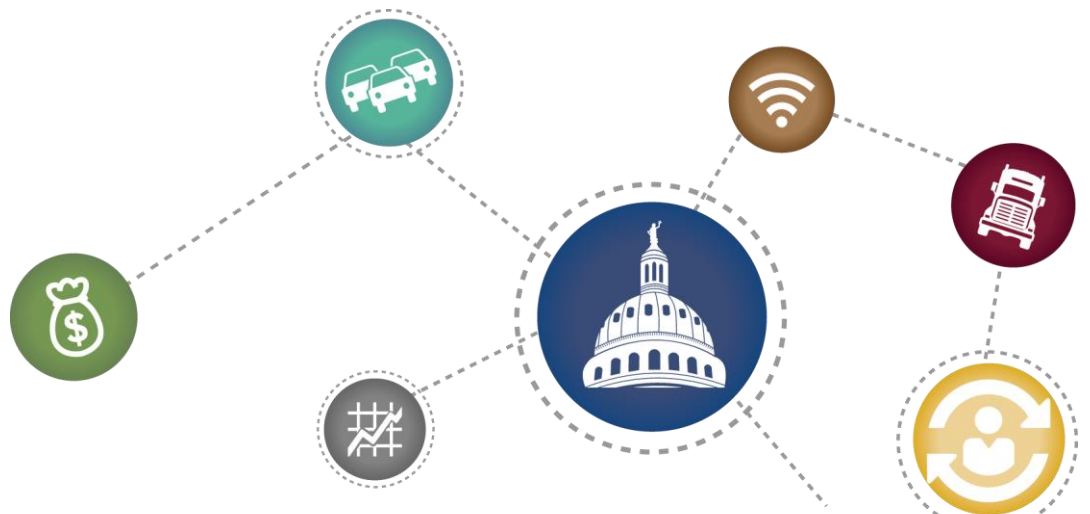


Regional Mobility Authorities in Texas: History and Current Status

Final report

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Regional Mobility Authorities in Texas: History and Current Status

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Executive Summary

A regional mobility authority (RMA) is an independent local government agency authorized by state statute (Chapter 370, Transportation Code) with the main function of transportation project development, finance, and implementation. This research documents the nine existing RMAs in Texas looking at both the history and current activities of RMAs from a statutory and operational standpoint in terms of successes, project implementation progress, and the varied approaches used in development and implementation. This research also characterizes the role of RMAs in transportation development with respect to metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), rural planning organizations (RPOs), and local governments.

This research project reviewed the current financial state of RMAs and RMA projects under development using details from annual reports and annual financial statements. Researchers developed geographic and demographic profiles for each RMA. These profiles characterize RMAs and the environment in which they operate. Appendix 1 presents RMA profile summaries. Appendix 2 contains a literature review and annotated findings. Appendix 3 includes maps of state legislative representation for RMAs.

The first RMA in Texas was created in Central Texas in 2002 after the 77th Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill (SB) 342. After House Bill (HB) 3588 passed in 2003, RMA powers were expanded, and the majority of RMAs were formed between 2004 and 2007. The most recently formed RMA is the Webb County RMA in the Laredo region of South Texas. Figure 1 shows the timeline for RMA development.

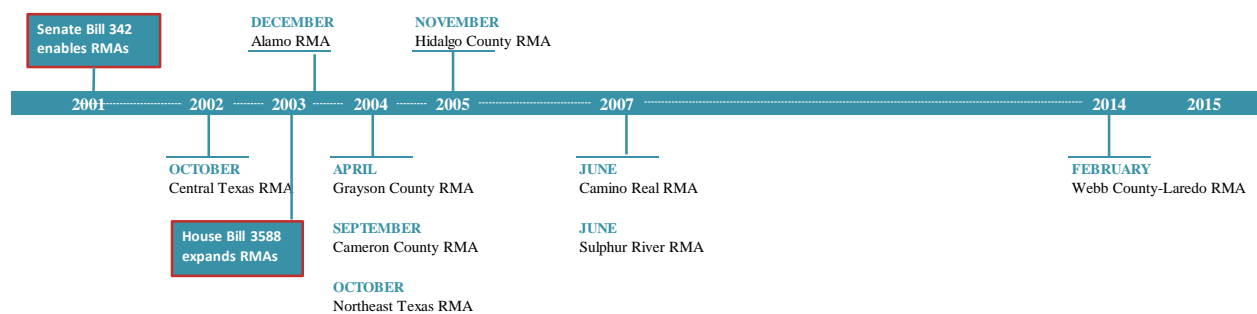


Figure 1. RMA Development Timeline.

RMAs function as regionally focused transportation development and implementation authorities with oversight from the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC). RMAs are independent government agencies enabled by legislation (TCC, Chapter 370) to finance, acquire, design, construct, operate, and maintain multimodal transportation projects. RMAs may include multiple counties.

In comparison, MPOs are enabled by federal (and state) legislation for the purpose of transportation planning, programming, and project selection in metropolitan areas. MPOs are

governed by elected officials acting as a forum for informed transportation decision making in metropolitan areas. MPOs do not directly design, build, finance, manage, operate, or maintain transportation projects.

The common mission for both RMAs and MPOs is to encourage local and regional control for the planning, programming (MPOs), and advance project implementation (RMAs) of multimodal transportation facilities. Statewide toll authorities, regional toll authorities, and county toll authorities also function as implementation authorities that are able to finance, design, construct operate, and maintain primarily roadway projects.

Table 1. Toll Authorities in Texas.

Characteristic	Regional Mobility Authorities	Regional Toll Authorities	TxDOT Statewide Toll Authorities	County Toll Authorities
Number of Tolling Authorities in Texas	9	1 (NTTA)	1 (TTA)	8
Texas Administrative Code	Ch. 370	Ch. 366	Ch. 221,228	Ch. 284
Texas Transportation Commission Oversight	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Metro project planning and programming	MPO	MPO	MPO	MPO
Rural Project Planning and Programming	TxDOT/ District	TxDOT/ District	TxDOT/ District	TxDOT/ District

North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Texas Turnpike Authority Division of TxDOT (TTA)

Each RMA Is Unique

In the 13 years since RMAs in Texas were formed, each RMA has addressed transportation and mobility challenges unique to their region. RMA projects cut across all modes and include roadways, aviation, transit, port, and rail. Some of the RMAs address rural connectivity and others address metropolitan mobility. In some cases, RMAs completed very narrowly defined projects, and others used a combination of projects and mobility strategies to address a particular corridor or on-going regional transportation issues. RMA projects and financing also ranged from relatively small highway or airport improvements to large multimillion dollar highway interchanges or toll roads.

Cameron County, Hidalgo County, and Camino Real (El Paso) all have freight needs that are addressed in their suite of projects. Cameron County RMA is improving railroad switch yards and border crossing infrastructure for freight traffic, while Hidalgo County is developing an oversize/overweight freight corridor to allow heavier Mexican trucks to use their road network for a fee. The Central Texas RMA (Travis and Williamson Counties), which has the highest

number of urban lane miles and congested corridors of all RMAs, has developed the most toll roads using comprehensive development agreements (CDAs). Their projects are generally focused on mobility improvements.

RMA Diversity Mirrors Texas Regional Diversity

RMAs vary based on regional geography, demographics, travel behavior, and transportation needs. These differences also make direct comparisons among RMAs difficult.

RMAs are primarily county-based, but one RMA (Camino Real RMA) is based on the municipal city limits of El Paso. While six of the nine RMAs are located in just one county, three RMAs encompass multiple counties; the Central Texas RMA covers two counties, the Sulphur River RMA lies in four counties, and the Northeast Texas RMA (NETRMA) serves 12 counties. Population and population density also vary widely. The population of Grayson County RMA is only 122,353, in contrast to the Alamo RMA (Bexar County) population, which tops the list at 1,817,610, and is also the most densely populated at 1,383 persons per square mile. The Webb County- Laredo RMA is the least densely populated at 74 persons per square mile.

RMAs are formed to facilitate the funding and implementation of specific transportation projects or programs to address specific mobility needs. In metropolitan regions RMA projects generally target congestion reduction. The Alamo RMA, for example, has the most freeway miles, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and the second highest number of congested roads among the RMAs. In more rural areas, RMAs are more likely to target connectivity projects. In the 12-county NETRMA, for example, lane miles are predominantly rural and congestion levels are among the four lowest of the RMAs.

The Alamo RMA was started in 2004 and planned to develop a 50-mile toll road network to accommodate congestion relief. In 2012, Bexar County assumed the administration and operation of the Alamo RMA. Alamo RMA has completed environmental impact statements (EIS), operational improvements, and non-toll road direct connectors between US 281 and Loop 1604 (*I*). Neighboring Central Texas RMA in Austin, in contrast to the Alamo RMA, has seven times the amount of transportation assets in place, nearly twice the number of congested roadway segments, and slightly lower VMT and fewer freeway miles.

In South Texas, the Webb County-Laredo RMA is the least densely populated, has the fewest number of lane miles, and the third lowest number of VMT. It was the most recently formed RMA in 2014 and has expressly focused on developing financial support to convert Loop 20 into interstate standards at a cost of \$250 million to alleviate congestion from I-35. As the county borders Mexico and is also bisected by busy I-35, the Webb County-Laredo RMA also hosts one of the state's top 100 most congested roadway segments.

RMA Data and Reporting

RMA data and reports are varied in levels of detail, formats, and availability. As part of their responsibilities, RMAs are required to report to local governments, financiers, TxDOT, and TTC on current financial and project delivery information (2). Not all RMA information and reports are located in one single repository. Although some RMA websites contain comprehensive project and financial reports, some do not. Researchers sought project status, financial activities, and RMA information from a variety of unlike sources. (Sulphur River RMA does not maintain a website, and Grayson County RMA provides a financial overview).

RMAs report their fiscal positions with annual financial statements (e.g., balance sheet, statement of revenues and expenses, and cash flow statement). Researchers obtained financial statements and annual budget information from the individual RMA websites to document the financial state of RMAs, when available. However, researchers also sought financial statements from Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA),¹ a service provided by the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board. The EMMA website was used to access RMA financial statements that were not available on the individual RMA websites.

Audited financial statements consisted primarily of the examination and summarization of the annual operating and non-operating revenues and expenses for the organization, as well as assets and liabilities for short- and long-term debt. Some annual financial statements also had short descriptions of the reasons for major shifts in operational costs or asset and liability increases, which were often attributed to projects underway. There was no attempt to perform an independent audit of the financial statements or to assess the financial position of the RMA in terms of solvency, adequate reserves, or the future ability to meet the terms of its debt obligations.

Project level details such as total project costs, and current project construction costs incurred for each project were gathered from a variety of sources, such as annual reports, financial statements, annual budgets, and strategic plans. As a result, it was difficult to establish and compare construction progress between RMAs, and improvements to the regional transportation networks from the projects that they provide. One of the claimed benefits of RMAs is their ability to accelerate project development and completion and enhance transportation system performance. Researchers found it difficult to confirm this benefit due to lack of a standard report format that clearly documents total project costs, where the project stands in terms of completion, current spending on the project, and the project's impact on system performance.

Researchers were able to confirm that RMAs do use many different sources to secure funding for projects. For example, to support the development of its \$215 million loop network system, the Hidalgo RMA issued a \$61.6 million bond in 2013 (3). Issuance of this bond was backed by

¹ Electronic Municipal Market Access (<http://emma.msrb.org/Home/Index>) a service provided by the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board.

approximately \$5.4 million in annual fees based on a statutorily authorized \$10.00 local fee added to vehicle registrations in the county.

Coordination with Other Entities

RMAs have been formed to facilitate the funding and implementation of regional transportation projects in support of local jurisdictions. In most cases, this means a close and cooperative relationship with their host counties, TxDOT, MPOs, and other local entities. It also includes neighboring districts where inter-local agreements are established to complete projects that benefit the RMA's transportation network. In El Paso, this includes projects across the border in Mexico, and across the state border of New Mexico. For metropolitan areas, transportation planning and programming is the responsibility of the region's MPO. The evidence for this cooperative relationship is in the integration of RMA transportation project development into the MPO planning and programming process. RMA projects (or project plans) are generally included in an MPO's long range plans, known as metropolitan transportation plans (MTPs), in support of MPO transportation planning goals and strategies. In most cases, the RMA is represented at the region's MPO on either the MPO's policy board, or the MPO technical advisory committee (TAC). MPOs are governed by a board of elected officials and act as a decision making forum for transportation planning in metropolitan areas. MPOs do not directly design, build, finance, manage, operate, or maintain transportation projects.

RMAs are not always formally engaged in cooperative transportation development with RPOs because many RMA projects are within a metropolitan boundary and outside an RPO's planning area; or RPO planning boundaries may not coincide with the RMA boundaries, and coordination of rural transportation issues generally occur at the TxDOT district with local and county officials where RPOs are not in existence. However, the 12-county NETRMA coincides with many areas of the 14-county East Texas RPO, and there are opportunities for coordination. Rural project planning and programming is a cooperative process involving the RPO and TxDOT District and includes the RMA where they coincide.

RMAs coordinate with multiple jurisdictions and agencies. For example, Smith and Gregg Counties helped create the NETRMA to capitalize on opportunities to develop the Loop 49 Toll Project and other projects. The development of NETRMA was in-part driven by a desire to improve not only transportation mobility and access to these towns, but also their respective economic futures (4). The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA), TxDOT, and CAMPO have all worked together to address differences in project selection and merge them into a Unified Transportation System Plan for the Travis and Williamson Counties in the Austin region.

RMAs can also bridge funding gaps for rural counties. For example, Sulphur River RMA conducted a study to identify priority projects of regional significance to the three counties involved in the RMA. The RMA identified a 10.4-mile roadway expansion project inside Delta County, which provided four lane access through Hunt, Delta, and Lamar Counties to I-30. Since

Delta County did not have the funding to support a \$38.5 million loan on its own, the three counties formed the Sulphur River RMA to advance a regional transportation improvement for the region. The formation of the Sulphur River RMA enabled Lamar County to use its tax dollars beyond its borders in order to support the Sulphur River RMA in developing this regionally significant transportation project. By creating an RMA, the region was able to bridge a funding gap that existed in Delta County and secure a state infrastructure bank (SIB) loan to develop a non-toll road to benefit mobility for all three counties in the region.

RMAs have provided an increased opportunity for local jurisdictions to develop transportation facilities in their regions. Because an RMA can independently generate revenue for their region's transportation-related projects, it is less dependent on competing for limited state and federal funding sources. This is also true for County Toll authorities such as the Harris County Toll Road Authority or NTTA. RMAs can accelerate projects using access to financial resources and innovative financing, including:

- Federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loans.
- TxDOT-based financial assistance agreements.
- SIB loans.
- Funding from transportation reinvestment zones (TRZs).
- Bonds based on local specialty taxes.
- Inter-local agreements (bill backs to MPOs, counties, cities, etc. for planning and administrative support services).
- CDAs (as limited by SB 792).

As a result, RMA projects can be more financially competitive in the project prioritization and selection processes at TxDOT, MPOs, and municipal governments.

RMA Governance

RMA governance is defined by the Texas Administrative Code Chapter 370. RMAs are governed by a board of directors consisting of a presiding officer that is appointed by the governor, and additional directors appointed by the county commissioner's court or city council from the host RMA city, county, or counties. Board members are term limited and cannot be elected officials or an employee of a government entity, but may be re-appointed by commissioner courts. RMA boards may also hire an executive director to operate the RMA and carry out duties assigned by the board. Executive directors serve at the pleasure of the board of directors. Board members are not compensated.

Summary of Findings

Listed below is a summary of findings from this research project:

- RMAs, in comparison to toll authorities, are not limited to roadways and bridges, and have the authority to develop multimodal projects including aviation, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. RMAs can provide a more regional approach to implementing project in contrast to a county by county, or city by city approach.
- RMAs in Texas are diverse and can vary significantly from one another in that their respective regions can be quite different in terms of geography, demographics, travel behavior, and transportation needs. RMAs also address transportation and mobility challenges unique to their region.
- RMAs work cooperatively with their host counties, TxDOT, MPOs, and other local entities to facilitate the funding and implementation of regional transportation projects and priorities.
- RMA reporting requirements are minimal and may not capture detailed financial and operating data. Annual reports and financially audited statements describe some project details, but oftentimes lack detail on project expenditures, schedules, and progress. Annual reports are often geared toward displaying the RMA's achievements, in a public-friendly brochure format that lack specific project management-level details. Project costs and transaction level expenditures are difficult to identify in RMA reports. Annual reports would improve if they contained a project performance section with the same reported performance categories and display results that also align with the reporting requirements of other government agencies.
- The detail and depth of information reported by RMAs vary significantly. Some RMAs have very robust websites and comprehensive reports, whereas others contain only basic information.
- RMAs could consider implementing performance-based planning and project management consistent with TxDOT. These performance measures could include simplified performance measures on project delivery progress and total project costs.
- Each RMA is unique in the types of projects being implemented and in the variety of revenue and funding sources used to operate and implement projects. RMAs may apply for grants and loans provided by TxDOT and the federal government and may generate their own revenue through tolls and fees from other agencies. Although RMAs do not have taxing authority, RMAs may receive contributions from local governments that have taxing authority, and may apply for loans and grants. RMAs could improve reporting by identifying sources of funding more clearly to show if and when taxpayer dollars from

the state highway fund were applied and where taxpayer dollars are used for RMA projects.

- RMAs can perform a unique role in coordinating a wide variety of transportation system projects among a variety of partners and leveraging a variety of funds. This role also presents challenges in communicating to the public the inherent complexity of the many different projects, revenue sources, and financing.
- A possible improvement would be creation of a central website or clearinghouse for RMA project data, financial data, and standardized reporting similar to the Central Texas RMA, which currently maintains a website that provides detailed project planning, development, and financial information for each project.

Introduction—What Is A Regional Mobility Authority?

An RMA is an independent local government agency that TTC may authorize at the request of one or more counties or certain cities. Their purpose is to finance, acquire, design, construct, operate, maintain, expand, or extend transportation projects, including toll roads (TTC, Chapter 370). The 77th Texas Legislature enabled the creation of RMAs in 2001 with the enactment of SB 342. This legislation enabled RMAs to construct, maintain, and operate a turnpike in areas of the state that at the time did not have regional tollway authorities (5). In 2003, as a result of HB 3588, RMAs were empowered with increased financing and contracting capabilities, the powers of eminent domain, the authority to combine transportation projects into systems, and to transfer indebted turnpike projects to TxDOT, among others (6). HB 3588 also amended the transportation code to allow RMAs to construct transportation systems that include:

- Passenger and freight rail facilities.
- Bridges.
- Ferries.
- Airports.
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Border crossing inspection stations.
- Air quality improvement initiatives.
- Public utility facilities.
- Transit systems.
- Parking areas, structures, or facilities or collection device for parking fees.
- Port security (7).

As a political subdivision of the state, an RMA is meant to exercise its powers for the public good, and (6):

...in all respects for the benefit of the people of the counties in which an authority operates and of the people of this state, for the increase of their commerce and prosperity, and for the improvement of their health, living conditions, and public safety.

This research examines and profiles nine existing RMAs that have been formed over the past 13 years in response to initiatives made by the Texas Legislature and TTC to encourage local control for the development and operation of transportation facilities in a region. RMA functions are not unique and are similar to the functions of a state department of transportation (DOT), state transportation agency, or toll authority.

Table 2 through Table 4 compare four of Texas’s tolling entities for project types, general powers, and finance. The tolling entities include the State of Texas, embodied by TxDOT and its explicit tolling authority; RMAs; regional tolling authorities; and the county tolling authorities.

The most significant differences between these four entities are in the areas of:

- What types of transportation projects they may work on.
- What their general powers are with regard to those projects.
- What finance and revenue mechanisms are available to them.

While Table 2 through Table 4 identify similarities and differences at a broad level, they do not capture the legislative nuances and limitations that may distinguish them within each category. For example, although RMAs, regional toll authorities, and counties may receive loans, gifts, or grants for transportation projects, counties are only authorized to receive them from the United States or the State of Texas, while RMAs and RTAs may receive them from almost any source. While TxDOT Statewide Toll Authority may generally receive loans, gifts, and grants from many sources, it is restricted from doing so for purposes of a tolled project, as it is with regard to many other powers and duties related to delivery of transportation projects that they are otherwise endowed with.

Other distinctions not noted here include eligibility limitations on participating entities. Counties that may exercise tolling authority are limited to very large counties (with populations of at least 2 million), counties adjacent to counties of that population size, counties that border Mexico, or counties that border the gulf of Mexico or an inlet of the gulf of Mexico, with populations of at least 50,000.

Special circumstances may also reshape an entity’s ability with regard to tolling. A county’s tolling authority, for example, may be expanded (within very specific limitations defined by Chapter 284), allowing that county to exercise the powers of an RMA.

Table 2. Toll Authority Project Types.

Existing Tolling Authority Transportation Project Types	TxDOT Statewide Toll Authority	Regional Mobility Authorities	Regional Toll Authorities	County Toll Authorities
Number of Toll Authorities in Texas	1 (TTA)	9	1 (NTTA)	8
Texas Administrative Code Chapter	Ch. 221,228	Ch. 370	Ch. 336	Ch.234
Authorized Transportation Project Types				
Turnpikes and turnpike-related	228.001(5)	370.003(14)	366.033(3)	284.003
Non-tolled state highway improvement project	228.001(5)			284.003
Other specified roadway projects		370.003(14)	366.037 (a)	
Passenger and freight rail facilities		370.003(14)		
Bridges	228.001(5)	370.003(14)		284.003
Ferries		370.003(14)		284.003
Airports/Aviation facilities		370.003(14)		
Pedestrian and bicycle facilities		370.003(14)		
Border crossing inspection stations		370.003(14)		
Air quality improvement initiatives		370.003(14)		
Public utilities facilities		370.003(14)		
Transit systems/public transportation project		370.003(14)		
Parking facilities	228.001(5)	370.003(14)		
Port security		370.003(14)		

Table 2 presents the various types of project that tolling authorities may undertake. All of the tolling authorities develop roadway projects, but RMAs are able to undertake broader and more multimodal projects, including aviation, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Table 3. Toll Authority General Power.

Existing Tolling Authority General Powers	TxDOT Statewide Toll Authority	Regional Mobility Authorities	Regional Toll Authorities	County Toll Authorities
Number of Toll Authorities	1	9	1	8
Texas Administrative Code	Ch. 221, 228	Ch. 370	Ch. 366	Ch.284
General Powers				
Study	228.003(a)	370.003(3)	366.033(3)	284.0031
Design	228.002(a)	370.003(3)	366.033(3)	284.0031
Finance	228.002(a) 228.003(a)	370.003(3)	366.174	284.003
Construct	228.002(a) 228.003(a)	370.003(3)	366.033(3)	284.003
Maintain	228.002(a) 228.003(a)	370.003(3)	366.033(3)	284.003
Repair/Reconstruct	228.002(a)	370.003(3)	366.033(3)	284.003
Operate	228.002(a) 228.003(a)	370.003(3)	366.033(3)	284.003
Condemn property	203.052	370.163(a)	366.166.(c)	284.0615

Table 3 presents the general powers for toll authorities. Each of the toll authorities have similar general powers to study, finance, design, construct, and operate transportation facilities.

Table 4. Toll Authority Revenue and Finance.

Existing Tolling Authority Tolling and Finance Characteristics	TxDOT Statewide Toll Authority	Regional Mobility Authorities	Regional Toll Authorities	County Toll Authorities
Number of Toll Authorities	1	9	1	8
Texas Administrative Code	Ch. 221,228	Ch. 370	Ch.366	CH. 284
Authorized Revenue & Finance Tools				
Impose tolls/collect toll revenue	228.053(a)	370.172(a)	366.173(1)	284.003
Issue bonds	228.102(a)	370.111 (a)	366.111(a)	284.003
Receive loans		370.003(9)	366.033(9)	284.006
Enter into CDA	223.201(a)	370.305	366.401	284.003
Maintain revolving fund		370.172	366.174 (a)	
Receive gifts		370.003(9)	366.033(9)	284.006
Receive grants		370.003(9)	366.033(9)	284.006
Receive money		370.003(9)	366.033(9)	
Receive property		370.003(9)	366.033(9)	
Receive labor		370.003(9)	366.033(9)	
Receive other contribution or thing of value		370.003(9)	366.033(9)	284.006

Table 4 presents revenue and finance tools for toll authorities. Each of the toll authorities has the authority to collect tolls, issue bonds, and enter into CDAs based on the availability (the legislature has limited the number of CDAs available to toll authorities).

RMA Powers

RMAs are authorized to implement, within a defined set of parameters, a wide range of transportation projects. Authorized project types include roadways (tolled or non-tolled), ferries, rail, airports, bikeways, transit, and intermodal hubs. Major projects are subject to approval by TTC. RMAs must also coordinate with other transportation entities. Their projects must be included in the plan approved by their MPO, and be consistent with the statewide transportation plan and the statewide transportation improvement program.

RMAs have the same powers and duties as TxDOT with regard to the condemnation and acquisition of real property for transportation projects (7). This means that with regard to acquiring property through eminent domain, RMAs must follow the same processes and procedures that guide TxDOT.

RMAs also enjoy a relatively high level of flexibility regarding funding options for transportation projects. They are authorized to issue bonds, levy tolls, apply for grants and loans, and receive assets from any source (7). They may also enter into inter-local agreements for administrative and planning support from local government agencies. However, that authority is

frequently subject to approval by TTC. For example, RMAs may apply for federal funds, but the TTC must approve the use of those funds. Project finance activities that RMAs are authorized to pursue include:

- Issuing revenue bonds.
- Establishing and imposing tolls, fees, and fares for the use of transportation projects.
- Using surplus revenue to finance other local transportation projects.
- Applying for federal highway and rail funds, with approval from TxDOT.
- Applying for, receiving, and spending loans, grants, gifts, and other contributions for purposes including the construction of a transportation project.
- Receiving and spending money, property, labor, or other things of value from any source (i.e., inter-local agreements).
- Applying for SIB loans.
- Maintaining a revolving fund.
- Maintaining a feasibility fund.

Role of Transportation Commission

TTC has oversight of RMAs and adopted rules governing RMAs. The commission's philosophy toward RMAs is to encourage local control for the development and operation of transportation facilities in a region, while ensuring safety and accountability. Beginning with approval of a county's or city's request to create an RMA, the commission acts as a partner in all the major process and project activities undertaken by an RMA. At the outset, the commission evaluates the proposed RMA to assess its value to the region and to the state. For example, when the Laredo RMA in Webb County was established, commissioners used the following criteria to evaluate whether to go forward with its authorization:

- Sufficient public support.
- Improved efficiency to state transportation system.
- Local control over transportation planning.
- Access to surplus revenue for future transportation projects.
- Improved mobility and traffic safety.
- Plan consistency with the Texas Transportation Plan, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, and the MPO (8).

The commission's powers and duties include the establishment of minimum audit and reporting requirements and standards that affect the reporting requirements of RMAs, discussed below. The commission may also facilitate the ability of an RMA to leverage funding from diverse sources. For example, the commission may:

- Approve RMA use of federal funds.
- Approve RMA use of TxDOT funds and waive repayment of such funds.
- Make contributions of money, property, labor, or other things of value.

- Make loans to RMAs.
- Accept transfer of bonded turnpike project from RMAs.

Development of RMAs

As Figure 2 shows, the first RMA in Texas was created in Central Texas in 2002 after the 77th Texas Legislature enacted SB 342. It was after HB 3588 passed in 2003, when RMA powers were expanded, that the majority of RMAs were formed between 2004 and 2007. The most recently formed RMA is the Webb County RMA in the Laredo region of South Texas.

