



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Phase II Implementation Grants

El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area Application

Chihuahuan Desert Carbon Mitigation Beltway

Sub-Task 4

Team Biographies

Team Biographies

Staff and management structure were described in Section 6.C of the application. Below are the short bio-resumes of the key staff to be involved in the project.

Executive Lead – Nicole Alderete Ferrini

Climate and Sustainability Officer, Community and Human Development Director, City of El Paso

Holding degrees in both interior design and architecture from Texas Tech University, Nicole has leveraged her background in design and systems thinking to launch a career building better, stronger, more prosperous communities. In 2014, Nicole became the first Latina in the world to serve as Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) for municipal government.

Most recently, following 6 years at the helm of the Department of Community and Human Development, Nicole is now additionally serving as the Climate & Sustainability Officer for the City of El Paso. In these multiple leadership roles, Ms. Alderete Ferrini continues to raise the bar for city leadership by provoking innovation among civic leaders, industry professionals and the community at large. Despite the scale of the challenge, she remains focused on building grass roots resilience across the Paso Del Norte region, emphasizing dynamic solutions to the challenges of climate instability, urban development, housing homelessness, economic prosperity and social justice.

Finance and Economic Lead - Abraham Gutierrez

Assistant Director, Department of Community and Human Development, City of El Paso

As the Assistant Director for the Department of Community and Human Development with the City of El Paso, Abraham Gutierrez, helps lead a wide range of programs and services that assists the City's most vulnerable residents. They include and are not limited to affordable housing opportunities, homeless prevention, neighborhood improvement, senior volunteer opportunities, and small business assistance, all aimed to benefit low- and moderate-income residents. The Department has administered over \$100 million in various federal, state and local programs, and it serves as a catalyst for community partnerships, collaboration and change that will revitalize low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, enhance human services, promote accessibility, expand housing opportunities, and improve the quality of life for El Pasoans.

Capital Projects and Planning Lead - Joaquin Rodriguez

Director, Grant Funded Programs, City of El Paso

Joaquin Rodriguez is an engineer and urban planner with a diverse background in public service. A proud UTEP Miner, Rodriguez received both his bachelor and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from UTEP before working in a variety of roles focusing on renewable and sustainable design. Rodriguez started his career as an urban planner with the City of El Paso in 2012. He then worked with EPISD where he helped manage the urban planning, design and rollout of the district's \$668 million-dollar 2016 bond.

Subsequently, Rodríguez served as chief of staff and senior advisor to the chair of the El Paso Transportation Policy Board where he worked closely with the MPO to secure critical funding for regional transportation priorities. He currently serves as the Chair of the region's Transportation Project Advisory Committee.

Rodriguez has also collaborated on projects across the border region including elements of the Viva Laredo comprehensive plan for Laredo Tx, the Sunland Park NM trails master plan, and the County of El Paso mission trail master plan and Fabens Airport Zoning effort. Most recently, Rodriguez has overseen the development of the Onward Alameda Corridor plan, the City's Vision Zero Action Plan and the adoption of the City's award-winning Complete Streets Policy.

GHG Reduction Technical Lead – Fernando Liano

Senior Climate Program Manager, Office of Climate and Sustainability, City of El Paso

Fernando Liano is an engineer with 16 years of private and public sector experience. He currently serves as Senior Climate Program Manager for the City of El Paso, TX.

He is currently the technical development of the first Climate Action Plan for the region of El Paso, focusing on GHG emissions reduction and adaptation measures. His first role with the City was as Sustainability Coordinator, leading energy management programs and sustainable projects for the City and community. Prior to joining the City, he worked as energy efficiency and climate change consultant for the private and public sectors in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe for more than 10 years.

He is a Certified Energy Manager (CEM) and Certified Measurement and Verification Professional (CMVP) by the Association of Energy Engineers.

LIDAC and Climate Justice Lead – Dora Hernandez

Climate Program Manager, Office of Climate and Sustainability, City of El Paso

Dora Hernandez has worked in both the public and private sector for over 16 years. She currently serves as the Climate Program Manager under the Community and Human Development Department with the City of El Paso.

Prior to serving in her current role, she worked in the state of Washington as a Volunteer Program Coordinator. She developed several environmentally focused community volunteer programs. Outreach and engagement efforts for these programs increased volunteer engagement by over 4,000 individuals. Currently, she is focused on outreach efforts to help inform the El Paso community of the regions first Climate Action Plan. Her experience and education help advise and inform on sustainable and environmentally sound practices.

Dora hold a Bachelor's of Science in Environmental Science from Washington State University. She is a Texas Master Naturalist and serves on the board of the Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition.

