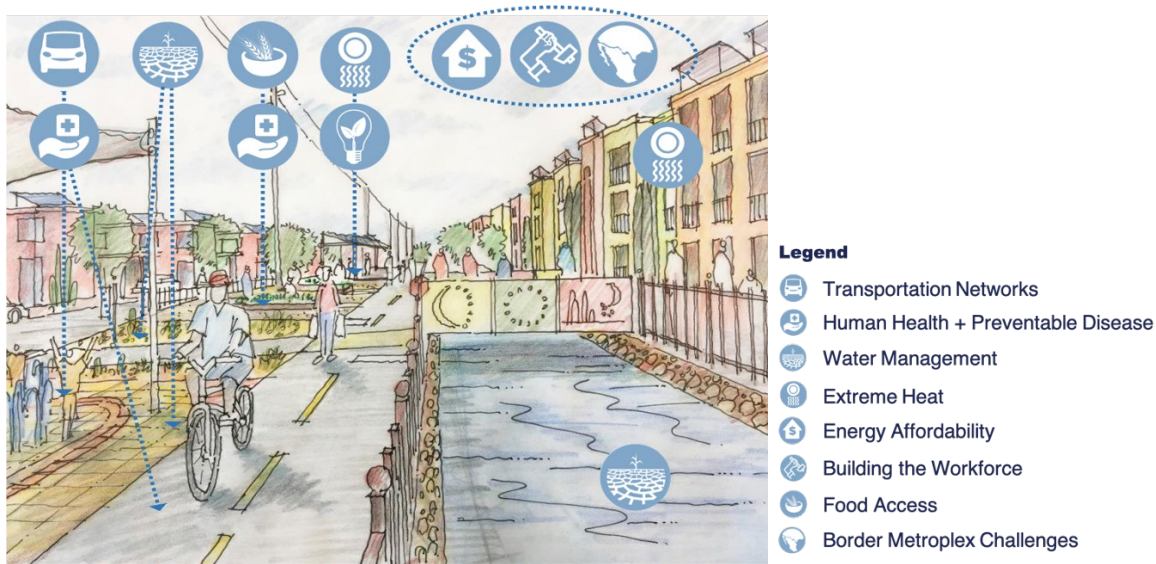


Figure 1. Future trail

The PCAP may be found online at <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/community-and-human-development/civic-empowerment/climate-action/>.