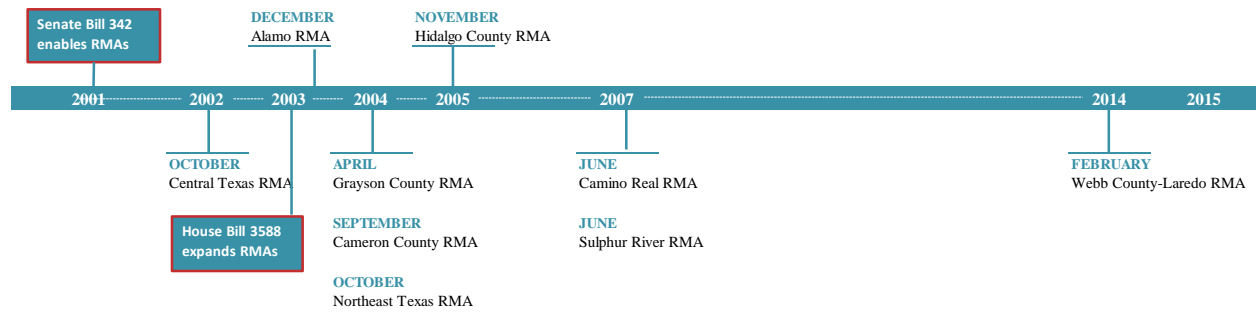


Figure 2. Timeline Showing Establishment Date of Each RMA.

Figure 3 shows the counties where RMAs are located and basic demographic information about each area.

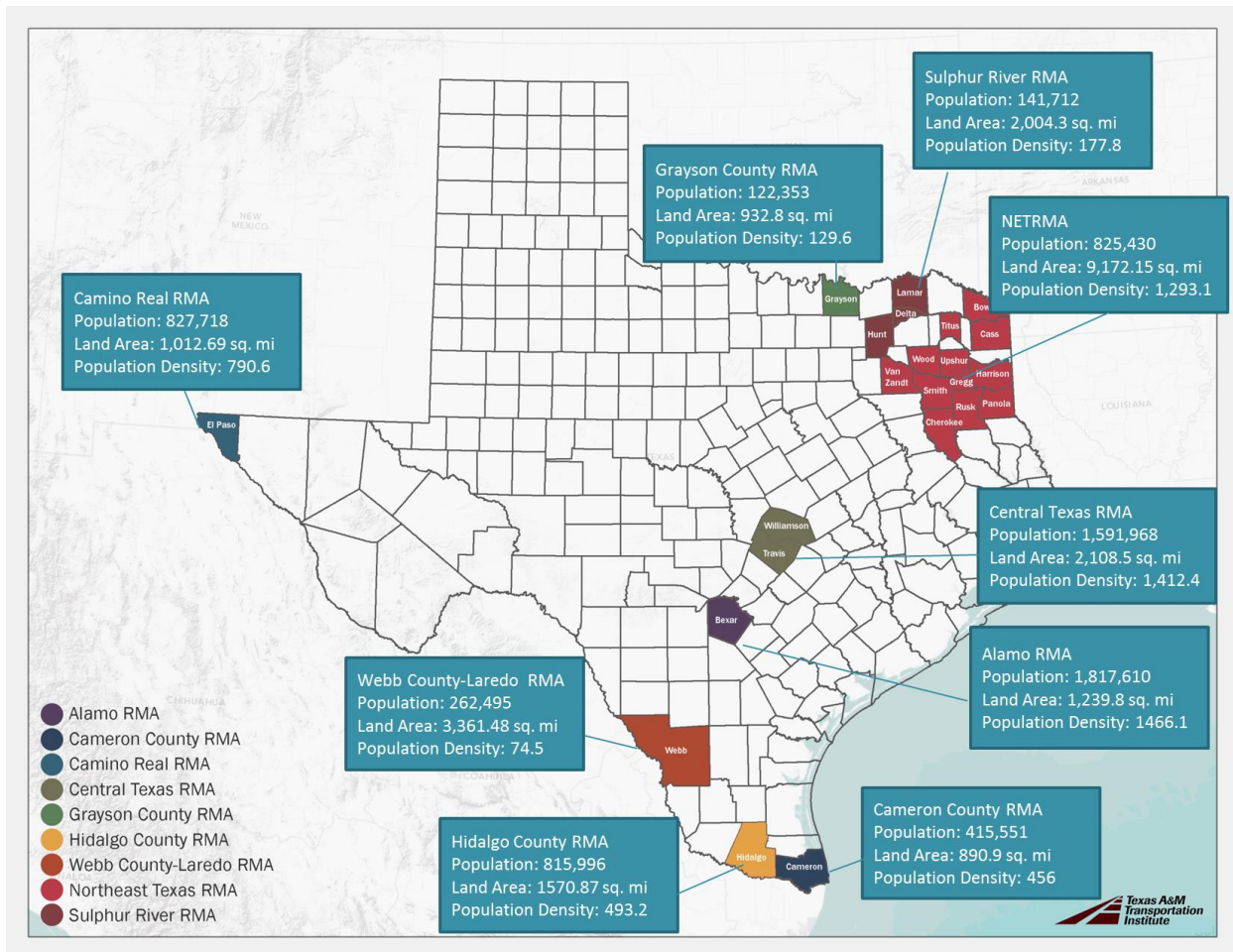


Figure 3. Texas RMAs.

The 77th legislative session in 2001 and the 78th session in 2003 saw the creation and expansion of RMA responsibilities, project types, and scope of activities. In the intervening years, the Texas legislature has passed a total of 38 bills affecting RMAs. Some bills expanded those powers; some contracted them. For example, in 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature passed SB 792, which imposed a number of restrictions on toll projects developed under CDAs, one of Texas’s mechanisms for forming public/private partnerships.

On balance, the legislature has increased the project scope, purpose, and financing tools that RMAs may use. Today, RMAs are authorized to implement a wide range of multimodal transportation projects that include airports, sea ports, rail, parking facilities, transit systems, public utility facilities, and more. RMAs also now have many finance tools available to them to finance transportation projects including bonding authority, toll project revenue, public and private grants and loans, and more. RMAs can also acquire or condemn property for projects, enter into public-private partnerships, within the limits established by the legislature, and set rates for the use of transportation facilities.

Bills filed during the 84th legislative session in 2015 were incremental in how they addressed RMAs. There were five bills enacted in the 84th legislative session that addressed minor issues associated with an RMA's authority, including oversized/overweight permitting (HB 1969) and notice requirements for public meetings (SB 679). These enacted bills did not call for significant changes to RMA powers or duties.

There were several bills introduced in the 84th legislature that failed but sought to reduce RMA authority and increase legislative scrutiny of RMAs. HB 3114 (9) and its companion SB 1184 (10) both called for state audit and review of RMAs, as well as a change in RMA governance, shifting more board appointment authority to county commissioners. HB 528 (11) and SB 721 (12) both called for RMAs to undergo a sunset review, as though they were state agencies (both bills would have exempted RMAs from being abolished after a sunset review). SB 1150 (13) called for the repeal of their enabling legislation altogether. From increased scrutiny of RMA finances and project activity to outright repeal of RMAs, the attempted legislative actions indicate both an increased awareness and interest in RMAs by the 84th legislature, but also a growing scrutiny of RMAs.

Eligibility for Establishing an RMA

RMAs are created at the request of one or more counties, or of the associated cities such as El Paso, Laredo, Brownsville, McAllen, or Port Aransas (14). First, the County Commissioners Court must authorize the creation of an RMA. Petitions for the creation of an RMA are submitted to the chairman of the transportation commission and reviewed by TxDOT. Counties or cities may be deemed ineligible by TTC if the application reveals an RMA whose council does not reflect a geographic representation and appointment process that adequately represents its local political subdivisions that would be affected by the creation of an RMA. Petitions for the creation of an RMA must include:

- An adopted resolution from the commissioner's court of each county indicating its approval of the creation by the county of an RMA.
- A description of how the RMA would improve mobility in the region.
- A description of a potential candidate transportation project or system of projects the RMA may undertake depending on study outcomes, including:
 - An explanation of how the project or system of projects will be consistent with the appropriate policies, strategies, and actions of the statewide Texas Transportation Plan, and if appropriate, with the MTP developed by MPOs.
 - A brief description of any known environmental, social, economic, or cultural resource issues, such as impacts on wetlands and other water resources, endangered species, parks, neighborhoods, businesses, historic buildings or bridges, and archeological sites.

- The name and address of any individuals or organizations known to be opposed to any element of the project or system of projects, and a description of any known controversies concerning the project or system of projects.
- A preliminary financing plan for the project or system of projects, which shall include an estimate of the following information, if available to the petitioner:
 - Total estimated cost, including planning, design, right of way acquisition, environmental mitigation, and construction.
 - Proposed financing, specifying the source and use of the funds, including debt financing and department contributions, identified as a loan or a grant.
- A commitment by the RMA to be fully responsible for identifying all environmental permits issues and commitments, obtaining all required environmental permits, and other required environmental approvals.
- A brief description of any other transportation projects the petitioner is currently considering to be developed by the RMA.
- The representation criteria and the appointment process for board members (14).

Petitioners must also show that an RMA's presence in the region and its proposed projects align with the Commission's rationale for approving an RMA. Since the establishment of the first RMA, in Central Texas (15), through the most recent, in Webb County, that rationale has remained almost unchanged. If the commission finds that a proposed RMA will directly benefit the state, local governments, and the traveling public, and will improve the efficiency of the state transportation system, it may authorize the establishment of the RMA. This rationale was expressed most recently in the creation of the Webb County RMA (16):

The commission finds that creation of the RMA will result in direct benefits to the state, local governments, and the traveling public, and will improve the efficiency of the state's transportation systems. The RMA will benefit the state by constructing needed roadway projects, such as the projects identified in the county's petition, as the county's initial project and other potential candidate projects. The RMA will benefit local governments by increasing local control over transportation planning and through additional transportation projects that may be funded through surplus revenue earned by the RMA. The traveling public will also benefit through improved mobility and traffic safety throughout the region encompassed by the RMA. The RMA will improve the efficiency of the state's transportation systems through the construction of the initial project and other potential candidate projects, which will enhance mobility and safety within

these segments of the state highway system, and through the development and financing of additional projects in the future.

RMA Governance

RMA governance is defined by the Texas Administrative Code Chapter 370. An RMA board of directors is composed of an odd number of appointed directors with representation from each county and a presiding officer appointed by the Governor (2). Additional members may be appointed at the time of initial formation to ensure fair representation of participating and affected counties. Directors are appointed to two-year terms by the commissioner's court of the represented county and may be reappointed at the discretion of the appointing entity. TTC may refuse creation of an RMA if it determines that the proposed board will not fairly represent participating counties. RMA boards may also hire an executive director and staff to operate the RMA and carry out duties assigned by the board. Executive directors serve at the pleasure of the board of directors. Board members are not compensated.

There are few limitations on who may serve on the board of an RMA. People who may not serve include elected officials, a non-resident of one of the counties within the RMA boundaries, an employee of TxDOT, someone employed by a governmental entity from within the RMA boundaries, or a property owner whose land may be acquired for an RMA project, if at the time of the appointment, it was known that the land would be so acquired (7).

Reporting Requirements

Each year, an RMA is required to submit reports to cities and counties within the RMA, TxDOT, and to TTC (2). Those requirements include:

- Financial and operating reports to each county or city that is a part of the RMA (14).
- Compliance and project reports to the executive director of TxDOT (14):
 - The compliance report lists each duty that the RMA is required to perform and indicates that the RMA has performed that requirement.
 - The project report describes the progress made during that year on each transportation project or system of projects of the RMA, including the initial project for which the RMA was created.

Based on the reported documentation that researchers were able to locate, RMAs have some latitude in the manner and format in which they provide compliance, project, financial, and operating reports to the public via their websites. Based on RMA websites, the Alamo RMA reports audited financial statements back to 2008, while the CTRMA reports its audited financial statements back to 2011 (17, 18). The Hidalgo RMA reports financials back to 2008, and annual reports back to 2011 on its website. Within the reports themselves, different levels of investments lead to differences in what is contained the report and how it is listed. For example,

in an asset heavy region like CTRMA, net assets are broken down by current assets, restricted assets, capital assets, and bond issuance costs detailed according to total assets and liabilities. In an asset light region like Alamo RMA, net assets are simply broken down by current assets, non-current assets, invested in capital assets, net of related debt, unrestricted assets, and total net assets. Variances in what was reported were found throughout the finance reports and annual reports, but all finances were found to be in line with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Research did not confirm to what extent investigations into the reporting accuracy of RMA annual and financial reports were undertaken by local and state government entities.

Based on the compliance report requirements, RMAs must “maintain...books and records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States and shall have an annual financial and compliance audit of such books and records” (19). In addition, there is a requirement to have the financial report independently audited by a professional accounting service. As far as project-level reporting requirements within the compliance report there were no specific requirements found.

Coordination with Other Entities

RMAs were formed to facilitate the funding and implementation of regional transportation projects in support of local jurisdictions. In most cases, this means a cooperative relationship with their host counties, TxDOT, MPO, and other local entities. MPOs typically do not own nor operate transportation systems and do not design or implement the projects priorities they establish in the transportation planning process. MPOs identify and evaluate improvements for their respective regions and guide transportation investments for their region including seeking participation from relevant agencies such as RMAs. The MTP that is prepared by the region’s MPO includes the policies, strategies, and projects for the future. The evidence for this cooperative relationship is in the integration of RMA transportation projects into the MPO planning and programming processes. RMA projects (or project plans), are included in an MPO’s long range plans, and the four year transportation improvement program known as the TIP. In most cases, the RMA is represented at the region’s MPO on either the MPO’s policy board, or the MPO TAC. Table 5 pairs the RMA with the corresponding MPO for its region. Hunt County, part of the Sulphur River RMA, is within the Dallas-Fort Worth MPO planning area boundary. The 12-county NETRMA includes three MPOs within its region.

RMAs are not always formally engaged in cooperative transportation development with RPO because many RMA projects are within a metropolitan boundary and outside an RPO’s planning area; or RPO planning boundaries may not coincide with the RMA boundaries, and coordination of rural transportation issues generally occur at the TxDOT district with local and county officials where RPOs are not in existence. However, the 12-county NETRMA coincides with many areas of the 14-county East Texas RPO, and there are opportunities for coordination. Rural project planning and programming is a cooperative process involving the RPO and TxDOT District and includes the RMA where they coincide.

Table 5. RMAs with Corresponding MPOs.

RMA	MPO
Alamo	Alamo Area
Cameron County	Harlingen-San Benito
Camino Real	El Paso County
Central Texas	Capital Area
Grayson County	Sherman- Dennison
Hidalgo County	Hidalgo County
Webb County	Laredo
Northeast Texas	Tyler
	Longview
	Texarkana
Sulphur River	(Hunt County is in the 12-county Dallas-Fort Worth MPO)

RMAs coordinate with multiple jurisdictions and agencies. Smith and Gregg Counties helped create the NETRMA to capitalize on opportunities to develop the Loop 49 Toll Project and other projects. One of the main reasons behind the development of NETRMA was a desire to improve not only transportation mobility and access to these towns, but also their respective economic futures (4).

RMAs can also bridge funding gaps for rural counties. The Sulphur River RMA identified a regionally significant project for the three member counties. The 10.4-mile roadway expansion project inside Delta County provided four lane access through Hunt, Delta, and Lamar Counties to I-30. Since Delta County did not have the funding to support a \$38.5 million loan on its own, the three counties formed the Sulphur River RMA to advance a regional transportation improvement for the region. The formation of the Sulphur River RMA enabled Lamar County to use its tax dollars beyond its borders in order to support the Sulphur River RMA in developing this regionally significant transportation project. By creating an RMA, the region was able to bridge a funding gap that existed in Delta County and secure a SIB loan to develop a non-toll road to benefit mobility for all three counties in the region.

RMAs have provided an increased opportunity for local jurisdictions to develop transportation facilities in their regions. Because an RMA can independently generate revenue for their region’s transportation-related projects, it is less dependent on competing for limited state and federal funding sources. RMAs can accelerate projects using access to financial resources and innovative financing, including:

- Federal TIFIA loans.
- TxDOT-based financial assistance agreements.
- SIB loans.
- Funding from TRZ.

- Bonds based on local specialty taxes.
- Inter-local agreements (bill backs to MPOs, counties, cities, etc. for planning and administrative support services).

As a result, RMA projects can be more financially competitive in the project prioritization and selection processes at TxDOT, MPOs, and municipal governments.

RMA: Current Status

RMA in Texas exhibit unique demographics, geography, project rosters, mobility traits, financial resources, and financial mechanisms. Some RMA operate in a largely urbanized setting, while others are more rural and focus on a single project or facility such as an airport or highway.

RMA Mobility Data

Data displayed illustrate the demographic makeup of the RMA's entire region, the current extent of the transportation network in each region, and the extent of congestion and demand for mobility improvements. Figure 4 shows the total number of lane miles that exist within each RMA service area (not lane miles of RMA projects) for each RMA. NETRMA has the most number of rural lane miles because NETRMA includes nine rural counties. In contrast, the Central Texas RMA and Alamo RMA have the largest number of urban lane miles because they are located in metropolitan areas of Austin and San Antonio.

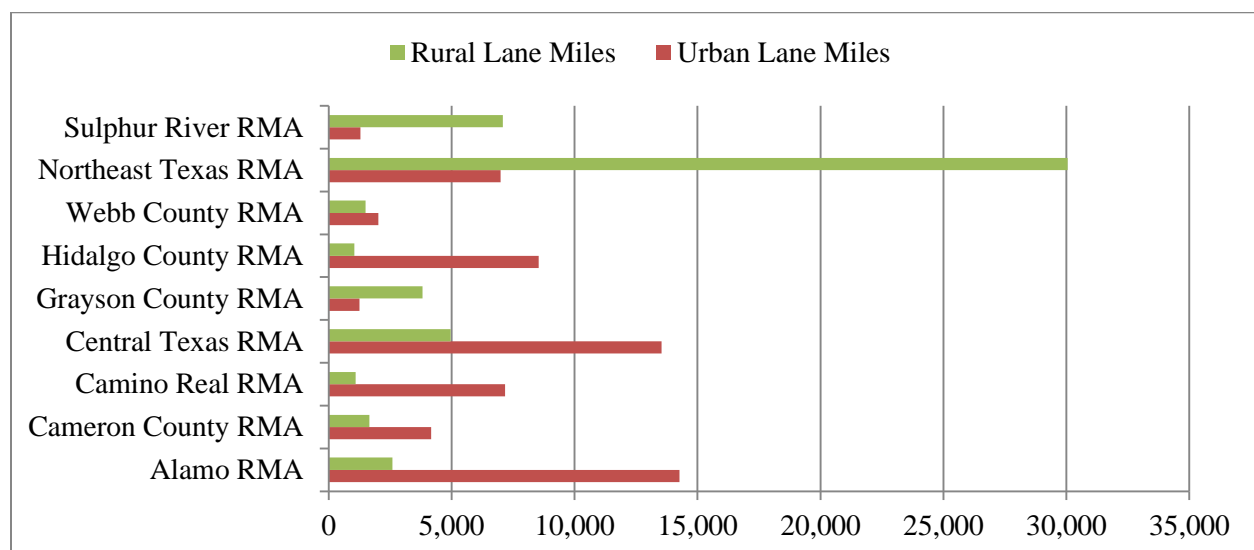


Figure 4. Total Number of Lane Miles in Regional Mobility Authorities Service Area (20).

Figure 5 shows the total number of congested roadways in the 2014 Texas Top 100 list located within each RMA's jurisdiction. The Central Texas RMA has the most with 12 congested roadways from the list. Four of the RMA do not have any of the most congested roadways in the Top 100 located within their jurisdiction.

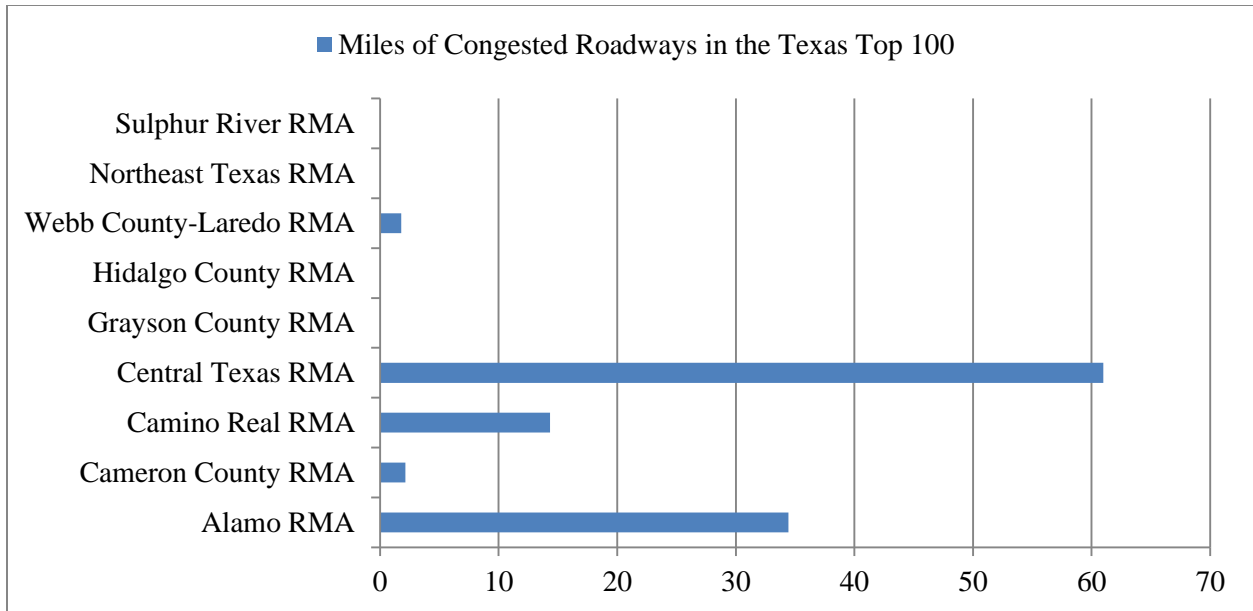


Figure 5. Lane Miles of Congested Roadways in the Top 100 (21).

Figure 6 shows the total VMT within each RMA's region. VMT is a broad measure of travel levels and can be affected by population and economic activity. VMT is the sum of distances traveled by all motor vehicles in a specified system of highways for a given period of time and is calculated by multiplying the average daily traffic by the length of the road section and the length of the time period. The Alamo RMA has the largest VMT at over 40 million, while Grayson County RMA has the lowest VMT at just over 3.5 million. NETRMA's apparently high level of VMT is because it includes 12 counties.

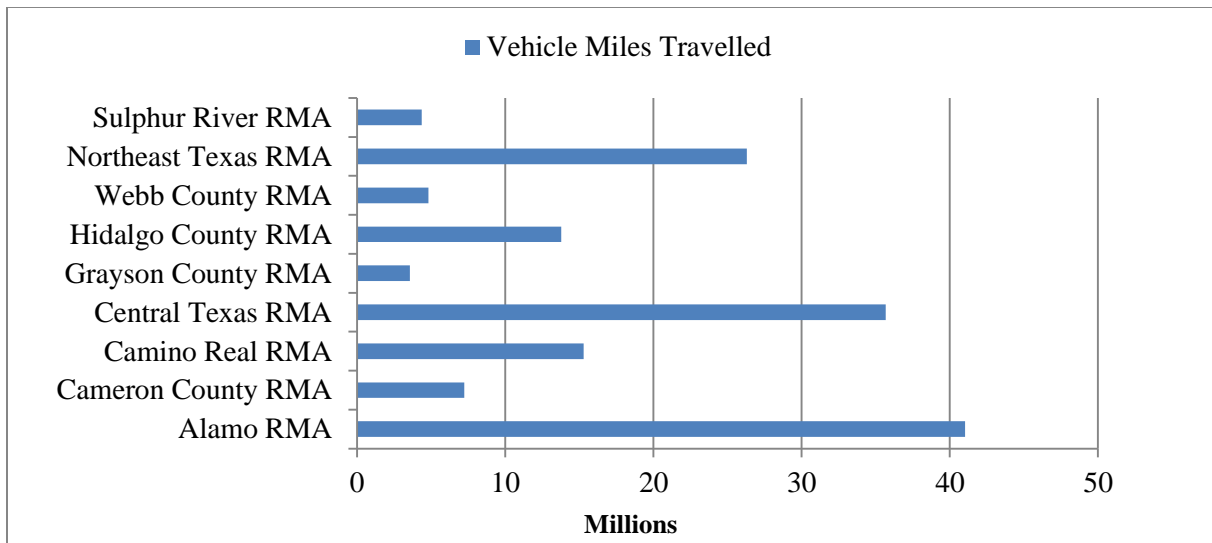


Figure 6. Number of VMT within Each RMA (20).

Figure 7 shows the total number of centerline freeway miles within each RMA’s jurisdiction. The Alamo RMA has the largest number of freeway miles at 1,304, while the Grayson County RMA has only 118 freeway miles.

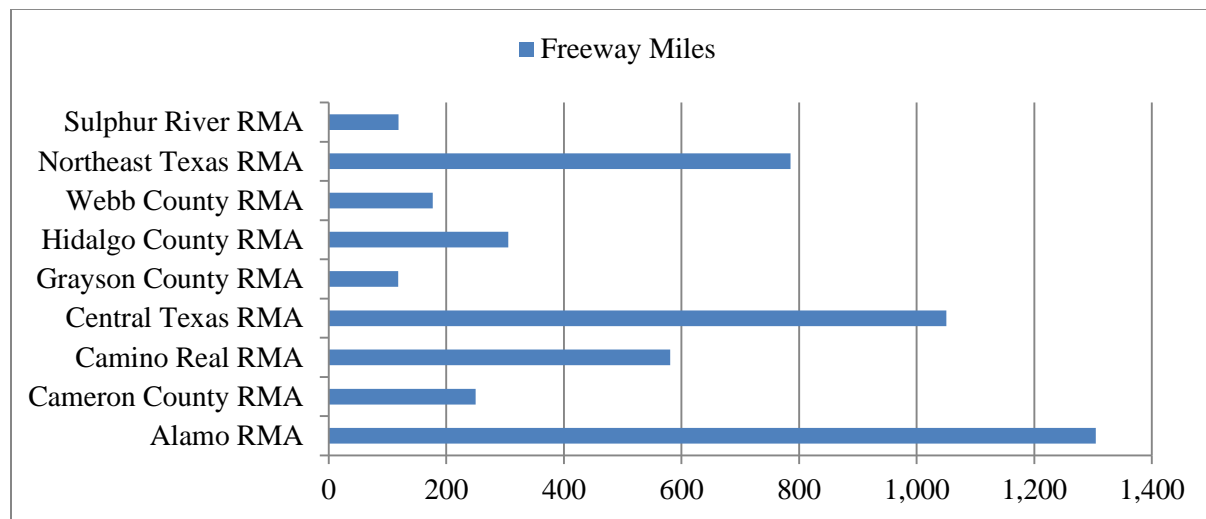


Figure 7. Number Miles within Each RMA (20).

RMA Financial Data

RMAs are subject to an annual audit of its books and accounts by a certified public accountant. TTC may also initiate an independent audit of the RMA or its activities at any time it deems appropriate (7). Financial data for RMAs was largely retrieved from RMA audited financial reports and RMA annual reports to TxDOT. RMA financial data can be used to reflect the level of RMA transportation project development activity. Financial statements are mostly noted as having been prepared in conformity with GAAP as applied to governmental units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles.

Figure 8 shows the assets and liabilities for all RMAs, which is reflective of the amount of construction-based debt, or infrastructure-related assets held within the RMA. As of 2013, the Central Texas RMA contained nearly \$2 billion in assets and liabilities. Researchers were unable to obtain financial reporting for current assets and liabilities from the Webb County-Laredo RMA, Sulphur River RMA, and Grayson County RMA. In the case of Grayson County, they provide a financial overview from 2013 dating back to 2009, but the overview does not appear to have an independent auditor, although they also do not have any investments warranting this type of review. The Webb County-Laredo RMA is relatively new (2014) and has only recently completed its website, which does not contain any financial reporting (22). Sulphur River RMA does not provide its financial report electronically, but this does not mean that this reporting does not exist.