Capital Projects Manager – Ismael Cepeda

Capital Projects Manager, Capital Improvement Department, City of El Paso

Ismael Cepeda is a licensed engineer and public servant working with the City of El Paso for over 14 years. A proud UTEP Miner, Mr. Cepeda received both his bachelor and master's degrees in civil engineering from UTEP. Mr. Cepeda joined the COEP's Engineering and Construction Management Department (now Capital Improvement Department) as an undergraduate student in 2012.

Mr. Cepeda has managed a great variety of locally funded projects including Yucca Park, Skyline Park, Radford Park,

among others. Since 2016 he has work with the Grant Funded Programs Department and concentrates on Federally or State funded projects such as Isela Rubalcava extension, Pan-American, Zaragoza and Winn road extension, Yarbrough Bridge replacement, multiple sections of the PDN trail, among others.

Forestation Lead - Andrea Silva-Brown – Sustainability Program Specialist

Sustainability Program Specialist, Office of Climate and Sustainability, City of El Paso

Andrea Silva-Brown, a geologist with 18 years of environmental and geotechnical experience has worked in both the private and public sector. She earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Geology from the University of Texas at El Paso, along with a Master's in Geology and Geophysics from the University of Missouri Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri. Her current position at the City of El Paso is the Sustainability Program Specialist in the Office of Climate and Sustainability.

Prior to serving as the Sustainability Program Specialist, she was a Senior Geologist at Wood Technical Consulting Solutions. She not only did environmental work but also oversaw safety compliance and was the El Paso's Office Safety Officer. Her duties in prior companies included managing, budgeting and coordinating projects such as pipeline installation projects. She has worked on several Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) in California, New Mexico, Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Texas. She has expertise in Environmental Baseline Surveys (EBS), Environmental Condition of Property (ECP) along with stormwater and erosion control projects. Mrs. Silva-Brown has extensive experience in working with leaking underground storage (LUST) sites, underground storage sites (USTs) and landfills. She is an expert in following regulatory standards in sampling and submitting samples to certified laboratories for reporting. She has provided numerous technical reports to regulatory agencies (EPA, NMED, TCEQ and California State Water Board) regarding remediation, permitting, compliance, and quality assurance.

Her involvement in the PCAP will include relating her expertise in regulatory compliance in the federal (EPA) and state level (TCEQ). Along with her experience with coordinating and executing large-scale projects.

Institutional Collaboration Lead - Tracy J. Yellen

Chief Executive Officer, Paso del Norte Foundation

The Paso del Norte Foundation is a \$300 million foundation, which includes the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, Fundacion Paso del Norte, El Paso Giving Day and a growing community of philanthropy.

Prior to joining the Foundations in 2013, Tracy served as Managing Partner of MJD & Associates, Campaign Director for the World YWCA Global Campaign, Development Director for the YWCA El Paso Del Norte Region, Public Outreach Director for the Border Environment Cooperation Commission, and Program Coordinator in the Office of Border Affairs for the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission.

Tracy is active in the El Paso community. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas El Paso Branch, Borderplex Alliance, PHIX Health Information Exchange, Fundación Paso del Norte, and ROICOM. She was previously on the boards of the University Medical Center of El Paso, YWCA El Paso Del Norte Region, Women's Fund of El Paso, Mesita Elementary, Wiggs Middle and El Paso High School PTAs, Kern Place Association, Keep El Paso Beautiful and The Johns Hopkins University.

Tracy has been recognized with numerous awards including the 2014 El Paso Inc. Woman of Impact, 2014 Project Amistad Humanitarian of the Year, 2012 Association of Fundraising Professionals Executive of the Year, and 2012 Nolan Richardson Charities Elaine Pharr Woman of the Year.

Tracy earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Studies from The Johns Hopkins University and Masters in Public Administration from the University of Texas at El Paso. She is a former college basketball player and marathon runner. Tracy is married to Steve Yellen and has two children.

Trail Project Manager – Janna Renner

Senior Program Officer, Paso del Norte Health Foundation

Jana Renner is a Senior Program Officer at the Paso del Norte Health Foundation. She has been at the Health Foundation since 2012. Ms. Renner currently manages the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity initiatives. In this capacity, she works with grantees and community partners on strategies to improve nutrition and expand opportunities to be physically active in the region, including the Paso del Norte Trail project. The Health Foundation funded a 3.4-mile trail construction project, the Playa Drain Trail, in 2018. Ms. Renner provided project oversight over that project and currently manages a contract for trail coordination among stakeholders. Before joining the Health Foundation, Jana worked at The University of Texas at El Paso as a Program Coordinator for twelve years.

Jana earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Trinity University, a Master of Public Administration from The University of Texas at El Paso, and a Graduate Certificate in Public Health from UTHHealth School of Public Health at Houston.