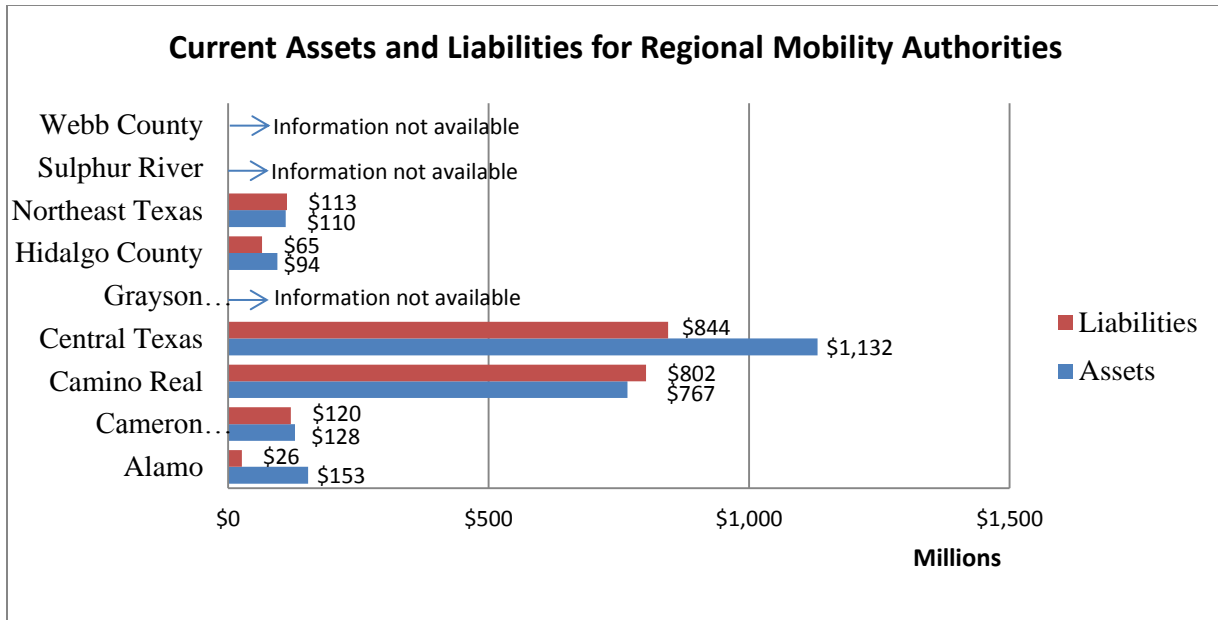


Figure 8. Current Assets and Liabilities across Regional Mobility Authorities.²

Figure 9 shows the cumulative expenses and revenues for all RMA's based on historic annual financial reports. As of 2013, the Central Texas RMA contains the largest operating budget with nearly \$800 million in expenses and revenues, followed by Camino Real RMA with just over \$400 million. The Grayson County RMA had the smallest operating budget totaling just over \$78,000. Data are unavailable for Webb County because they are new. The Sulphur River RMA's only project was SH 24, which was constructed using a \$4.4 M SIB loan.

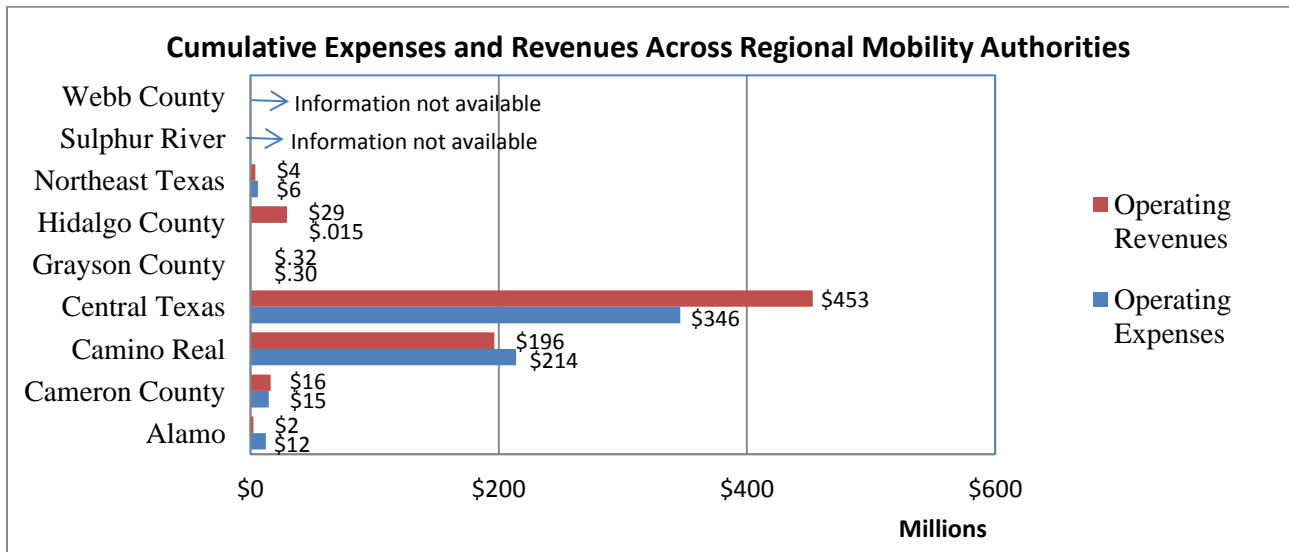


Figure 9. Cumulative Expenses and Revenues for Regional Mobility Authorities.³

² Sources are derived from the latest annual financial statements of each RMA for all listed figures.

³ Sources are derived from the combined addition of expenses and revenues listed in multiple annual financial statements for each RMA.

Table 6 presents the latest information on the types of RMA projects and costs incurred as of the date of this report. Because many projects are far from complete, this table attempts to capture the project cost incurred up to this point based on the latest information available. The majority of projects being developed by RMAs are for highway capacity and operational improvements. RMA projects also include rail improvements, airport improvements, transit projects, and bike-share programs.

Table 6. RMA Project Summaries.⁴

RMA	Project Types	Total Incurred Project Costs	Funding Sources	Number of Tolled Facilities	Number of CDAs
Alamo	Highway Capacity and Operational Improvements Ramps, Interchanges Environmental Assessments	\$197.1 M (23)	CDAs, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), TIFIA, TxDOT, Proposition 12 and 14 funds (23).	2 Planned (24)	0
Cameron County	Highway Capacity Bridge Expansion Rail Improvements Environmental Assessments	\$419.6 M (25)	TxDOT Grants, Tiger II Grant, ARRA, Bonds based on Vehicle Registration Fee ²⁶	1 Open (27)	2 Planned (28)
Camino Real	Highway Capacity and operational Improvements Transit/Streetcar Bike share	\$348 M (29)	TxDOT Grants, SIB, CDAs, City of El Paso, El Paso MPO, UTEP	1 open, 1 Planned (29)	1 (28)
Central Texas	Highway Capacity and Operational Improvements Environmental Assessments	\$2.19 B (30, 31)	CDAs, TxDOT Grants, Federal TIFIA grants, Senior Lien Bonds	3 (27)	2 (28)
Grayson County	Aviation Improvements Highway Capacity Feasibility Study Thoroughfare Plan	\$95.4 M (32)	Federal ARRA, Grayson County, TxDOT Aviation Grant, Walton Development Funding Agreement, TxDOT Grant (33)	0	0
Hidalgo County	Highway Capacity International Bridge Environmental Assessment	\$14.21 M (3, 34)	CDAs, Bonds from \$10.00 vehicle registration fee, Intergovernmental agreements with local cities, TxDOT Grants (35).	0	2
Webb County	No project information.				
Northeast Texas	Highway 49 Toll Road Rail plan Transit Planning	\$242.2 M	TxDOT Financial Assistance, SIB, TxDOT Toll Equity Loans, Rusk Inter-local Agreement, TxDOT Grants (36)	1	2
Sulphur River	Highway Capacity	\$3.8 M (37)	SIB (38)	0	0

⁴ Project costs and other data in the table were obtained from financial statements, annual budgets, strategic plans, and annual reports for each RMA.

Funding sources used by RMAs to develop transportation projects are generally a combination of several sources and programs. The funding sources include SIB loans, grants, and program funding from TxDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sources, local governments agreements, bond financing, and in some cases, CDAs. Legislation passed since the original enabling legislation for RMAs also open up new avenues of funding sources such as the allowance of certain regions to collect and devote an additional vehicle registration fee of \$10.00 toward their RMA for the purpose of project development.

Local support and matching funds provided by RMAs for transportation projects generally receive favorable ranking in project prioritization and programming. RMAs established with a firm charter and support from city, county, or MPOs demonstrate local project support. For example, Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority (CRRMA), created at the behest of the City of El Paso, also receives the benefit of administrative and in-kind services, including fiscal agent between the city and CRRMA. This strengthened its position when it applied for \$233 million revenue bonds to support the State Spur 601 project. CRRMA also attracted federal ARRA funding and \$30 million in SIB loans based on its partnering with the private sector in a CDA for the Americas interchange project. The state loan was provided as a result of dedicated funding from the City of El Paso's TRZ No. 2 to support the repayment of the loan.

A contrasting example is the Alamo RMA. Dedicated funding for transportation projects materialized from a special advanced transportation district created in 2005 that uses a sales tax to fund transit (1/2 of funds), city (1/4 of funds), and TxDOT (1/4 of funds) projects (39). There have been state grants in support of project funding, but based on records since the start of the Alamo RMA, there has been little local support for one of the primary avenues of financing, which are toll revenues. The RMA focused heavily on federal and state support to drive project development, and in 2008, approximately \$400 million in federal support was rescinded, which resulted in further project development delays (40).

Recently, Bexar County took over administration and costs of operating the Alamo RMA, and there have also been moves to increase local funding from a newly started \$10 vehicle registration fee. The vehicle registration fee that started in 2014 represents additional potential bonds to spur project development. As of late, planning level efforts have been put together to support the development of toll roads and managed lanes along Loop 1604 and U.S. 281, but funding and local support remains an issue with many comments having been received on recent public outreach phases of the planning effort, which required additional phases of public outreach (40).

Conclusions

This report presented an overview of RMAs, their origins, and current characteristics. In the 13 years since RMAs in Texas were formed, each RMA has addressed transportation and mobility challenges unique to their region. RMA projects cross all modes and include roadways, aviation, transit, port, and rail. Some of the RMAs addressed rural connectivity and others addressed metropolitan mobility. In some cases, RMAs completed very narrowly defined projects, and others used a combination of projects and strategies to address a particular corridor or on-going regional transportation issues. RMA projects and financing also ranged from relatively small highway or airport improvements to large multimillion dollar highway interchanges or toll roads.

- Central Texas RMA has a portfolio of strong central ownership of assets and has completed several mobility projects to address regional congestion issues. In comparison, other RMAs are involved on a much smaller scale as contributors to the redevelopment of the county, city, or state-owned infrastructure asset (Grayson, Sulphur River).
- Cameron County, Hidalgo County, and Camino Real (El Paso) all have freight needs that show in their suite of projects. Cameron County RMA is enabling improvements to railroad switch yards and border crossing infrastructure for freight traffic, while Hidalgo County is developing an oversize/overweight freight corridor to allow heavier Mexican trucks to use their road network for a fee.

The fact that RMAs may leverage so many different funding sources contributes to their ability to develop projects more quickly than would be possible under traditional government entities like city, county, or state agencies. Additionally, RMAs projects may include a broad range multimodal projects that are not limited to typical roadways and bridge projects. However, further research may be needed to show definitively if, and how much, project delivery was accelerated by RMAs versus traditional pay-as-you-go methods. RMAs have several attributes that place them in an advanced position in comparison to traditional project delivery. These include:

- Use of a more diverse funding structure:
 - Local TRZs.
 - Local vehicle registration fees.
 - Private CDAs.
 - Private revenue bonds.
 - SIB loans.
 - State TxDOT financial assistance grants.
 - Federal FHWA grants.

- Capacity to coordinate regional interests across multiple jurisdictions.
- Locally derived leadership.
- Multimodal project development that include passenger and freight rail facilities, ferries, airports, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, border crossing inspection stations, air quality improvement initiatives, public utility facilities, transit, and parking facilities.

Project Reporting

Funding for RMA-led projects is obtained from a mixture of funding sources. The format for reporting on project costs associated with these funds varies across RMAs and can be difficult to review. Since this project was initiated in 2014, many RMAs have improved and increased the information reported on their websites. RMAs would benefit from increased efforts to implement performance-based planning and performance reporting just as is occurring at TxDOT, MPOs, and state DOTs.

Both the efforts to locate financial and project information for this project and the concerns represented by filed (though not passed) legislation from the 84th legislative session indicate a need for more consistency and transparency in reporting. Researchers attempting to locate financial and project information had difficulty in accomplishing this task.

Overall, improved project reporting is needed. Annual reports and financially audited statements describe some project details, but lack details on current project expenditures, schedule vs. progress, and estimates for date of completion. Annual reports are often geared toward displaying the RMA's achievements, in a public-friendly brochure format that lack specific project management-level details. For example:

- The Camino Real RMA provides an annual report indicating the total debt accrued in support of completed projects, but it does not indicate the total cost of the projects. It provides information about current projects, and the financing that supports them, but there is little information on project budgets and schedule.
- The 2012 Alamo RMA annual report lists environmental development phases of projects but does not indicate the amount of dollars spent on the environmental development phase of the US 281 or Loop 1604 projects, nor does it indicate in yearly or financial terms where the evaluation stands in terms of the estimated completion date (41).
- The Cameron County RMA 2014 annual report provides projects that are underway such as the West Rail project but it does not detail the total project cost, and the year-to-year expenditures for the project on approach to completion (42).

Asset Ownership and Completed Project Accreditation

In many cases, an RMA completes what is termed a “redevelopment project,” which means combining funding from multiple sources, and overseeing the project as it is built, but in the end it will not be the owner or operator of the asset (43). Based on the review of annual and financial reports, it is unclear how many projects the RMAs are working on that will be owned and retained by the RMA and which will be developed by the RMA but passed off to other partners or agencies once finished. These projects are developed to benefit a region’s transportation network and should be attributed to RMAs who helped get them constructed. An effort by the state or commission to systematically track and recognize the RMAs for the transportation network benefits and economic benefits brought about by the completion of these projects in a systematic way was not found.

Documenting Interjurisdictional Decision Making

The evidence for RMA coordination with MPOs is seen in the frequent RMA representation on MPO boards and or TACs, and the inclusion of RMA projects in the MTP. As documented in the profiles in Appendix 2, RMAs operate in jurisdictions with multiple boundaries, (both national and international), agencies, and interests that all have a certain degree of involvement in seeing the coordination of a transportation system that works for them all. As a result, RMAs can perform a unique role in coordinating a wide variety of transportation system projects among a variety of partners leveraging a variety of funds.

Findings

Many of the questions raised by the findings of this research could be answered with improved reporting requirements and implementing performance-based planning and project management. These include:

- Simplified performance measures that are consistent with TxDOT performance measures and reporting, including:
 - Whether the project delivered on time and on budget.
 - Time and cost to complete preliminary engineering plans.
 - Time and cost to obtain environmental clearance.
 - Dollar volume of construction contracts awarded in the fiscal year.
 - The number of projects awarded in the fiscal year.
- Each RMA is unique in the mix of types of projects being implemented and in the variety of revenue and funding used to operate and implement projects. RMAs may apply for grants and loans provided by the TxDOT and the federal government. Although RMAs do not have taxing authority, RMAs may receive contributions from local governments

that have taxing authority and may apply for loans and grants. RMAs could improve reporting by identifying sources of funding more clearly to show if and when taxpayer dollars from the state highway fund were applied and where taxpayer dollars are used for RMA projects.

- RMAs can perform a unique role in coordinating a wide variety of transportation system projects among a variety of partners and leveraging a variety of funds. This role also presents challenges when communicating to the public the inherent complexity of the many different projects, revenue sources, and financing.
- RMAs, in comparison to other toll authorities, are not limited to roadways and bridges and have the authority to develop broader and multimodal projects including aviation, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. RMAs can provide a more regional approach to implementing projects in contrast to a county-by-county or city-by-city approach.
- RMA reporting requirements are minimal and may not capture detailed financial and operating data. Annual reports and financially audited statements describe some project details, but sometimes lack details on project expenditures, schedules, and progress. Annual reports are often geared toward displaying the RMA's achievements, in a public-friendly brochure format that lacks specific project management-level details. Project costs and transaction level expenditures are difficult to identify in RMA reports. Annual reports would be more informative if they contained a project performance section with the same reported performance categories and display results that also align with other RMAs and government agencies reporting requirements.
- The detail and depth of information reported by RMAs vary significantly. Some RMAs have very robust websites and comprehensive reports, whereas others contain only basic information. A central website or clearinghouse would improve the dissemination of RMA project data, financial data, and standardized reporting.
 - A possible template for the central clearinghouse website concept is the Central Texas RMA, which currently maintains a website that provides detailed project planning, development, and financial information for each project. Within the site are financial reports on current construction progress for three major projects underway that detail budget expenditures by percentage and by project phase.
 - Annual reports could contain a project performance section with the same reported performance categories and display results that also align with other RMAs and government agencies reporting requirements. RMAs could provide costs by project in the report, project funding sources, and project by owner of the asset once it is complete. Financial reporting that clearly defines assets.

- Archived records on project selection processes, interagency agreements, interjurisdictional agreements, disputes, and outcomes of projects selected on the associated RMA program.
- RMAs are governed by a board of directors that are appointed by county commissioners and are residents of the member county, but RMA board members cannot be elected officials or an employee of a government entity.

Appendix 1: RMA Profiles

RMA Profile: Alamo

History

TTC, finding that the proposed Alamo RMA (then called the Bexar County RMA) satisfied the requisite criteria for approval, created the RMA in December 2003. The Authority was established in 2004 by the Bexar County Commissioners Court with the intent to partner with TxDOT, the San Antonio-Bexar County MPO, and Bexar County to develop an initial 50-mile toll road network to include:

- New capacity on Loop 1604 from FM 471 (Culebra Road) to IH 35 (north).
- New capacity on US 281 from Loop 1604 (north) to the Comal County line.
- New capacity in the Northeast (IH 35) Corridor from Loop 1604 (north) to the Central Business District.
- New, direct connection ramps on Loop 1604 at IH 10 and at US 281 (44).

Since then these projects have been completed:

- IH 35 ENV Linkage Study.
- US 281 Superstreet.
- Loop 1604 Superstreet.
- US 281/Loop 1604 Interchange.
- US 281 EIS from Loop 1604 to Borgfeld Drive.

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is San Antonio. The area is 1239.8 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 1,817,610; and the population density is 1,466.1.

Mobility Data

Lane miles in RMA	16,857
Urban lane miles	14,264
Rural lane miles	2,593
Freeway Miles	1,304
Vehicle Mile Traveled	41,026,811
Top 100 Congested Roadways	7

Project Types

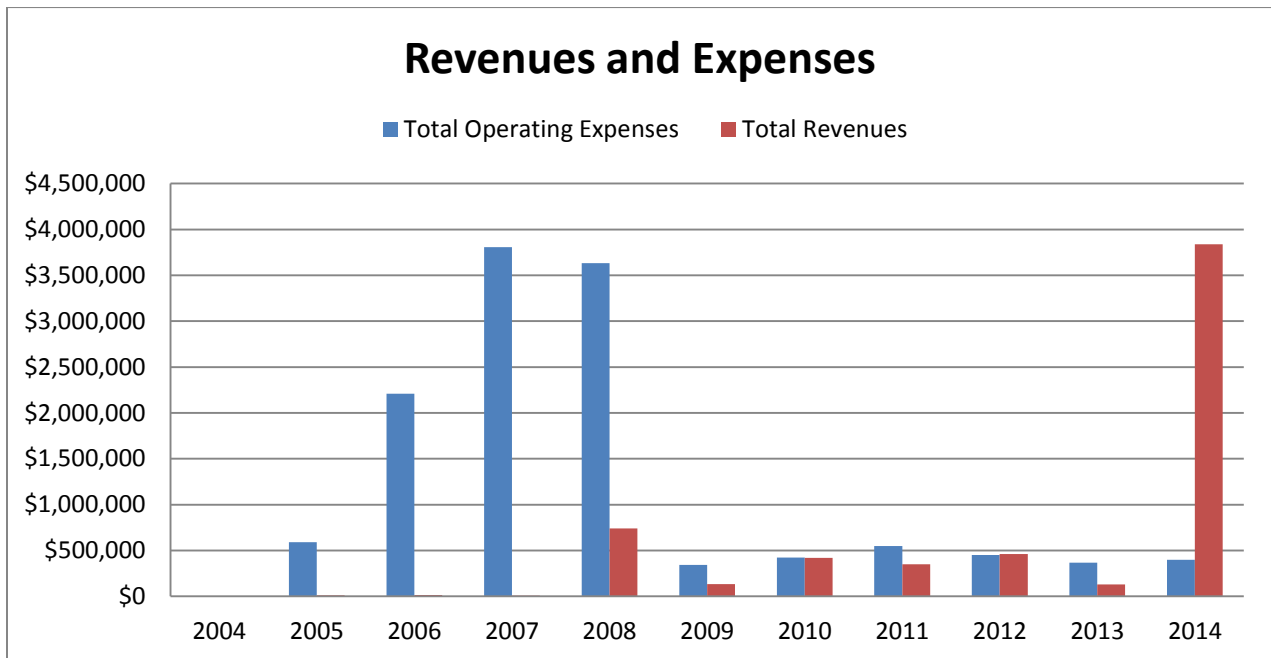
- Highway capacity.
- Operational improvements.
- Ramps.

- Interchanges.
- Environmental assessments.
- EIS.
- Traffic and revenue analysis.
- Connectivity.
- Mobility.
- Increased capacity.
- Feasibility studies.

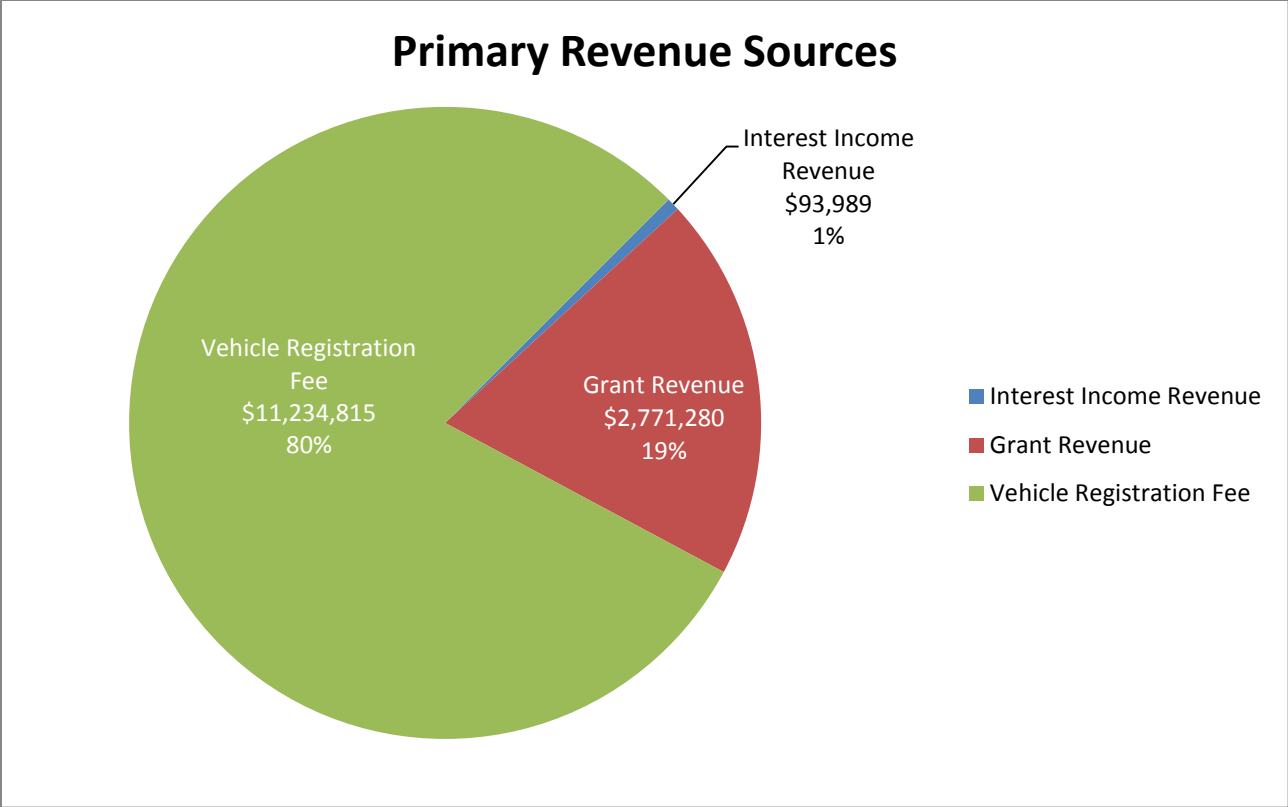
Total Incurred Project Costs: \$197.1 M

Finances

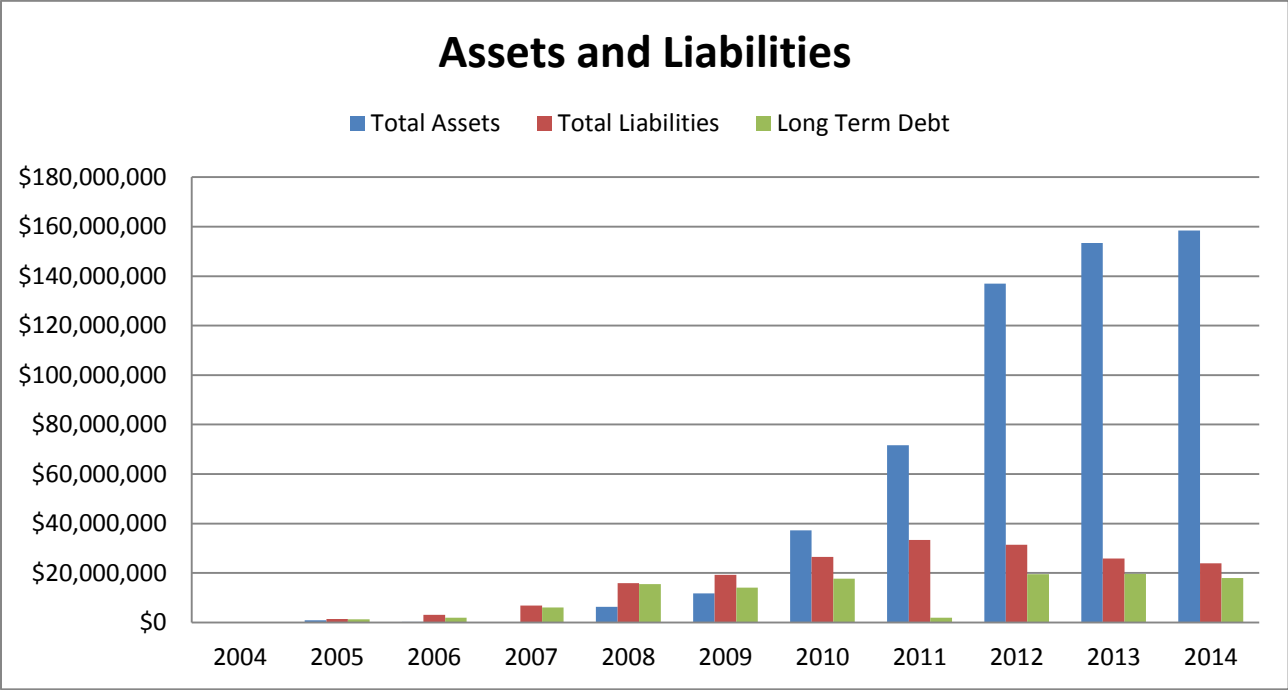
According to the 2009 financial audit, total operating revenue increased in 2008 and 2009 due to a grant received from the MPO and a loan received from TxDOT, which both totaled over \$15 million. Operating expenses and revenues are based on a mix of grants and tolls. Operating expenses were provided based on start-up loans and grants from TxDOT, Bexar County, and the City of San Antonio, totaling a little under \$9 million in loans and \$6 million in grants. Based on the financial reports, we were unable to separate grant sources as the information was reported inconsistently in the paragraph details, with some years indicating state and local grants, and other years not.



Alamo RMA Revenues and Expenses 2004–2014

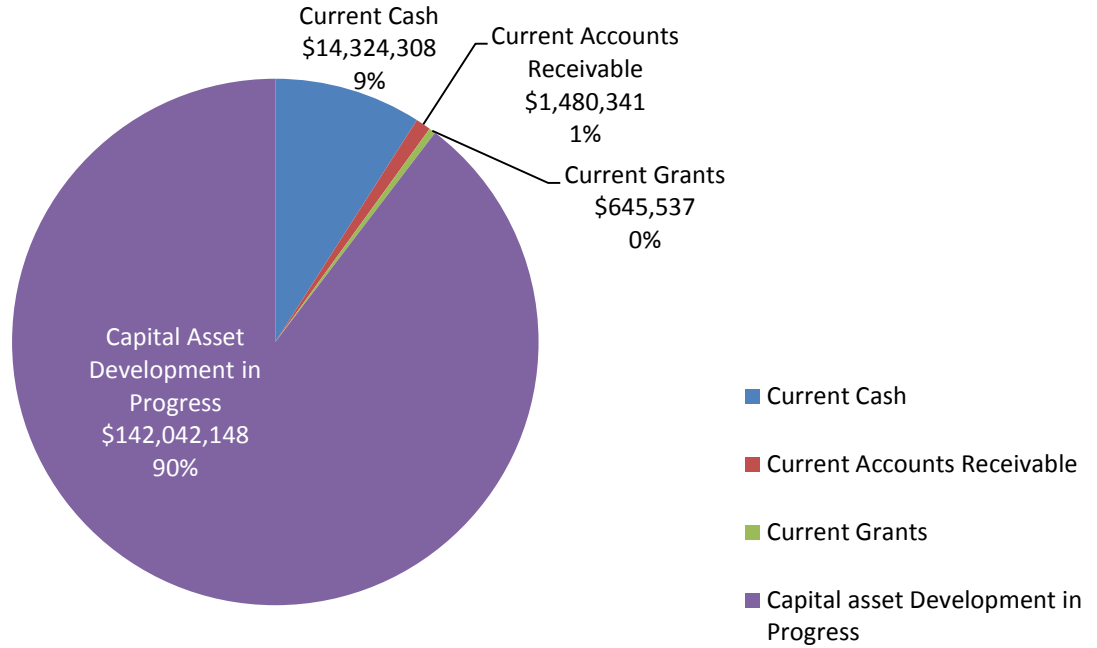


Alamo RMA Primary Revenue Sources



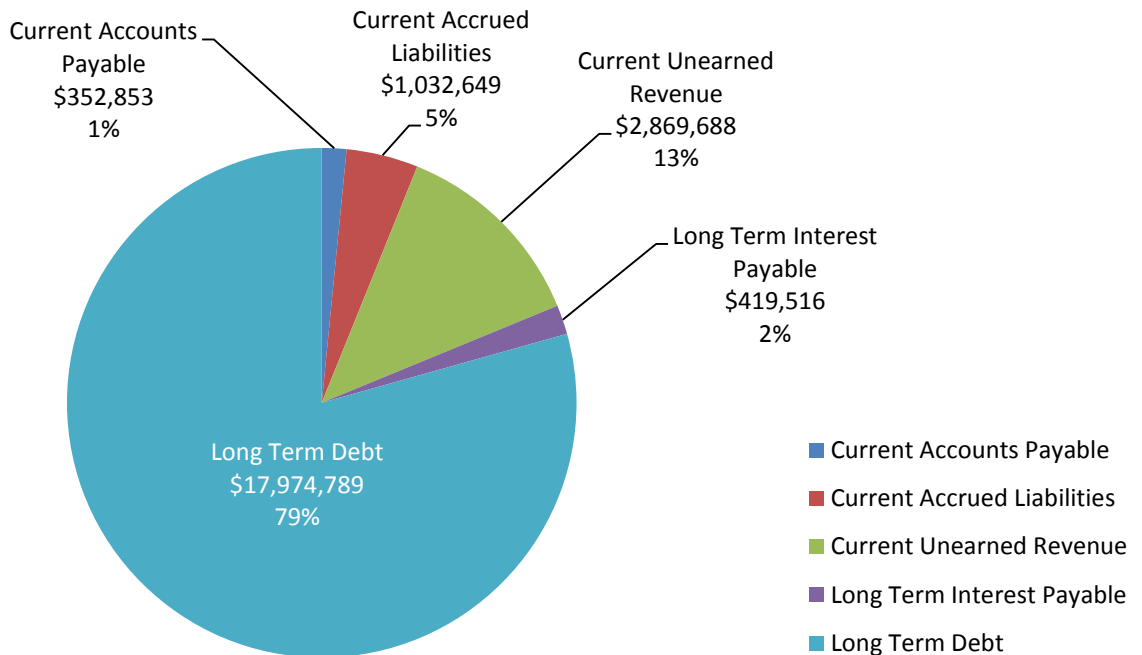
Alamo RMA Assets and Liabilities 2004–2014

2014 Asset Share by Percentage



Alamo RMA Asset Share 2014

2014 Liability Share by Percentage



Alamo RMA Liability Share 2014

Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (45)

US 281 North

\$2,666,496

US 281/Loop 1604 Interchange

Design and construction of four non-toll direct connectors between US 281 and Loop 1604 on the north side of San Antonio.

\$119,205,422

US 281 EIS

Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for US 281, working closely with the community to prepare an analysis of the corridor.

\$8,990,640

IH 35 Planning and Environmental Linkages Study

Begin the community discussion and visioning long-term improvements to IH 35 corridor, from FM 1103 into Downtown San Antonio.

\$45,774

US 281 Super Street

Operational and safety improvement for the US 281 corridor, designed to help ease use of this roadway in its highest traffic areas.

\$6,751,130

Loop 1604 EIS

\$10,304,153

Loop 1604 Super Street

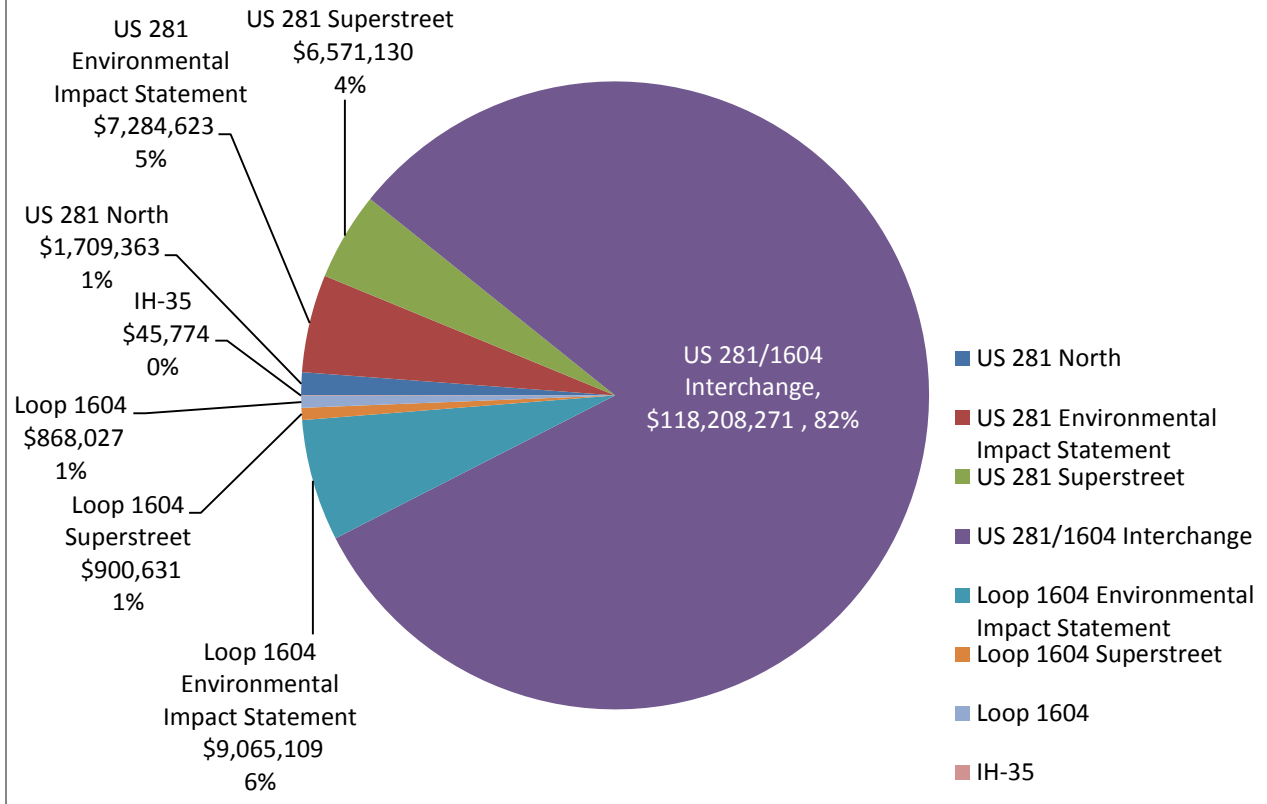
An operational and safety improvement for the Loop 1604 corridor, from Braun Road to SH 151 and Loop 1604, designed to help ease of use of in the roadway's highest traffic areas.

\$900,631

Loop 1604

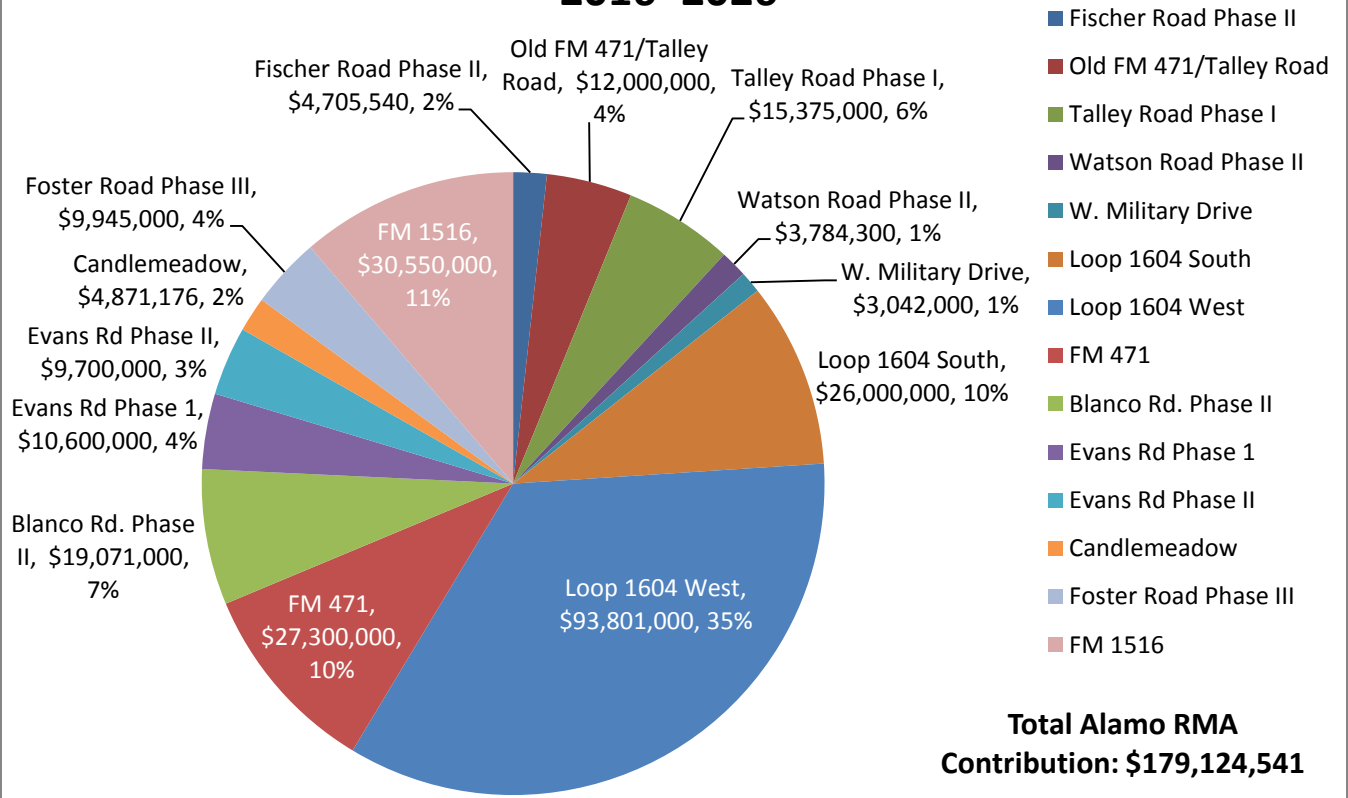
\$875,437

Asset Share by Project as of FY 2014

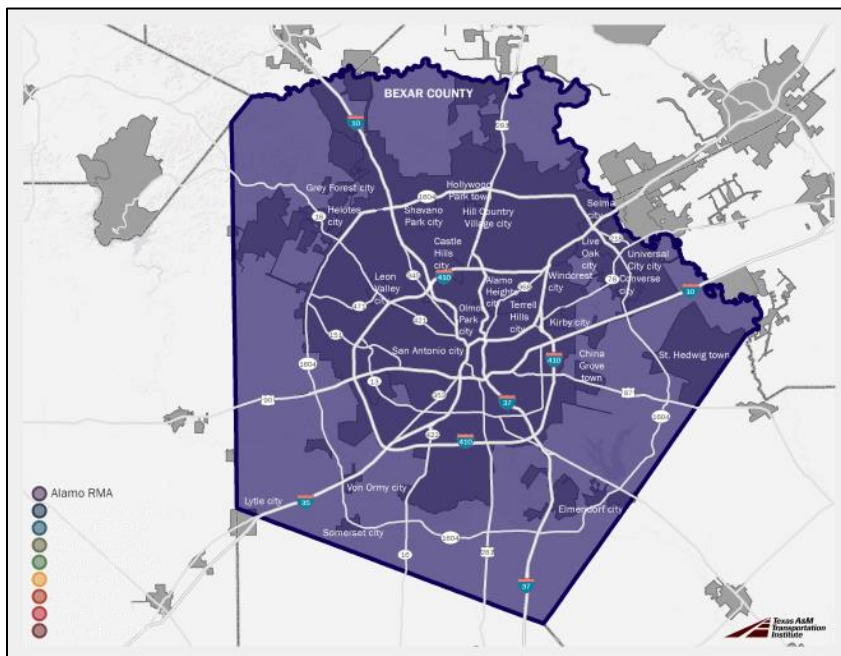


Alamo RMA Asset Share by Project as of 2014

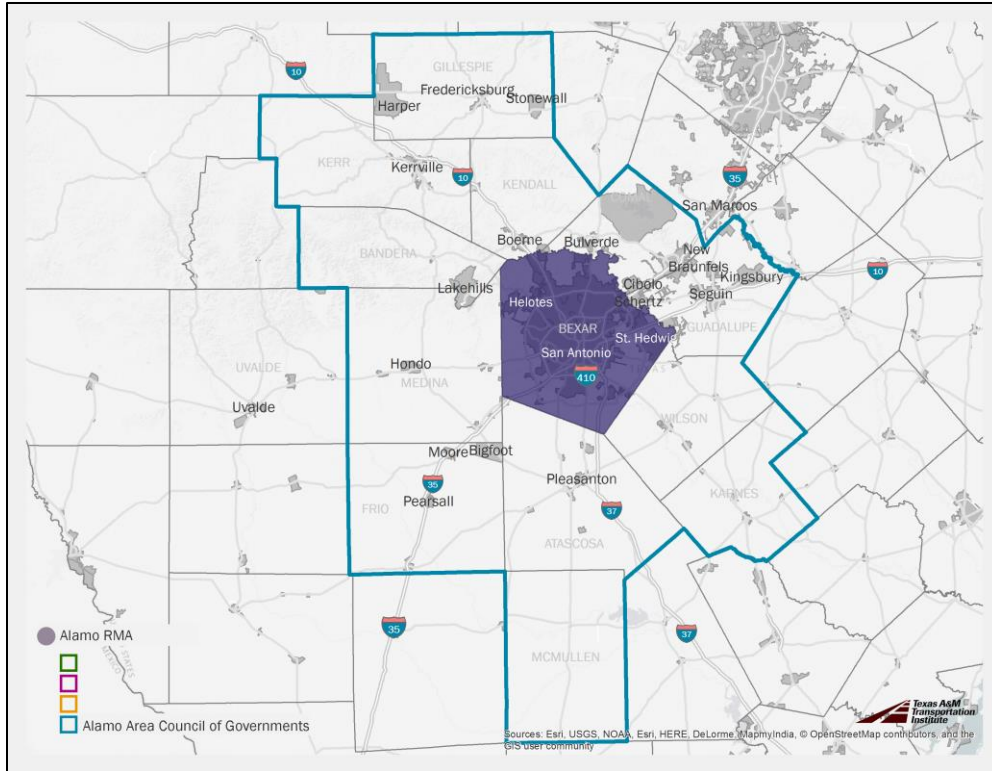
Proposed Vehicle Registration Fee-Based Projects 2016–2026



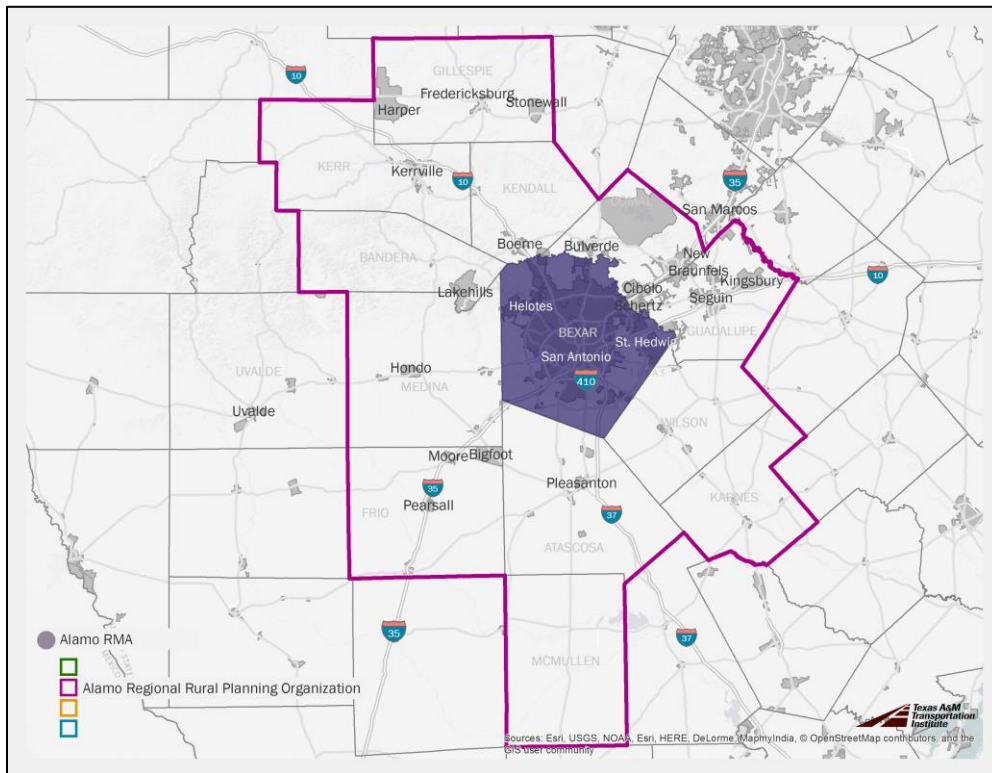
Alamo RMA Vehicle Registration Fee-Based Projects Planned from 2016–2026



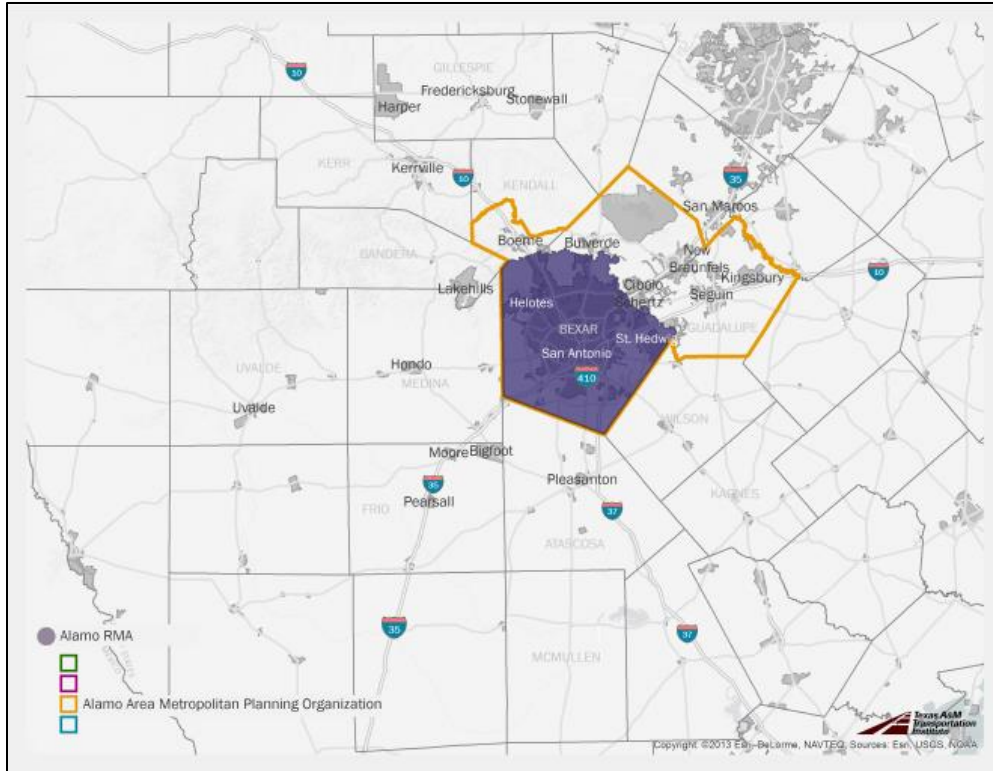
Alamo Regional Mobility Authority



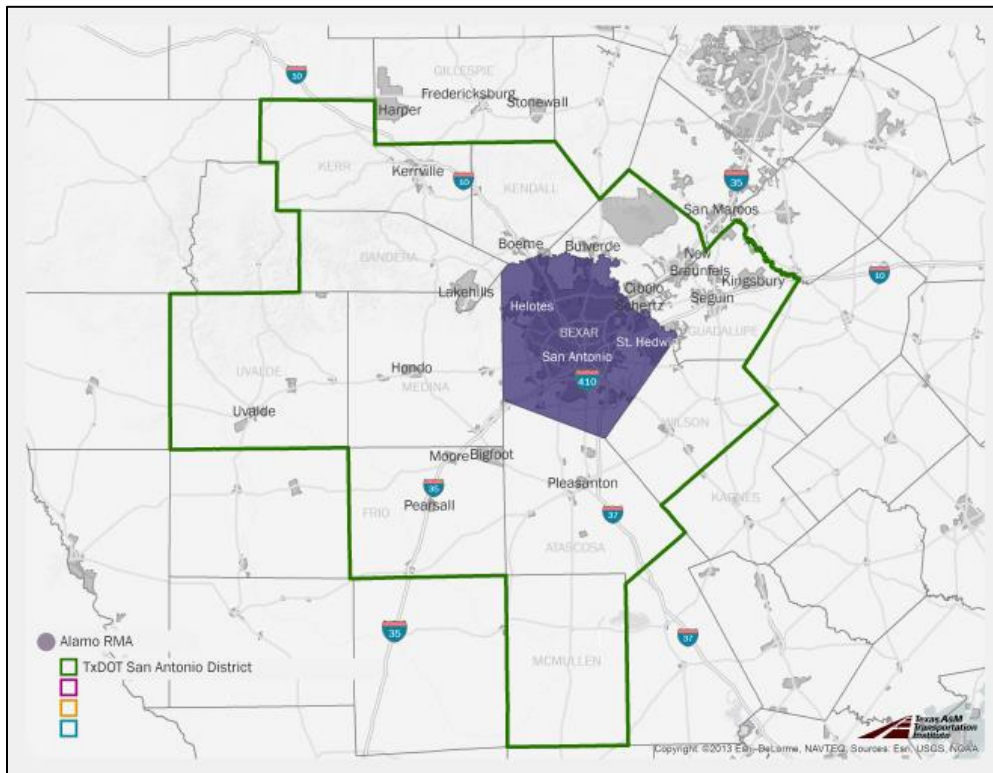
Alamo Area Council of Governments



Alamo Regional Rural Planning Organization



Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization



TxDOT San Antonio District

RMA Profile: Cameron County

History

TTC, finding that the proposed Cameron County RMA satisfied the requisite criteria for approval, created the RMA in September 2004. The projects that the RMA was initially authorized to develop consisted of an approximate 7.25-mile West Loop toll road network that would follow the current right of way of the Union Pacific Railroad beginning at US 77/83 and extend south to Palm Boulevard in the city of Brownsville. Additional projects in the founding resolution included SH 32 East Loop, South Padre Island 2nd Access Bridge, and FM 509. The West Loop project was intended to provide an important north-south corridor, a reliever route for some of the noncommercial traffic, and improved access to the Brownsville central business district (46).

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is Brownsville City. The area of the RMA is 890.9 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 415,551; and the population density is 456.

Mobility Data

Lane miles in RMA	5,824
Urban lane miles	4,165
Rural lane miles	1,660
Freeway Miles	250
Vehicle Mile Traveled	7,219,313
Top 100 Congested Roadways	1

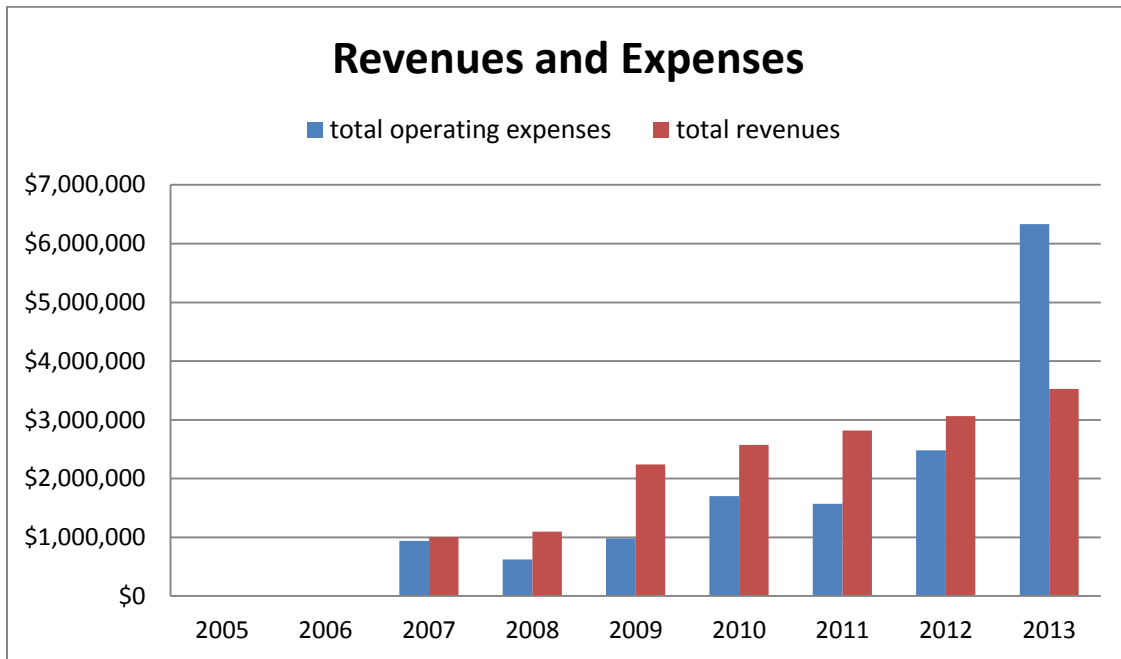
Project Types

- Highway capacity.
- Bridge expansion.
- Rail improvements.
- Environmental assessments.
- Interstate upgrades.
- Toll projects.
- Partnerships with sea port (Brownsville Navigation District).
- Partnerships with international bridges in both Hidalgo and Cameron County.

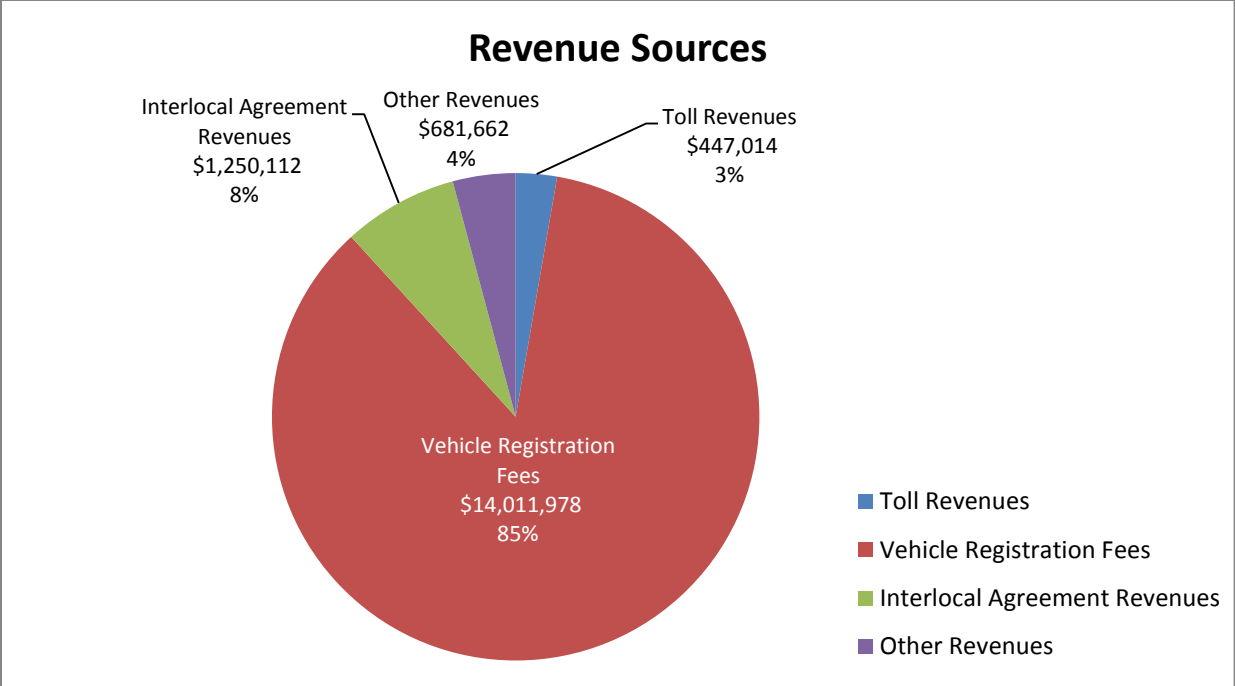
Total Incurred Project Costs: \$419.6 M

Finances

Expenses for the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) remained on an even keel, until 2013 when a \$3.4 million increase occurred due to the completion of work provided by the RMA for the US 77/IH 69 Project. These expenses had been held off as a result of having been capitalized in the prior years as the services were provided and then expensed in 2013. Of the \$3.4 million that was expensed, \$3.3 million was related to an advance funding agreement for voluntary local government contributions on the US 77 project. The scope of this project was for the CCRMA to perform the environmental assessment and mitigation along with the architectural and engineering services for the construction of main lanes on US 77 from FM 1018 to 0.3-mile north of FM 498. This project is not an asset for the CCRMA and was a voluntary contribution to TxDOT, which was expensed in FY2013 (47).



Cameron County RMA Revenues and Expenses 2007–2013



Cameron County RMA Revenues Sources

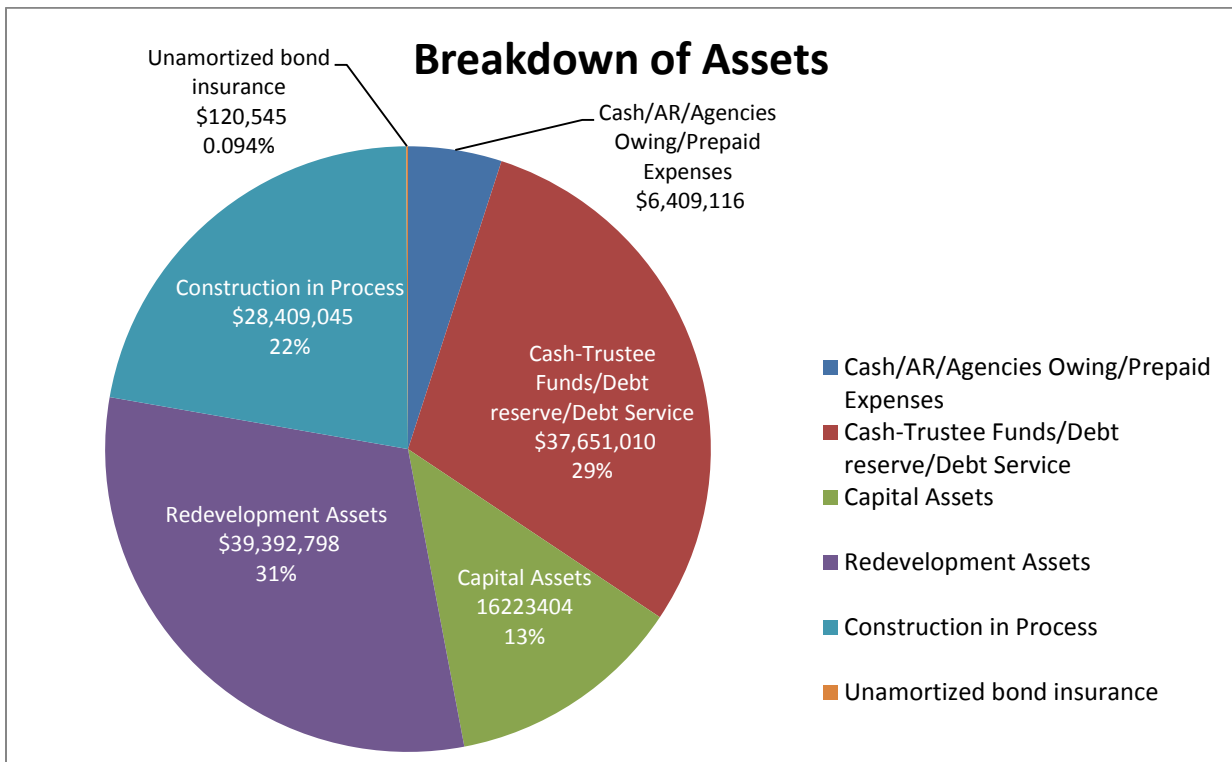
Inter-local agreements as indicated in the above chart denote agreements made between CCRMA and Cameron County who provided various loans to CCRMA starting in 2006 and ending in 2009 aimed at assisting with various efforts provided by the county. These efforts included organizational improvement efforts, planning, and project development activities such as route analysis, schematic design, environmental assessments, and payment for administrative services provided by the county.

Assets and liabilities increased significantly in 2010 as a result of the implementation of several new road projects and the receipt of additional financing from revenue bonds. The completion of Phase 1 of the SH 550 toll road also occurred in 2011 adding to the next year’s further jump in total assets.

Assets and Liabilities 2007–2013

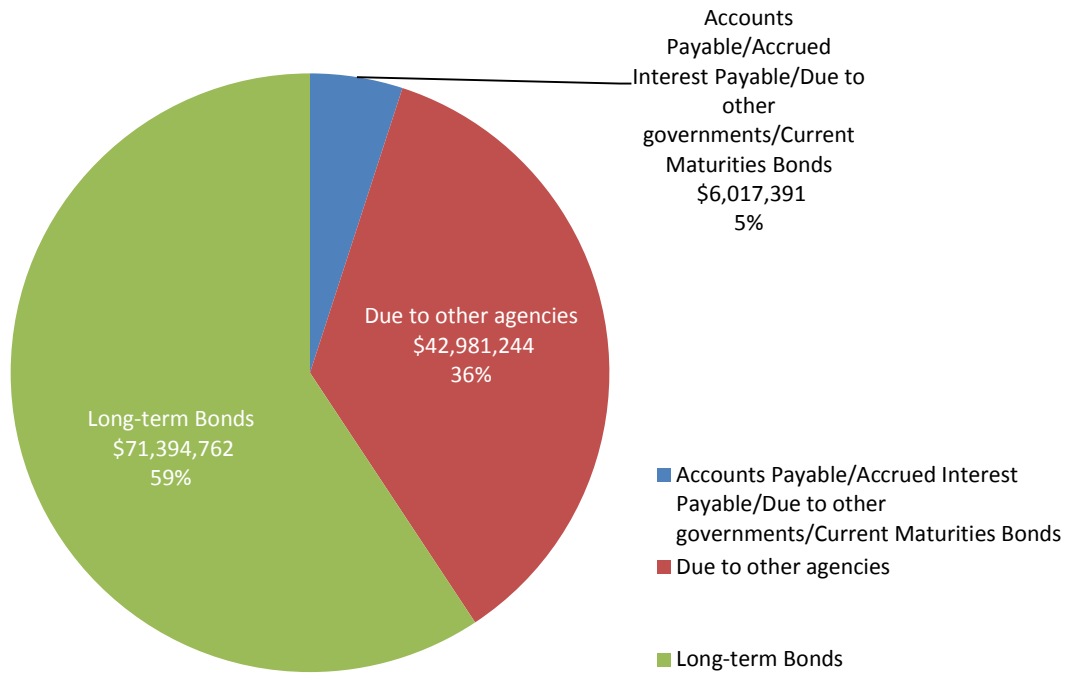


Cameron County RMA Assets and Liabilities 2007–2013



Cameron County Assets by Type

Breakdown of Liabilities



Cameron County Liabilities

Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (48)

SH 550 Phase 1

Overpass at UPRR and FM 1847
\$7 million

SH 550 North Port Spur- *Freight Related*

FM 3248 to SH 48/New Port Entrance
\$34 million

Olmito Switchyard Phase I – *Freight Related*

North Brownsville/Olmito
\$22 million

Port Access Road – *Freight Related*

SH 48/SH 550 to Capt. Donald Foust Road
\$3 million

Veterans International Bridge Expansion

Over Rio Grande River at 169 E
\$6 million

West Rail Relocation – *Freight Related*

I69E and Olmito Switchyard into Mexico
\$80 million

Olmito Switchyard Phase II – *Freight Related*

North Brownsville/Olmito
\$3.6 million

CE Spur 56 Willacy County

FM 1018 to FM 3168
\$28 million

I69E Sarita Overpass

Sarita School Area
\$12 million

SH 550 Direct Connectors

I69E to SH48
\$44 million

I69E

Brownsville to Corpus Christi
\$350 million

SH 32 East Loop – *Freight Related*

Port of Brownsville to Veterans Bridge
\$90 million

General Brant Road

FM 1847 to FM 510
\$15 million

South Padre Island 2nd Access

Mainland over Laguna Madre to Park Road 100
\$465 million

West Parkway

I69E to B&M Bridge
\$160 million

FM 803

I69E to SH 100
\$6 million

North Cameron County Switchyard – *Freight Related*

North of Harlingen near I69E
\$25 million

North Railroad Relocation – *Freight Related*

North Cameron County to SH 106
\$60 million

Outer Parkway

I69E near N. County Line to FM 1847
\$180 million

FM 509 Extension

Outer Parkway to Current Section of FM 509
\$7 million

Port Isabel Access Road – *Freight Related*

SH 48 to Port of Port Isabel
\$3 million

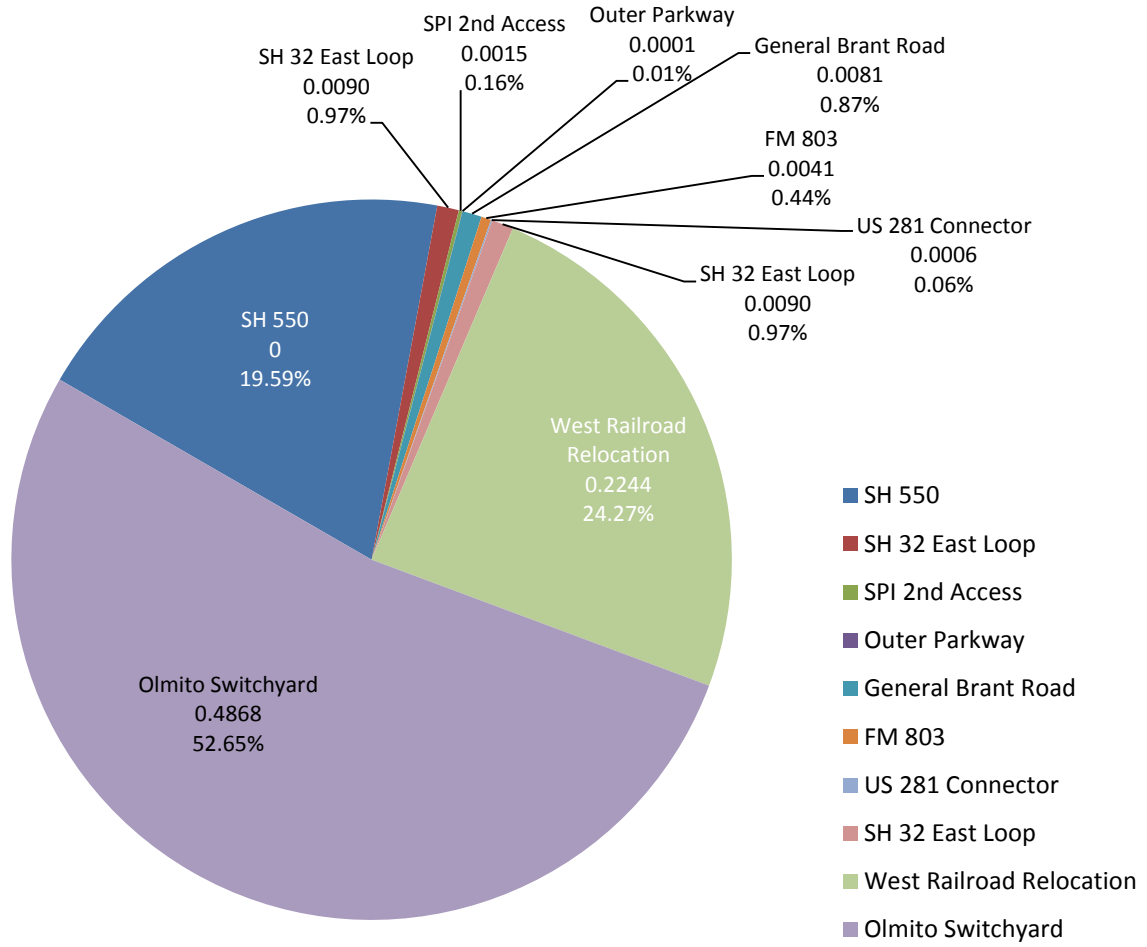
281 Connector

County Line to FM 1577 to I69E & SH100
\$140 million

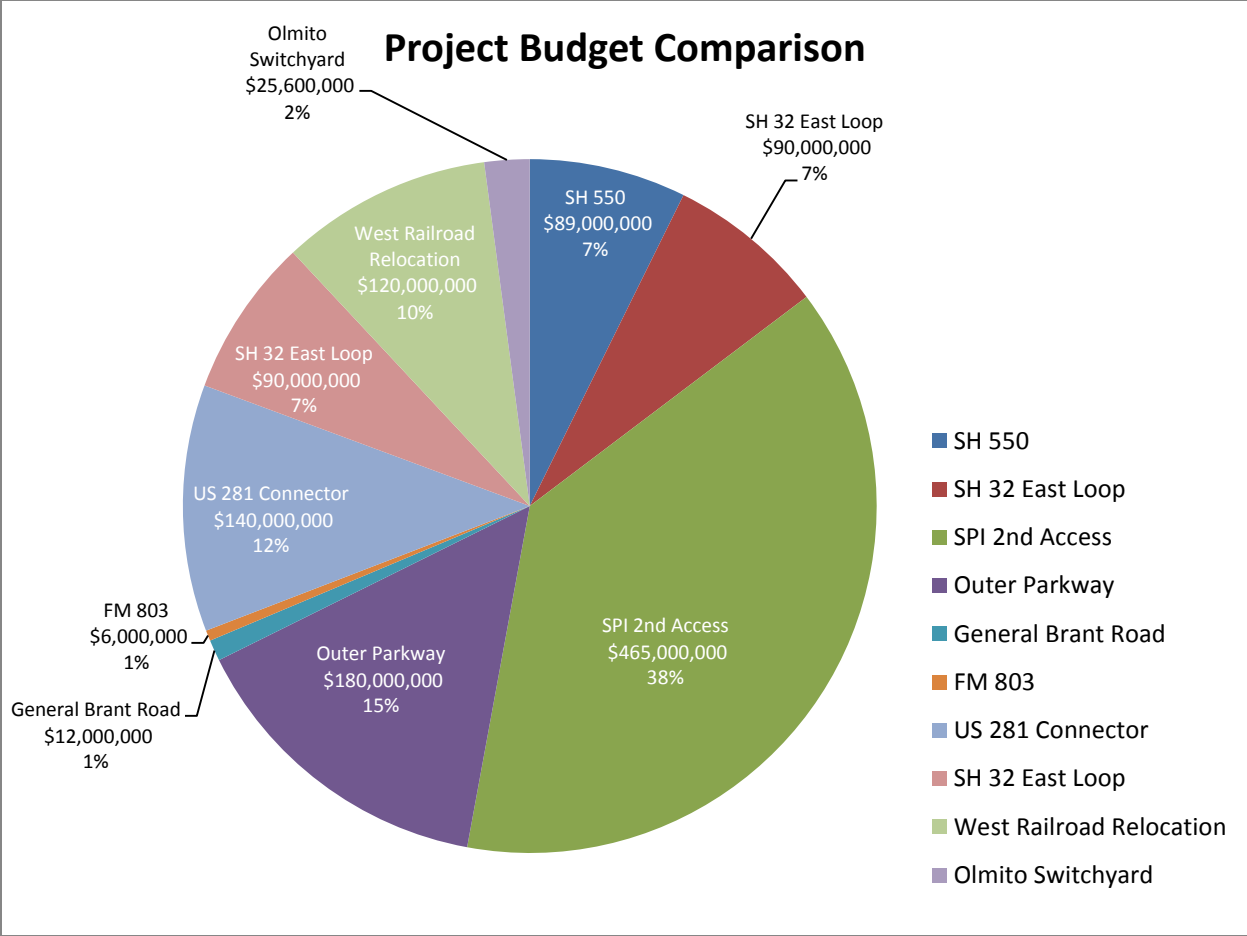
Port International Bridge Project – *Freight Related*

Port of Brownsville/East Loop into Mexico
\$50 million

Project Expenditures as Portion of Individual Budgets



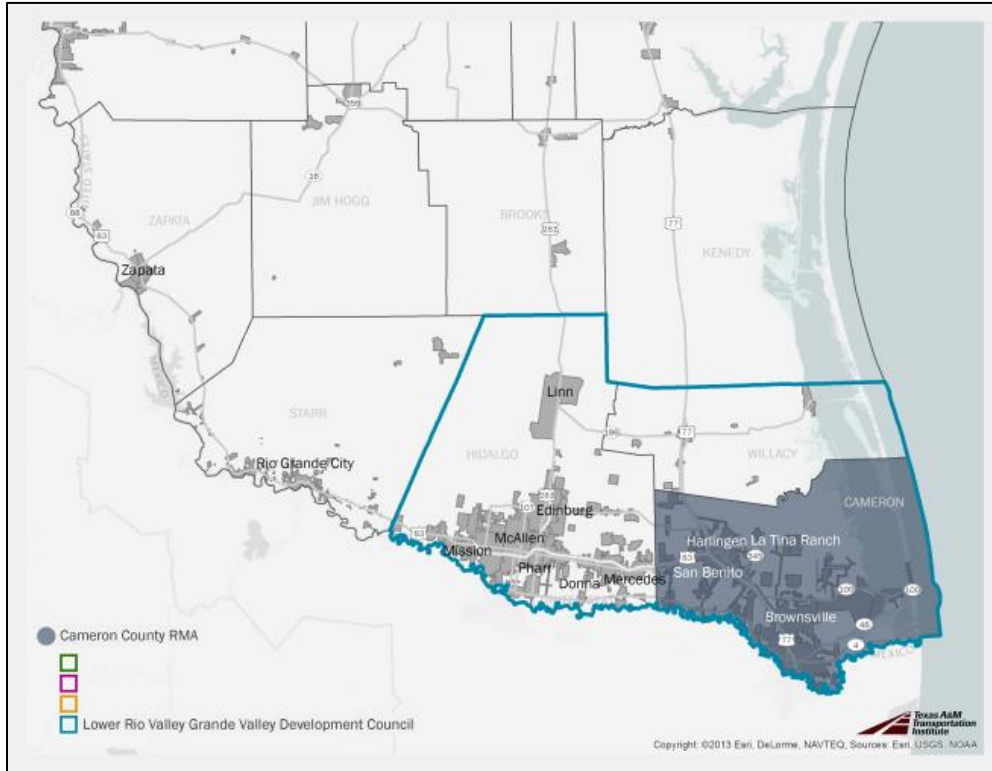
Cameron County Expenditure by Project



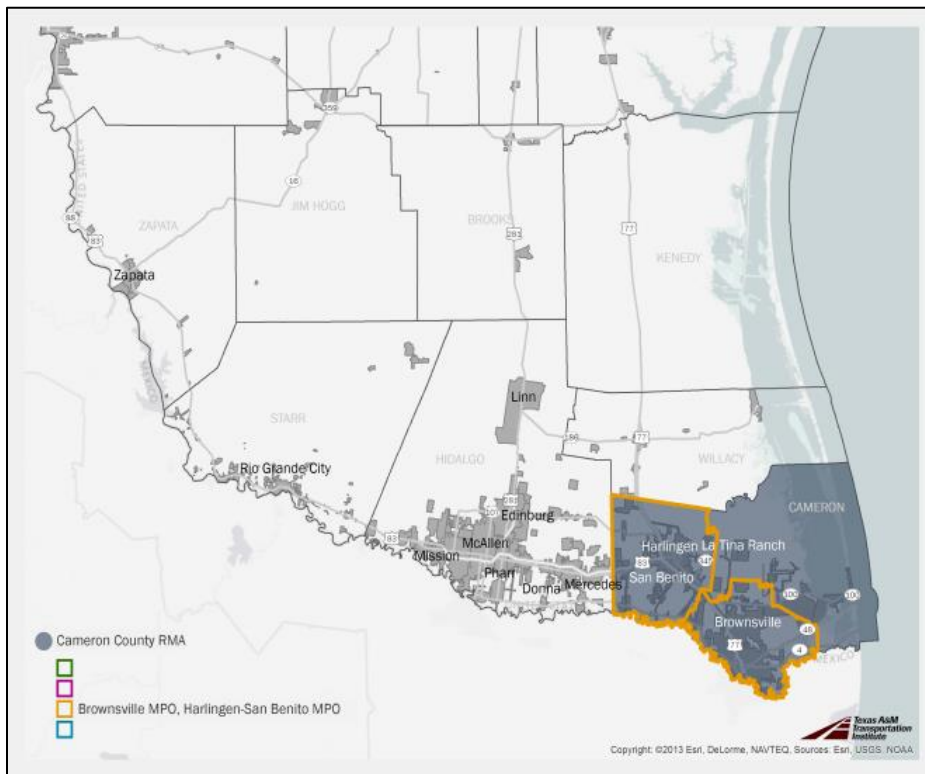
Cameron County Project Budgets



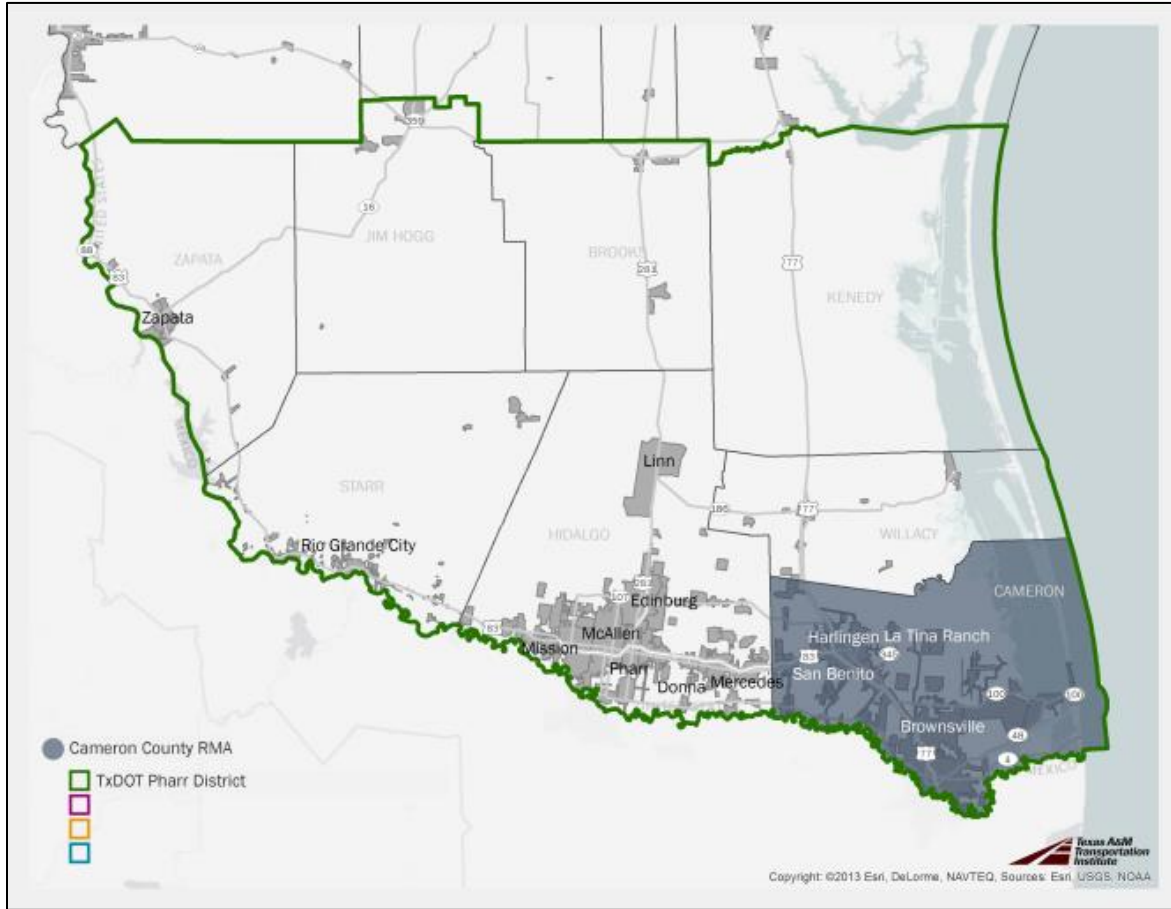
Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council



Brownsville MPO, Harlingen-San Benito MPO



TxDOT Pharr District

RMA Profile: Camino Real

History

TTC authorized the creation of the Camino Real RMA in June 2006. The project that the RMA was initially authorized to develop consisted of the completion of outer Loop 375 by extending the existing terminus of the Loop 375 at the downtown area westward to IH 10 at the US 85/NM 273 interchange. This project was assumed to increase mobility for the region (49).

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is the city of El Paso. The area is 1,012.69 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 827,718; and the population density is 790.6.

Mobility Data

Lane miles in RMA	8,277
Urban lane miles	7,176
Rural lane miles	1,101
Freeway Miles	581
Vehicle Mile Traveled	15,289,888
Top 100 Congested Roadways	4

Project Types

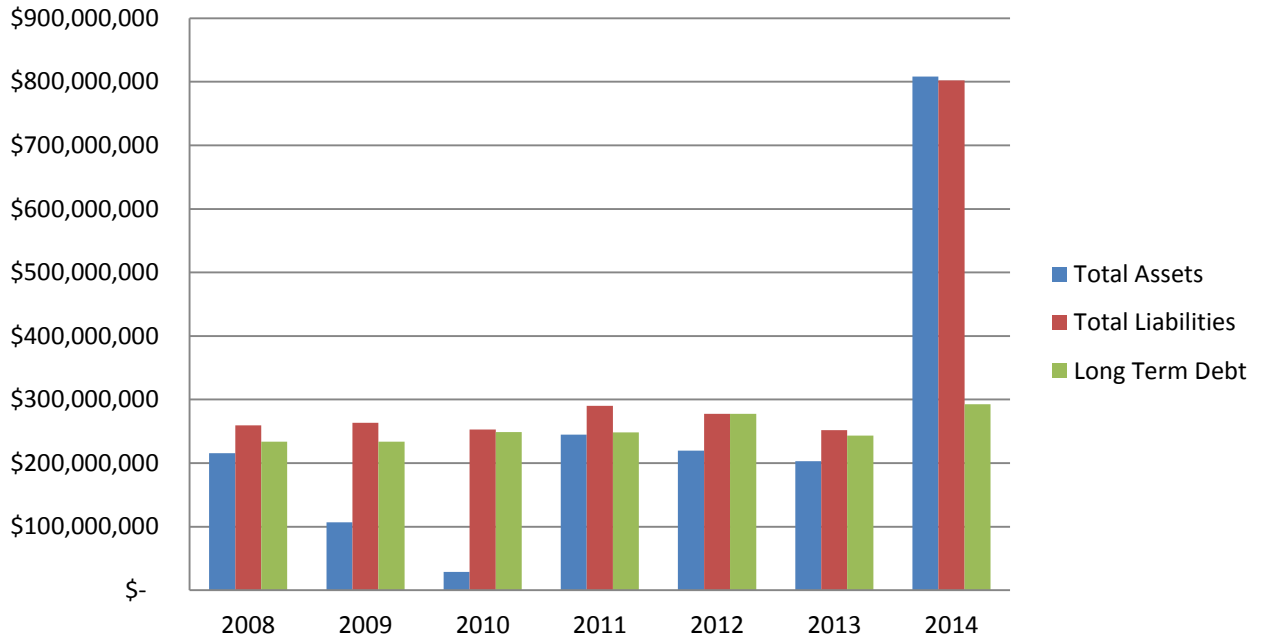
- Highway capacity.
- Operational improvements.
- Transit/streetcar.
- Bikeshare.

Total Incurred Project Costs: \$348 M

Finances

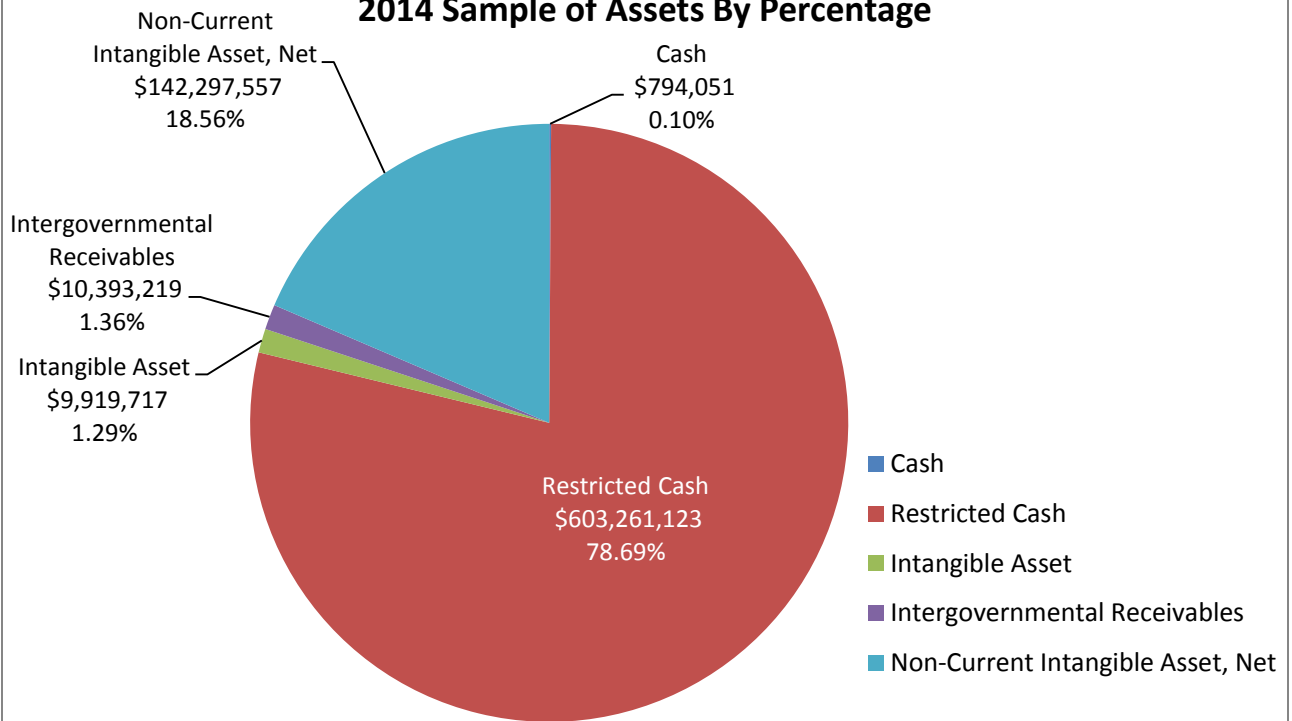
In 2014, CRRMA received several large grants from TxDOT to pursue redevelopment toll and light rail projects totaling \$597 million. This figure represents a significant jump in project development and construction activities, although it is not representative of the total ongoing activities by the CRRMA. In addition, CRRMA issued \$72 million in 2014 Series Bonds using revenues from the County of El Paso's vehicle registration fees to pursue a slate of transportation projects valued at \$400 million (29).

Assets, Liabilities, and Long Term Debt 2008–2014

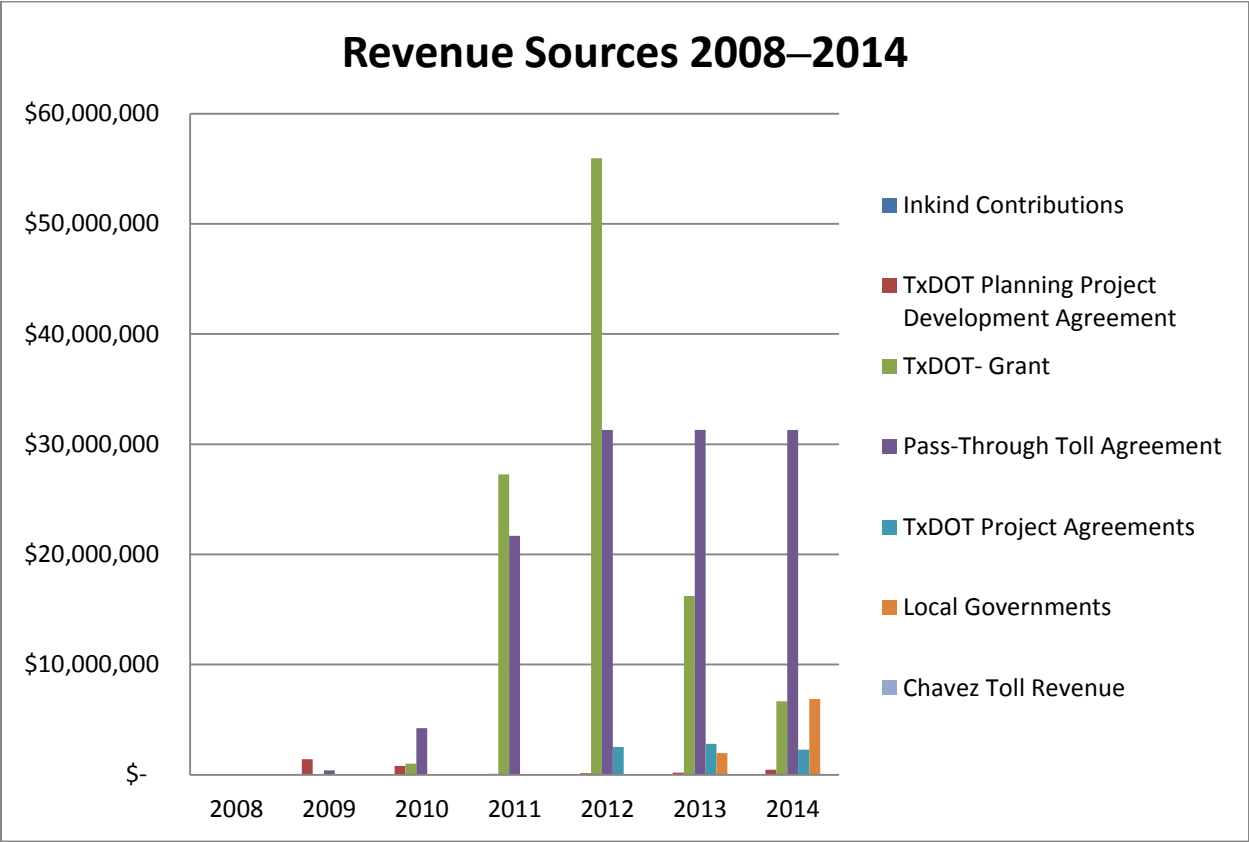


Camino Real RMA Assets, Liabilities, and Long Term Debt 2008–2014

2014 Sample of Assets By Percentage

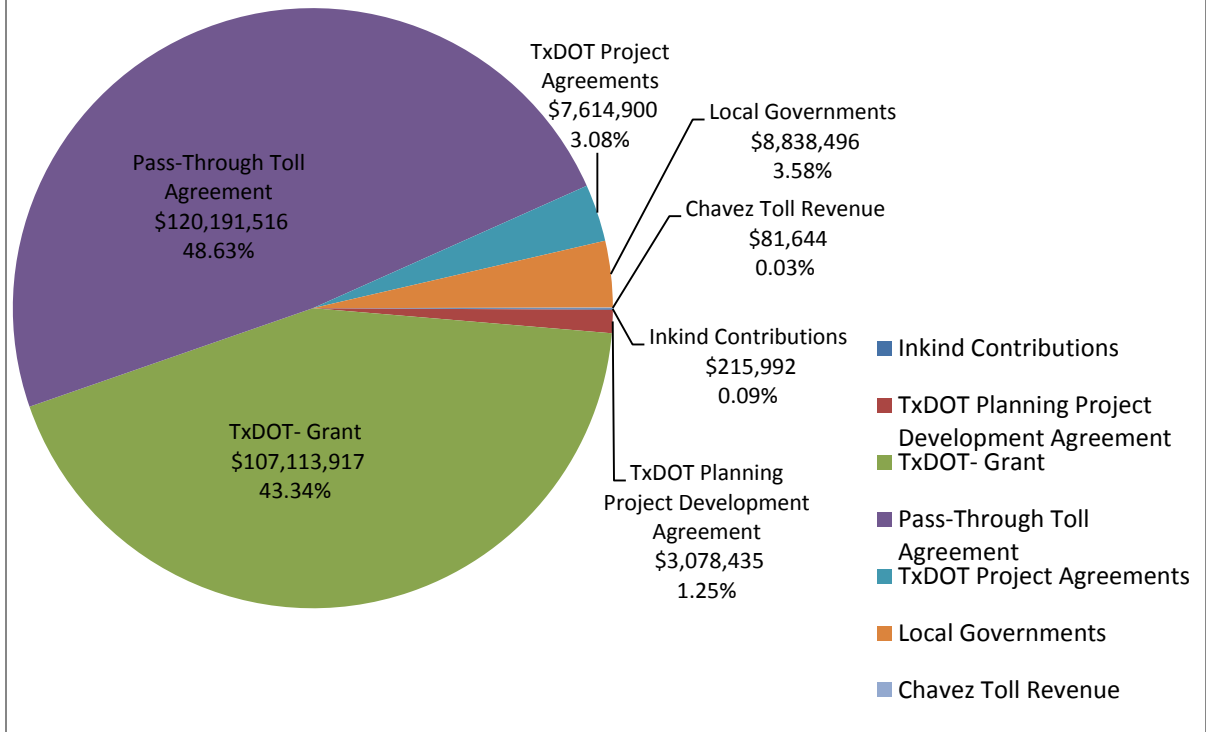


Camino Real RMA Assets by Percentage 2014



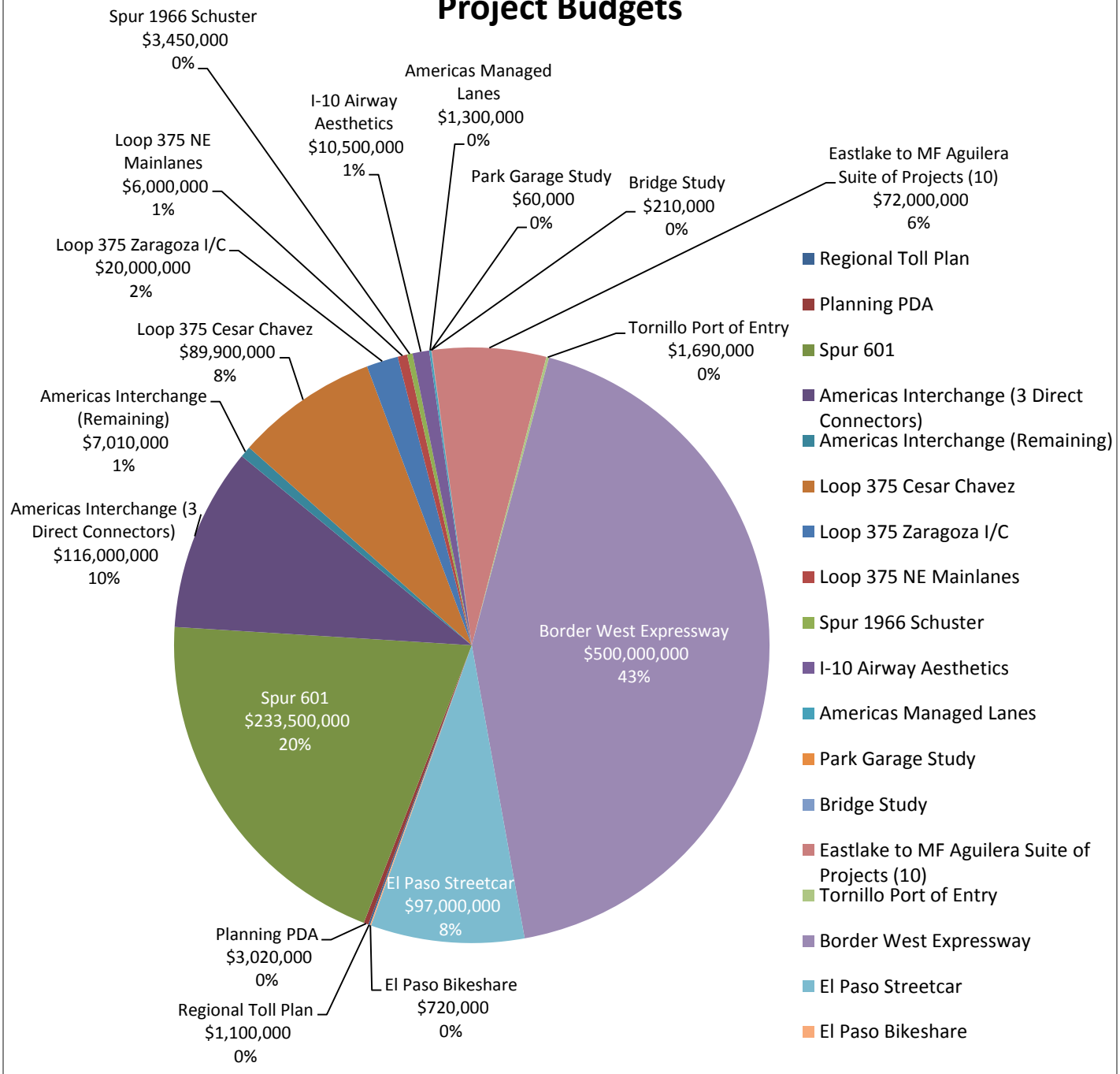
Camino Real RMA Revenue Sources 2008–2014

Total Revenue Sources



Camino Real RMA Total Revenue Sources

Project Budgets



Camino Real RMA Project Budgets

Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (50)

State Spur 601 - Inner Loop Project (Completed)

New construction connecting Loop 375 (Purple Heart) to US 54 (Patriot Freeway).

Zaragoza District Connector Project (Complete)

Design and construction of 2 new direct connectors between Loop 375 and FM 659 (Zaragoza Road).

Transmountain Northeast Project (Complete)

Design and construction of the remaining segment of Loop 375 in northeast El Paso.

Loop 375 at I-10 (Americas Interchange) Project (Completed)

Design and construction of the first 3 direct connectors for this interchange.

Airway Interchange Aesthetic Improvement Project (In Construction)

Various aesthetic improvements to the Airway Interchange at IH 10.

Americas Interchange Remaining Direct Connectors (In Design-Providing Design Services Only)

Design for final 2 direct connectors, frontage roads and cloverleaves for the interchange.

Spur 1966 Project (In Design-Providing Design Services Only)

Design and construction of a direct connection between Schuster Avenue and Paisano Drive (US 85) over IH 10.

Caesar Chavez Managed Lanes Project (Completed)

Design and construction of existing 9 miles of the 4 general purpose lanes on Loop 375 from US54 on the west to the Zaragoza port of entry on the east.

Americas Managed Lanes Project (In Planning)

Environmental and preliminary engineering phase for additional lanes on Loop 375 from the Zaragoza port of entry to Pellicano Drive.

Border Highway West Project (In Planning)

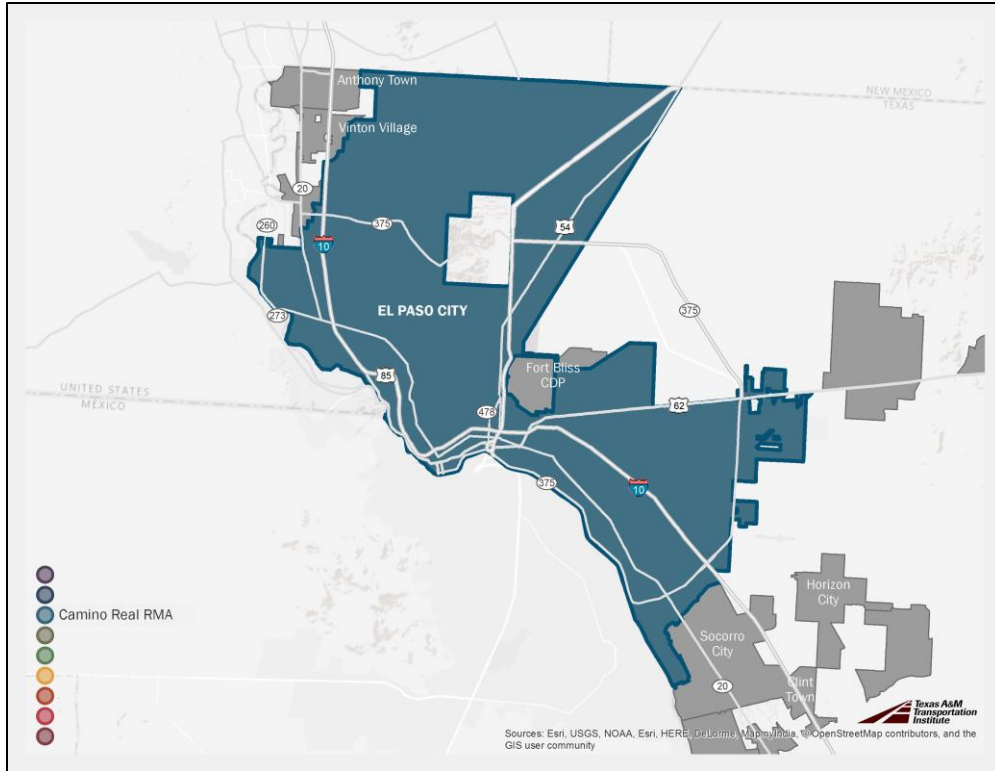
Design and construction of a 9 mile roadway, including 7 mile toll facility, completing Loop 375 from the Coles interchange downtown to Racetrack Drive on the west.

Transportation Reinvestment Zones

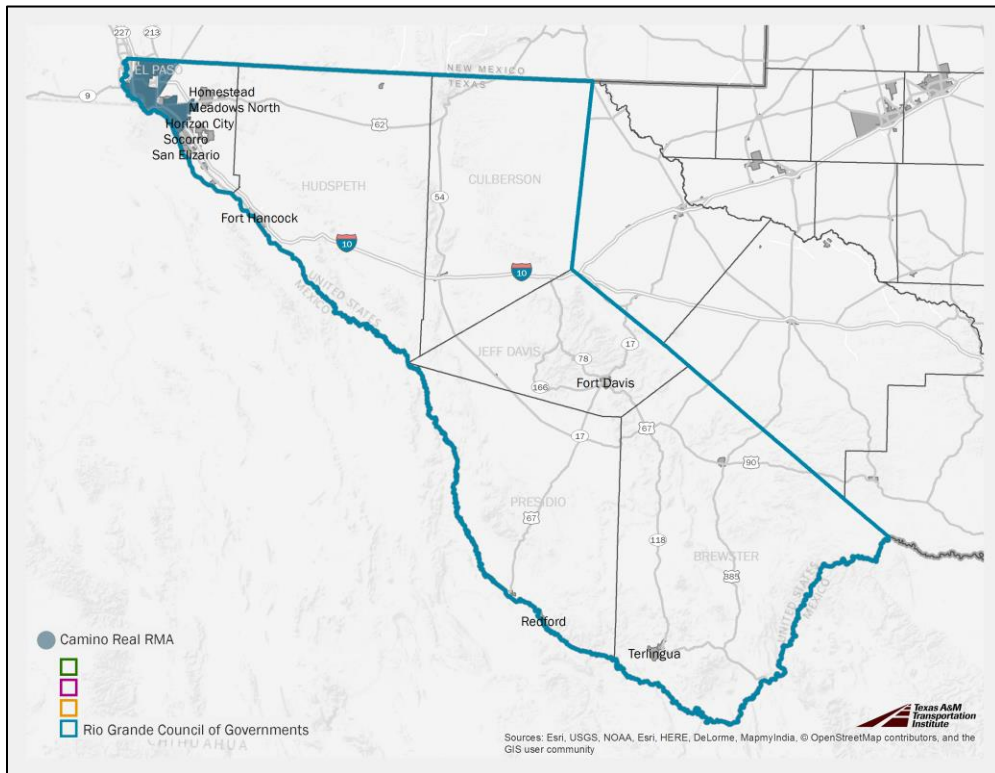
Creation of a TRZ in El Paso County, the Town of Horizon City and the City of Socorro.

Vehicle Registration Fees

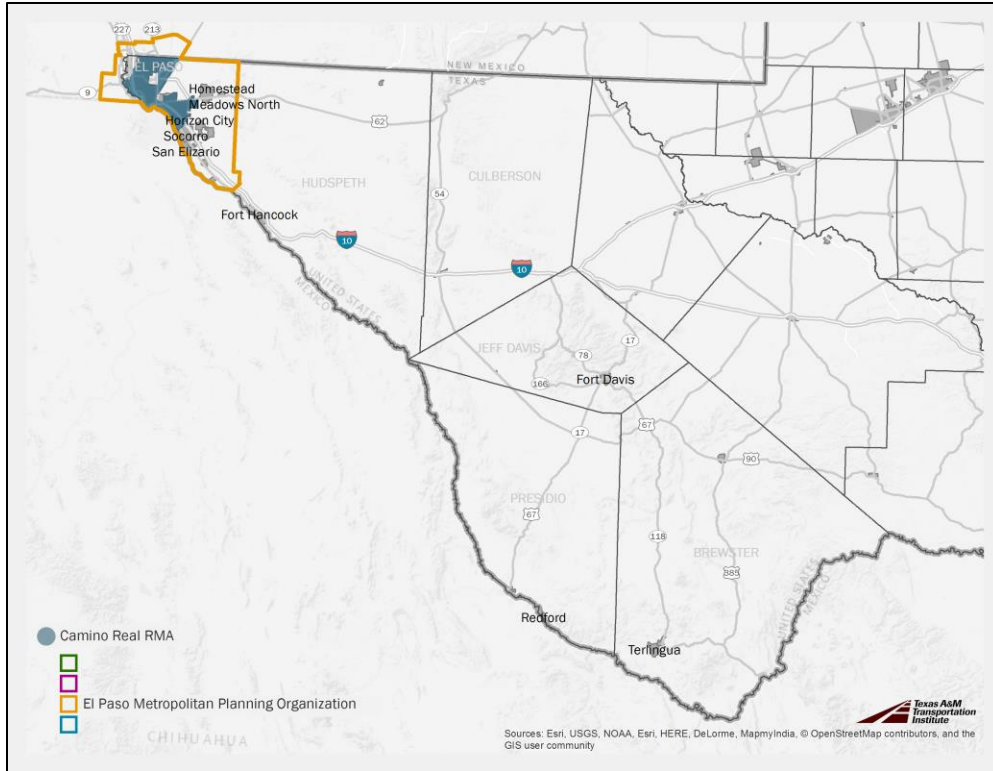
El Paso County adopted an option VRF. Commences on Jan.1, 2014.



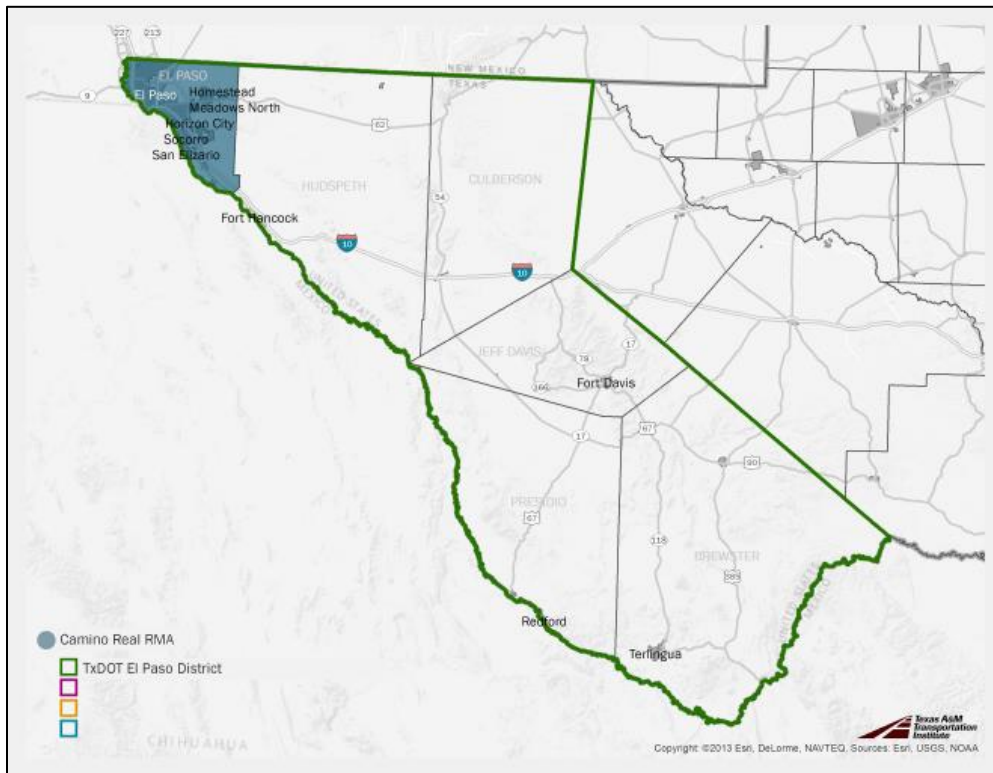
Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority



Rio Grande Council of Governments



El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization



TxDOT EL Paso District

RMA Profile: Central Texas

History

TTC, finding that the proposed Central Texas RMA satisfied the requisite criteria for approval, created the RMA in October of 2002 in Travis and Williamson Counties. The projects that the RMA was initially authorized to develop consisted of the proposed U.S. 183-A, an approximately 12-mile turnpike project located in Williamson County designed to connect with US 183 at SH 45 and extend northward, parallel to (and east of) existing US 183, then to reconnect with US 183 near the San Gabriel River, approximately 3 miles north of the City of Leander.

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is the city of Austin. The area is 2,108.5 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 1,591,968; and the population density is 1,412.4.

Mobility Data

Lane miles in RMA	18,498
Urban lane miles	13,535
Rural lane miles	4,962
Freeway Miles	1,051
Vehicle Mile Traveled	35,677,608
Top 100 Congested Roadways	12

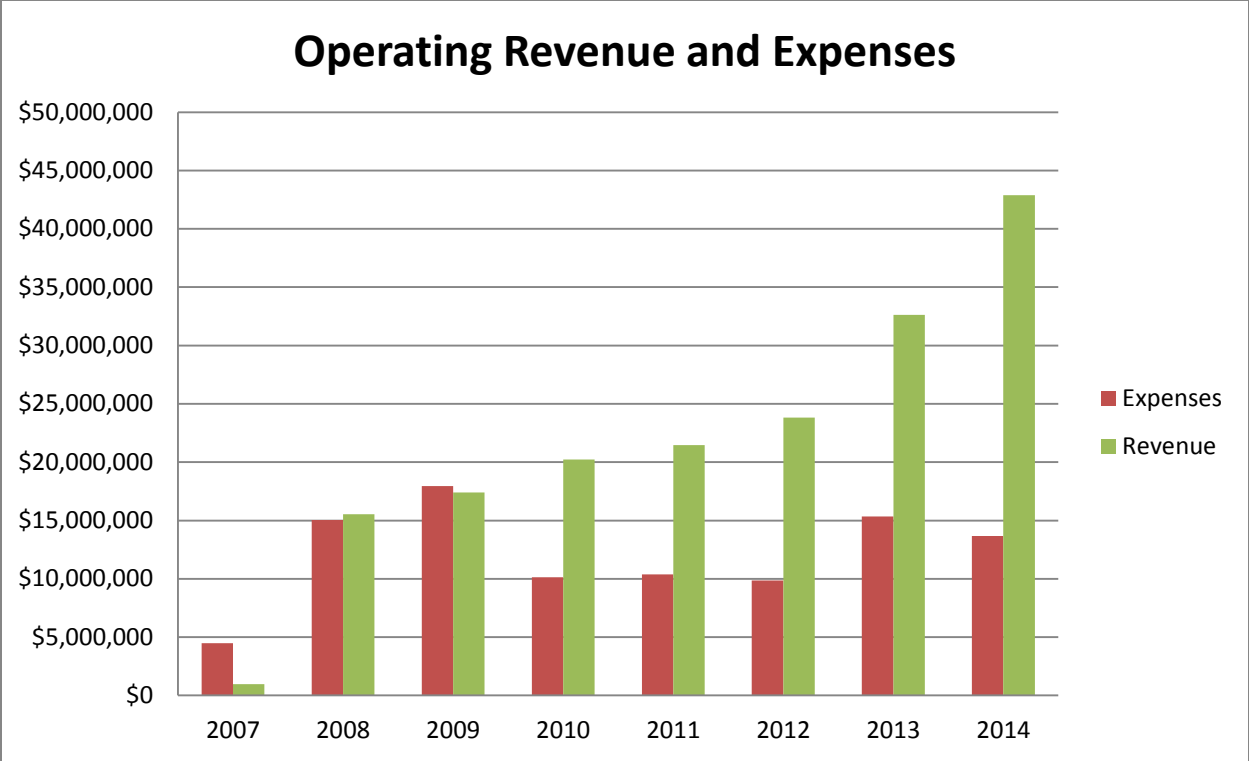
Project Types

- Highway capacity.
- Operational improvements.
- Environmental assessments.

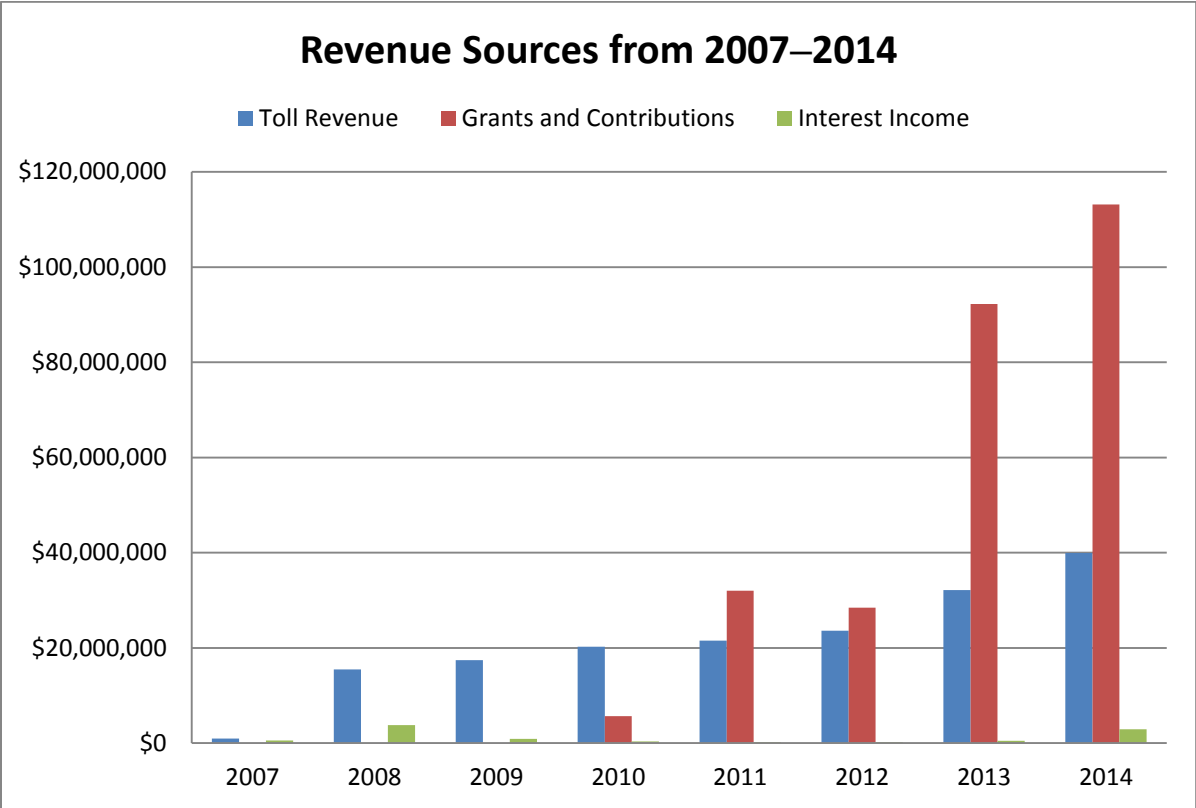
Total Incurred Project Costs: \$2.19 B

Finances

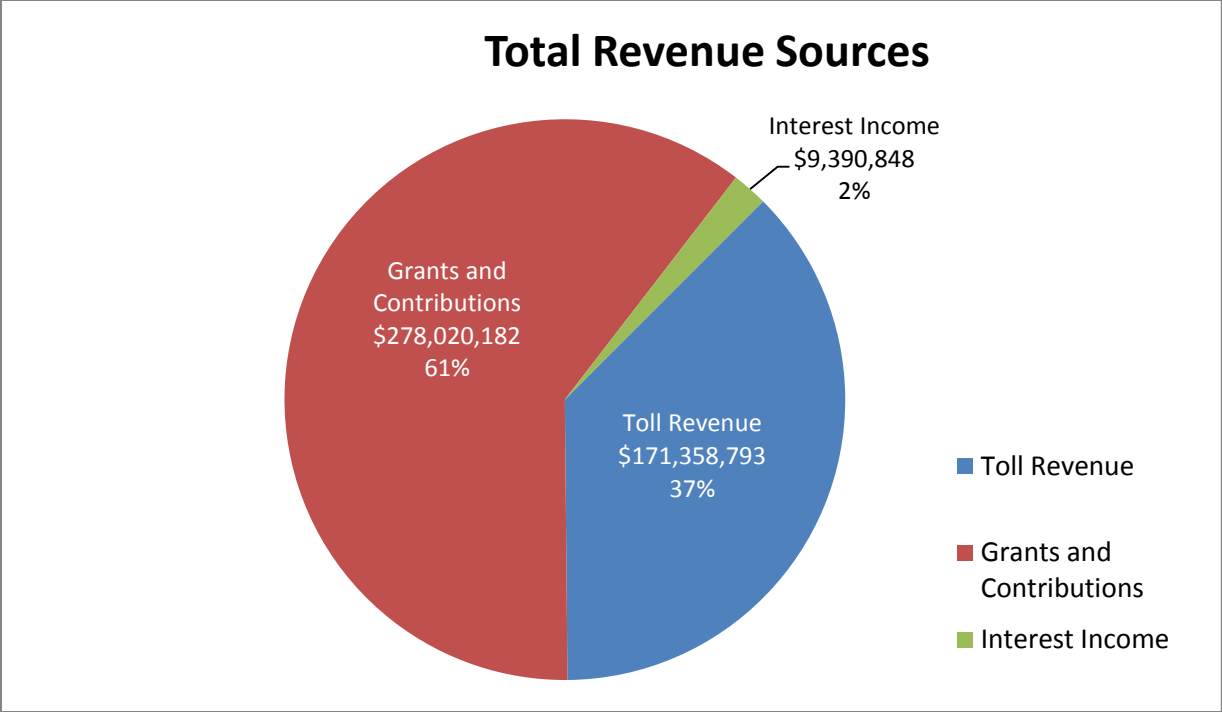
Financial information on CTRMA is presented in the following figures.



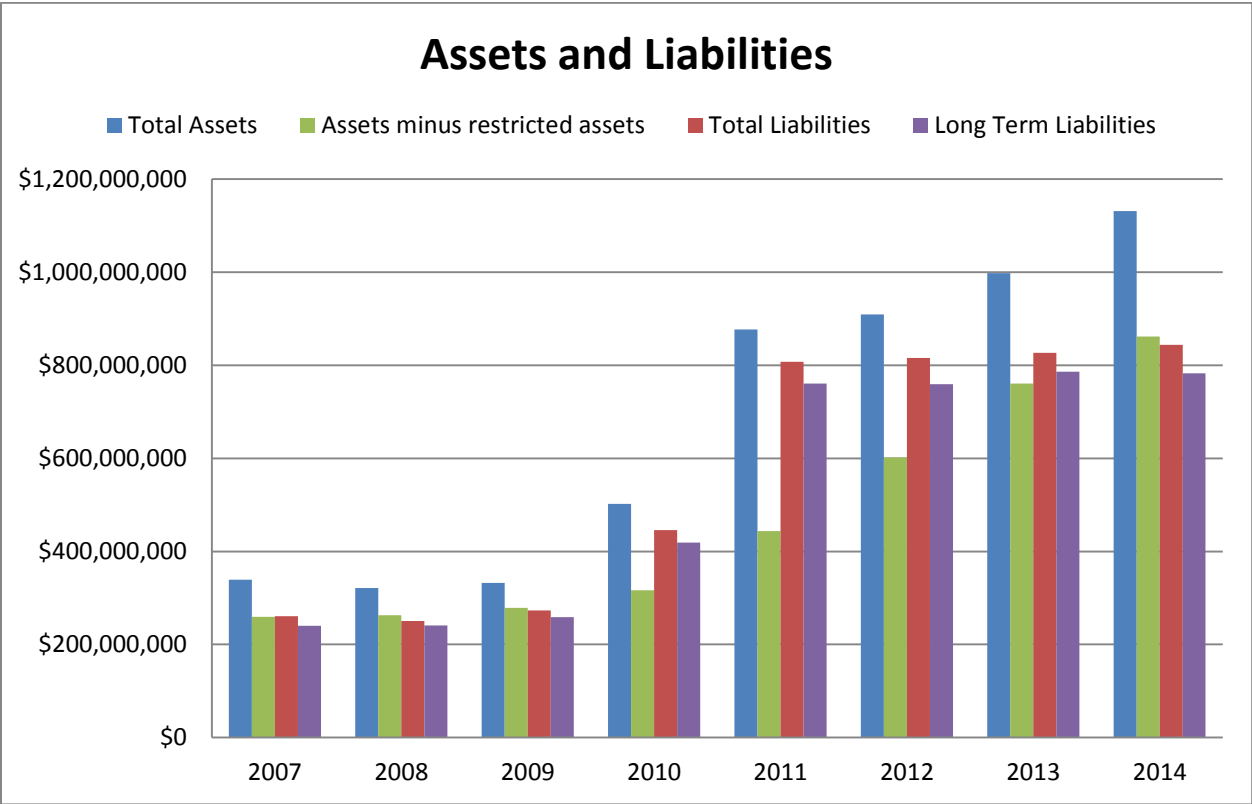
CTRMA Operating Revenue and Expenses 2007–2014



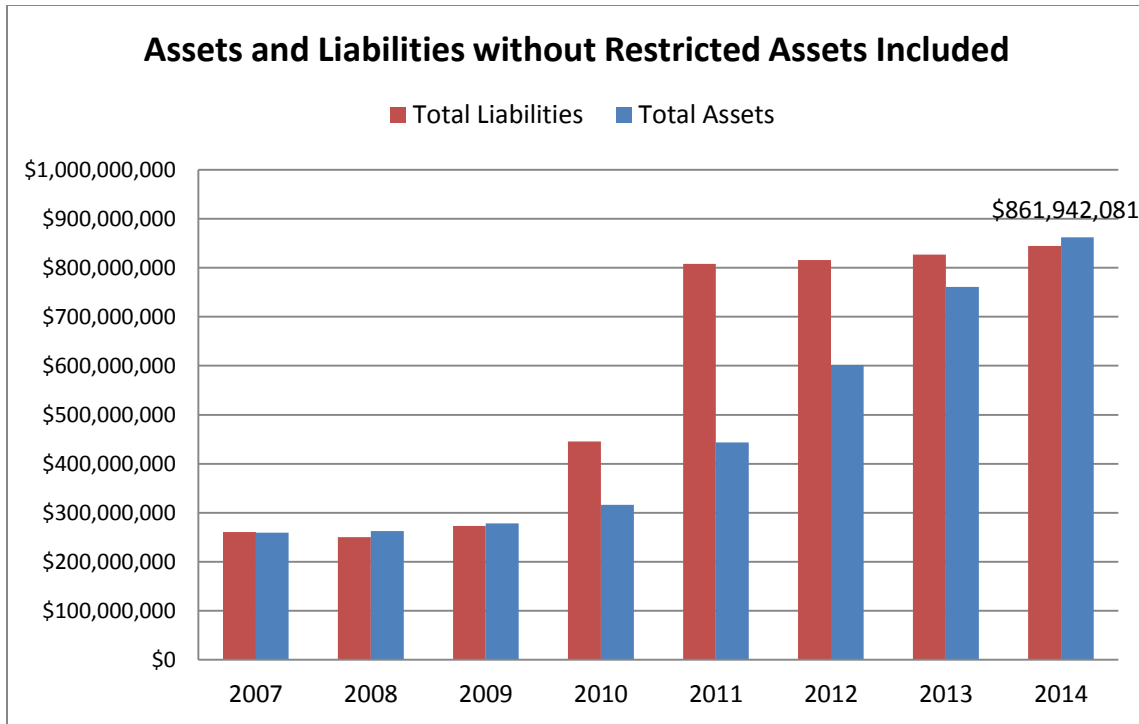
CTRMA Revenue and Expenses 2007–2014



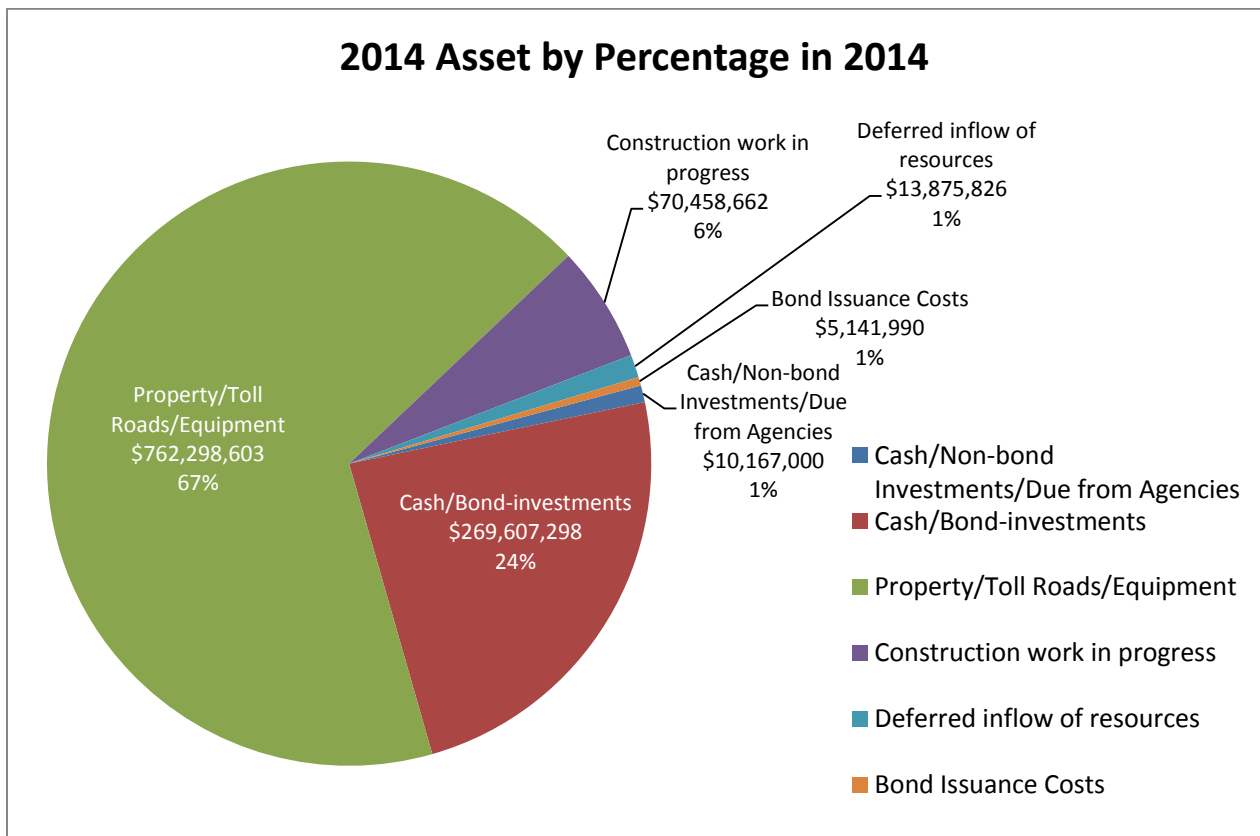
CTRMA Revenue Sources (2003–2014)



CTRMA Assets and Liabilities 2007–2014

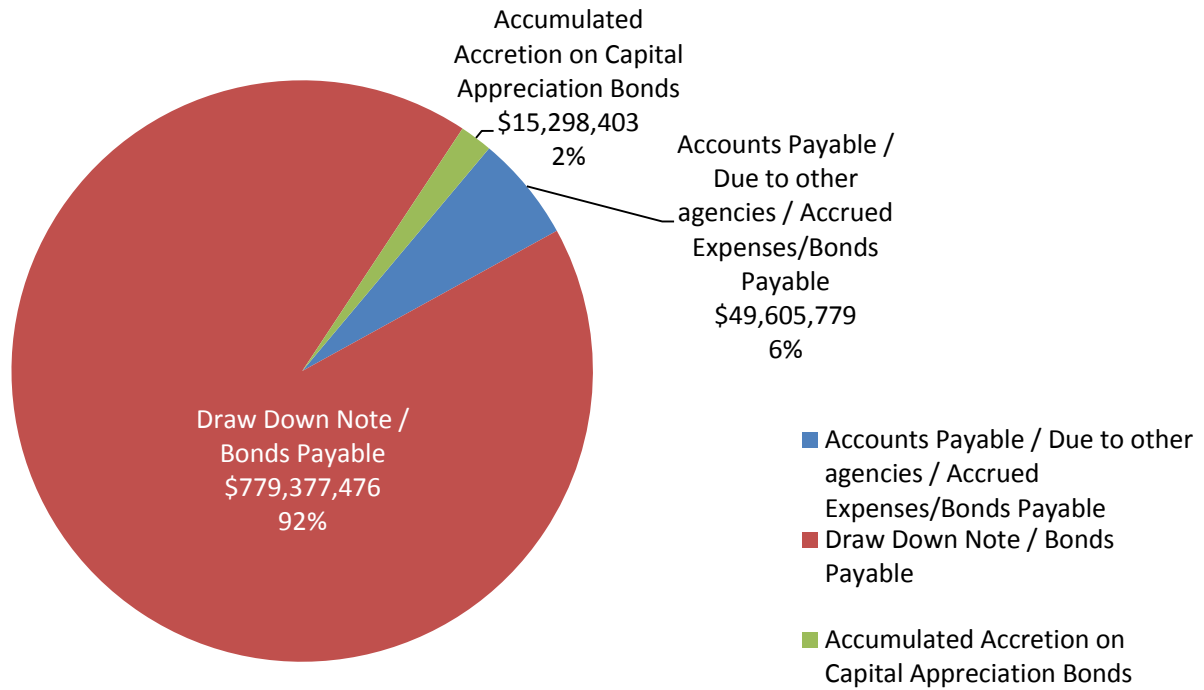


CTRMA Assets and Liabilities Excluding Restricted Assets 2007–2014



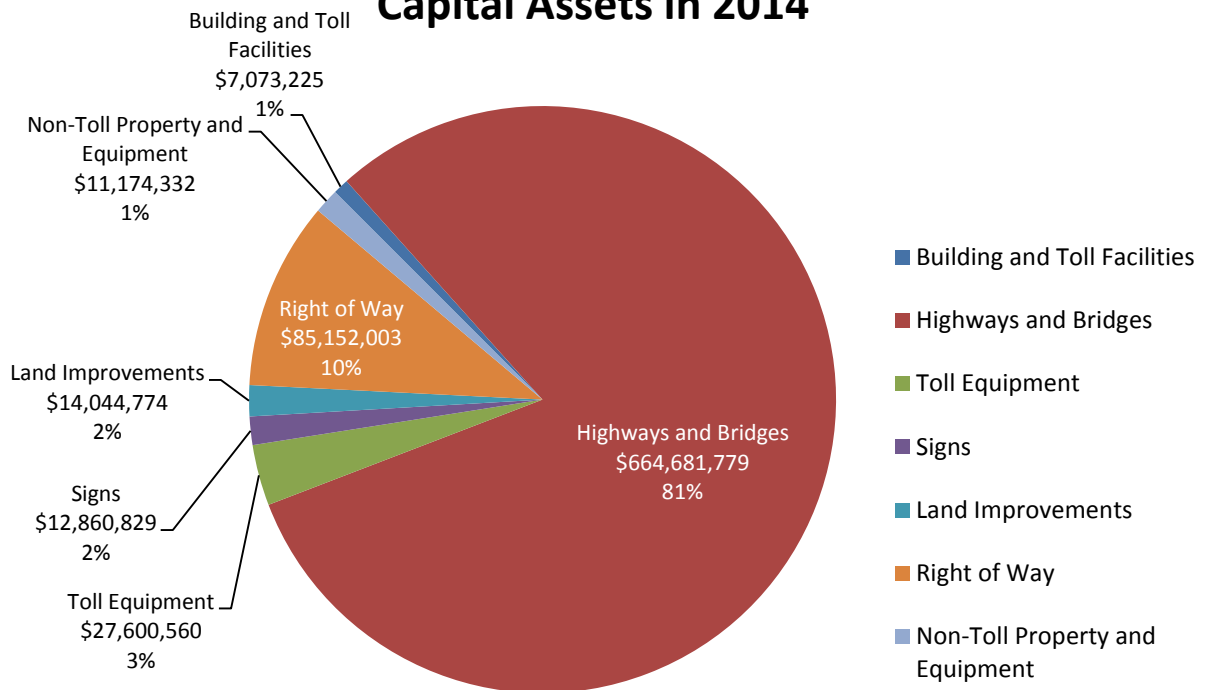
CTRMA Assets by Percentage in 2014

2014 Liabilities by Percentage



CTRMA Liabilities by Percentage in 2014

Capital Assets in 2014



CTRMA Capital Assets 2014

Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (30)

MoPac Improvement Project

Add one Express Lane in each direction from Cesar Chavez St. to Parmer Ln.

MoPac South Environmental Study

Improve mobility from Cesar Chavez St. to Slaughter Ln.

Manor Expressway - Phases I & II, III

Upgrade the existing US 290 (from US 183 to just east of SH 130) to a controlled access highway facility.)

Mopac Intersections Environmental Study

Improve the intersections of Slaughter Ln. and La Crosse Avenue with MoPac.

Bergstrom Expressway Project

South of the Manor Expressway and extending to SH 71 East.

183 North Mobility Project

Add lane(s) along existing US 183 North and direct connectors from US 183 and MoPac.

Oak Hill Parkway

Mitigate congestion in the area surrounding the "Y at Oak Hill" intersection.

SH 45SW Environmental Study

Environmental study of an area between MoPac and FM 1626.

SH 71 Express

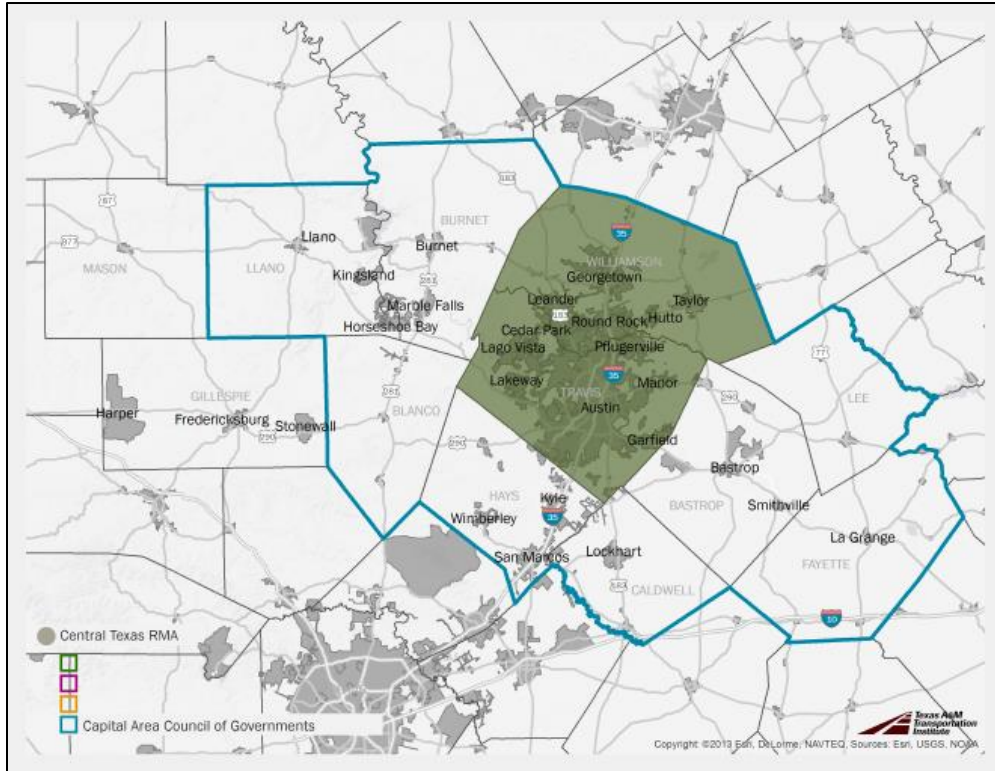
Improve mobility and accessibility of bike and pedestrians along SH 71 (between presidential blvd and SH 130).

183A Toll Road

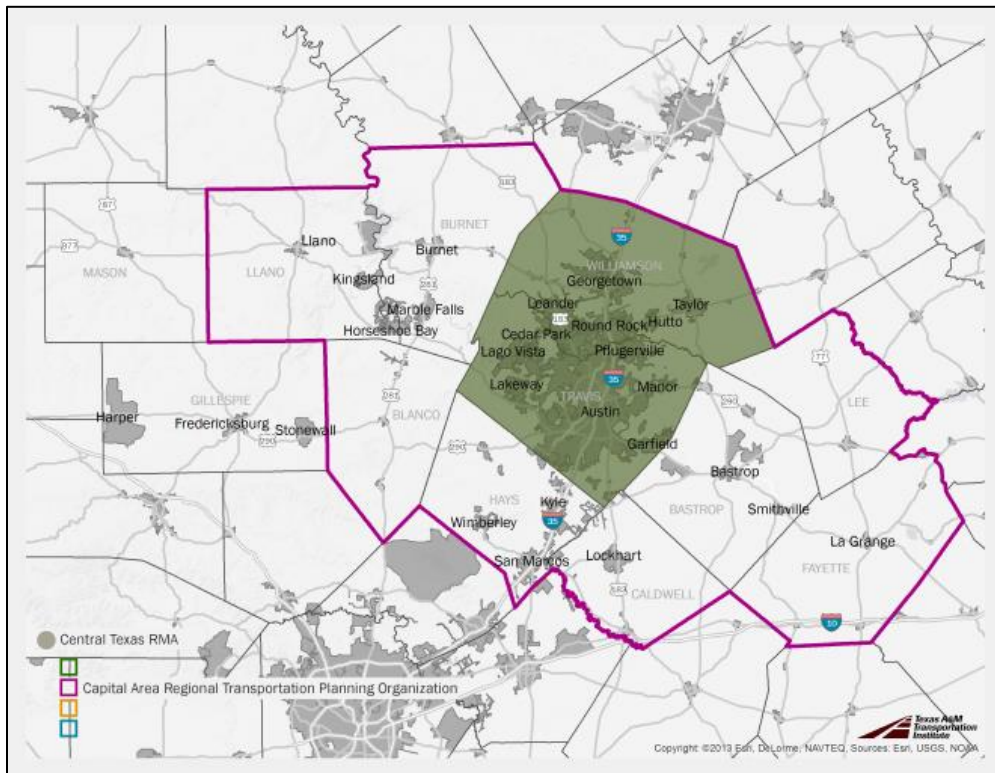
183A Phase II - expedite the tolled main lanes 5 miles north.



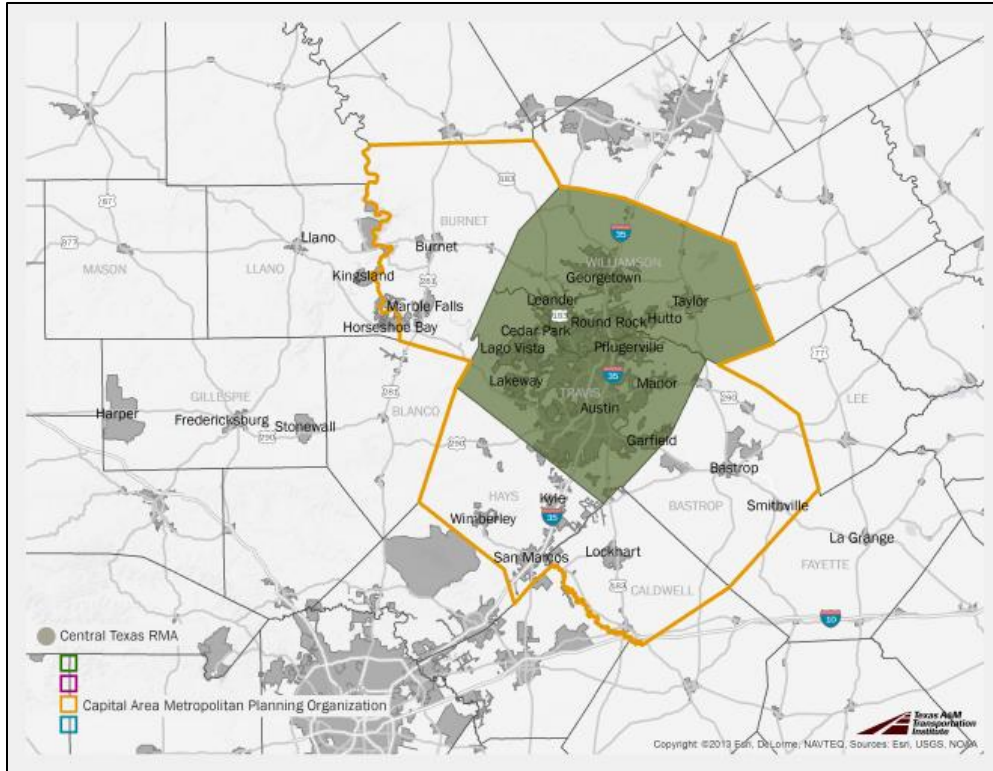
Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority



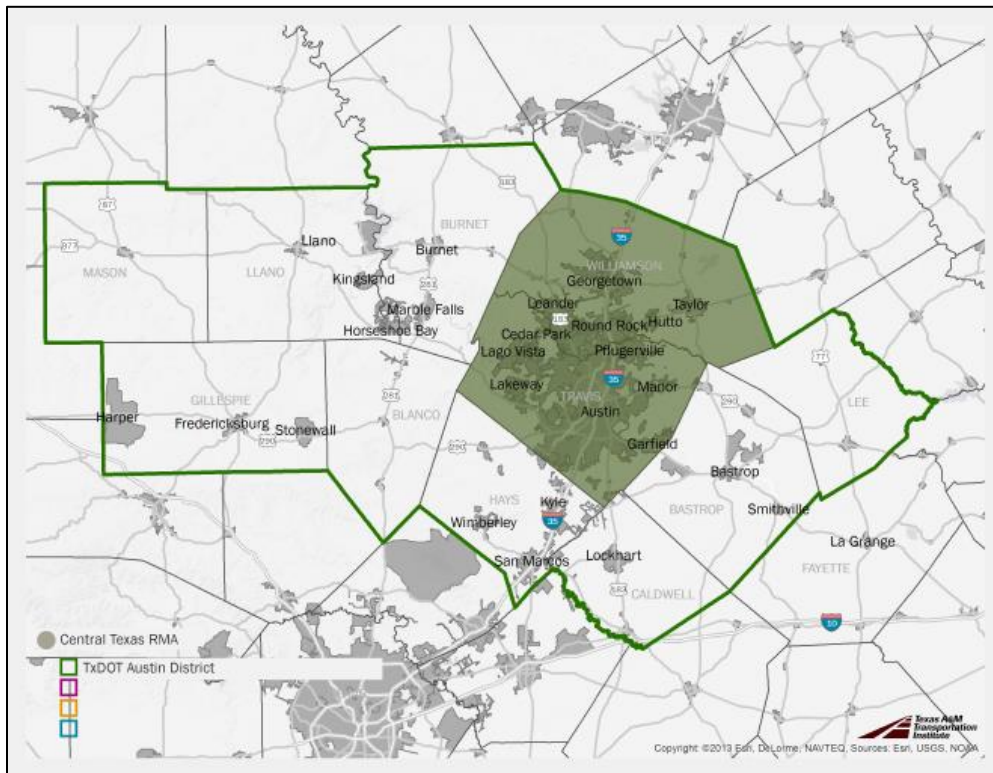
Capital Area Council of Governments



Capitol Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization



Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization



TxDOT Austin District

RMA Profile: Grayson County

History

TTC, finding that the proposed Grayson County RMA satisfied the requisite criteria for approval, created the RMA in April 2004 in Grayson County. The projects that the RMA was initially authorized to develop consisted of an approximately 12-mile extension of SH 289, beginning at SH 56 in Sherman and ending at FM 120 in Pottsboro, generally paralleling US 377 to the west (51).

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is the city of Sherman. The area is 932.8 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 122,353; and the population density is 129.6.

Mobility data

Lane miles in RMA	5,074
Urban lane miles	1,254
Rural lane miles	3,820
Freeway Miles	118
Vehicle Mile Traveled	3,554,886
Top 100 Congested Roadways	0

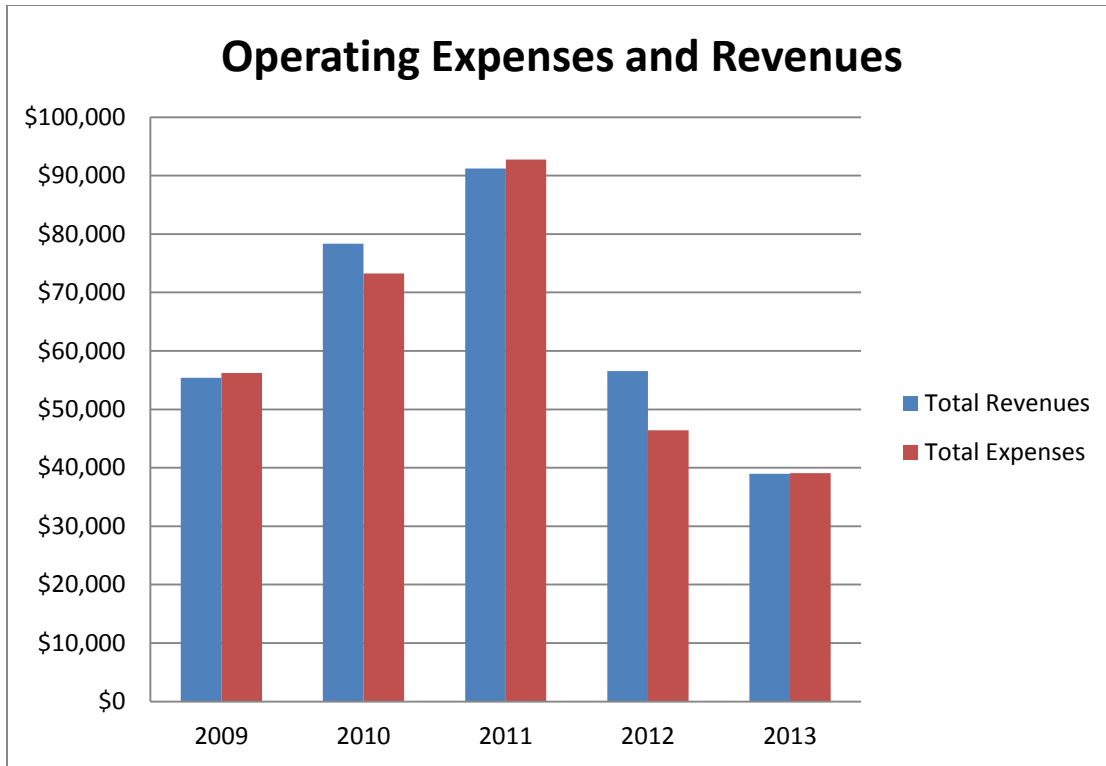
Project Types

- Highway capacity.
- Aviation improvements.
- Feasibility study.
- Thoroughfare plan.

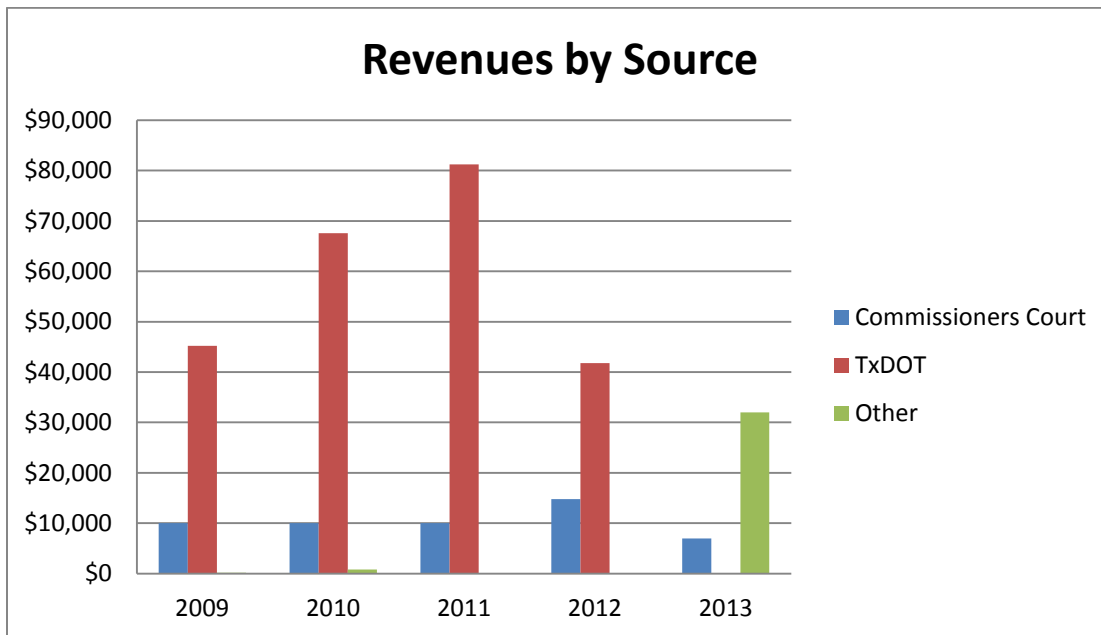
Total Incurred Project Costs: \$95.4 M

Finances

Financial information on Grayson County RMA is presented in the following figures.



Grayson County RMA Expenses and Revenues 2009–2013



Grayson County RMA Revenues by Source 2009–2013

Details provided for the revenue by the source tables illustrate TxDOT’s temporary involvement in plans to develop an \$88 million tollway facility into Grayson County and make improvements to access roads to the North Texas Regional Airport. The toll road feasibility study did not

support the development of a tollway, so funding has been reduced as of 2013. Current activities involve updating the RMA commissioning the University of Texas to conduct the Grayson Thoroughfare plan to merge with the Sherman-Denison MPO plan. Airport improvement projects listed in the annual report and supported by Grayson County RMA are funded and controlled by Grayson County in conjunction with the North Texas Regional Airport.

Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (33)

Grayson County Tollway Feasibility Study (Completed)

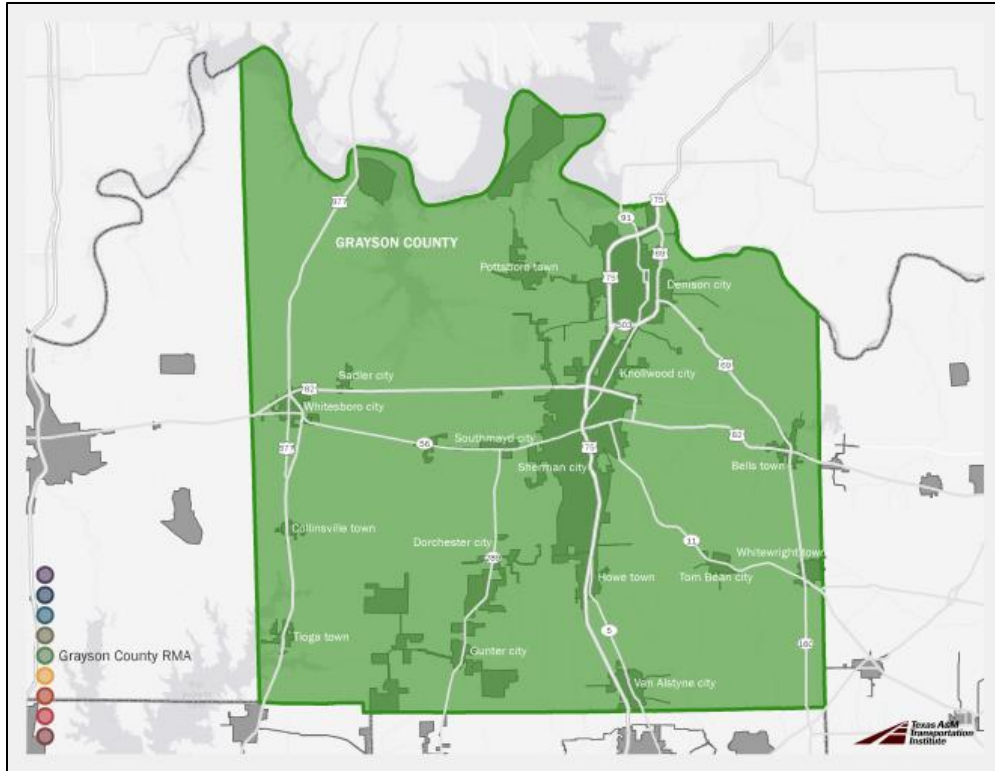
Research a toll way to connect the proposed N. Dallas Tollway extension ending at the Grayson County Line and the US 75 north of Denison.

Grayson County Thoroughfare Plan (Completed)

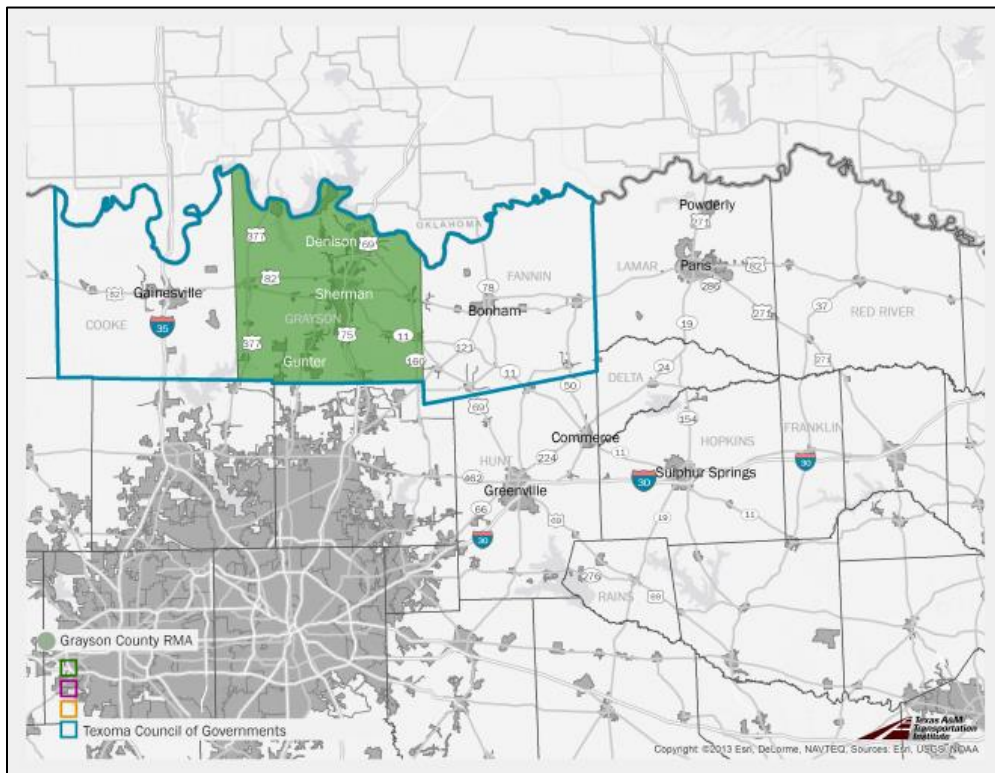
Develop, with the University of Texas at Arlington and funding from Walton Development, thoroughfare plan.

North Texas Regional Airport Maintenance (Planned Improvements under the control of the North Texas Regional Airport and Grayson County)

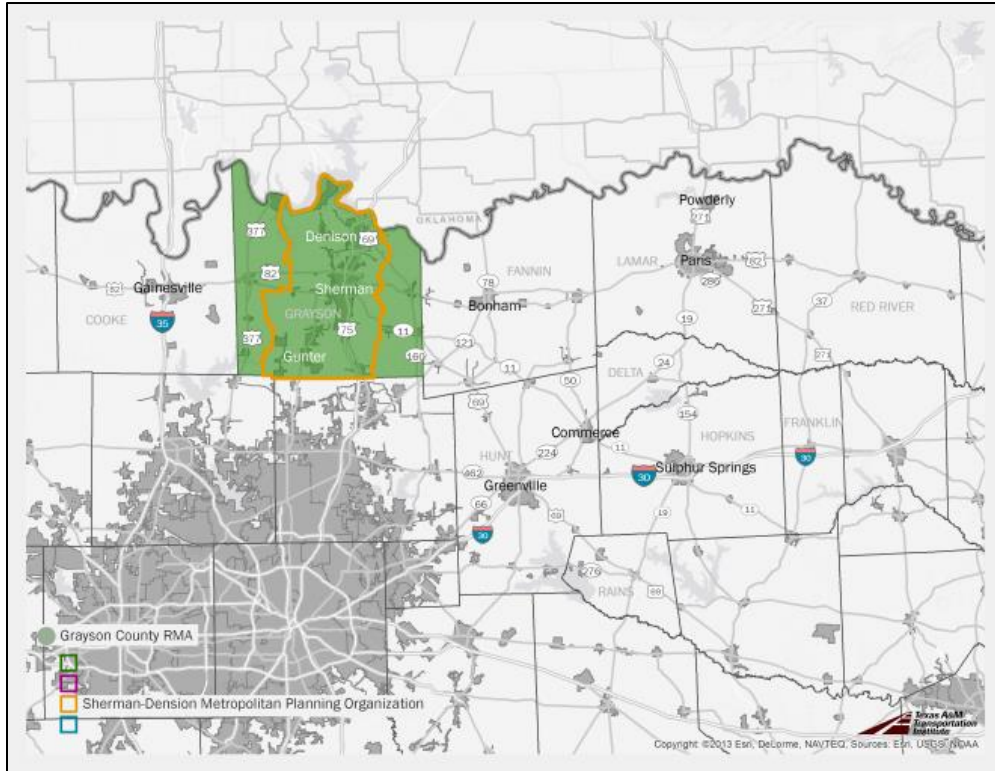
Make drainage, taxiway, runway and aircraft ramp improvements, water and sewer lines, hangar construction.



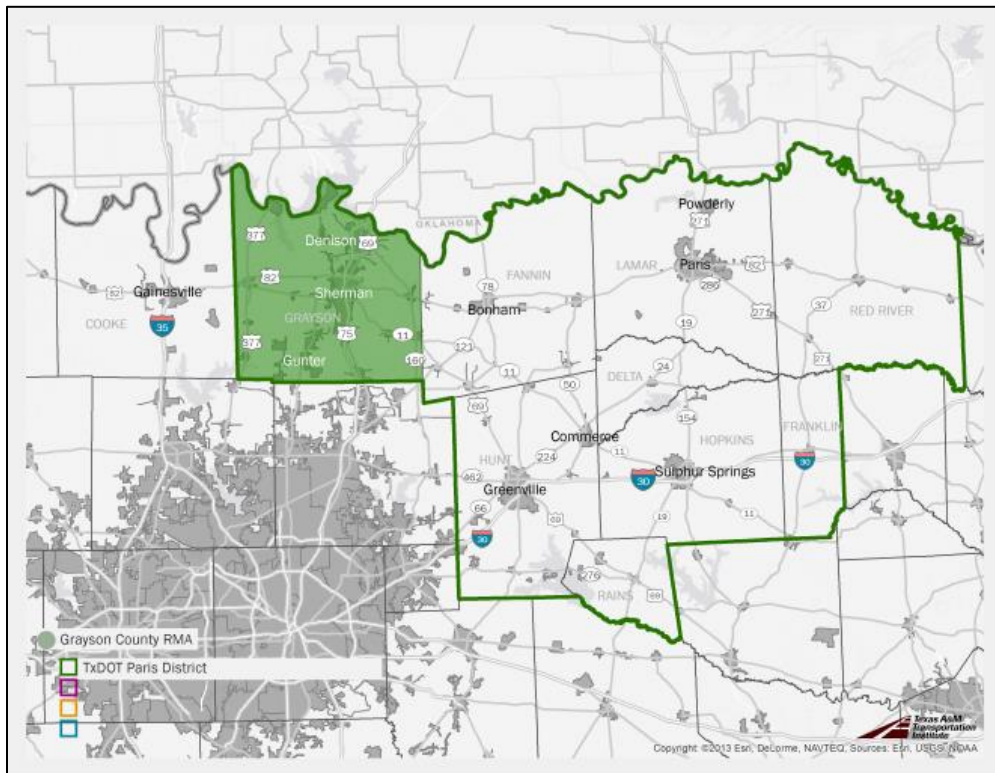
Grayson County Regional Mobility Authority



Texoma Council of Governments



Sherman-Dennison Metropolitan Planning Organization



TxDOT Paris District

RMA Profile: Hidalgo County

History

TTC, finding that the proposed Hidalgo County RMA satisfied the requisite criteria for approval, created the RMA in November 2005 in Hidalgo County. The projects that the RMA was initially authorized to develop consisted of a toll-road network consisting of:

- An approximately 104-mile Hidalgo County Loop, which was assumed would provide an important reliever route for some of the noncommercial traffic, and for improved traffic circulation within the county.
- The US 83 La Joya Relief Route.
- A US 281 alternate route from north of Edinburg to the Pharr International Bridge (52).

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is the city of McAllen. The area is 1,583 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 831,073; and the population density is 529.05.

Mobility Data

Lane miles in RMA	9,592
Urban lane miles	8,543
Rural lane miles	1,050
Freeway Miles	306
Vehicle Mile Traveled	13,775,260
Top 100 Congested Roadways	1

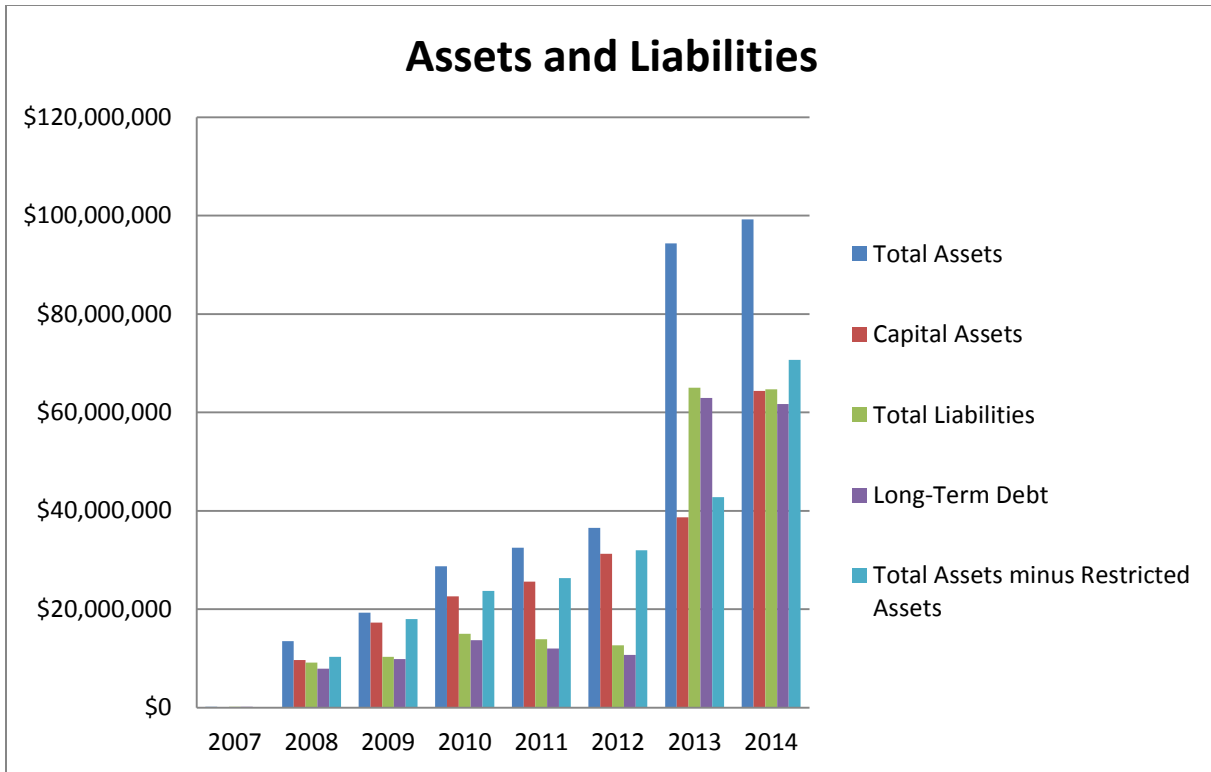
Project Types

- Highway capacity.
- International bridge.
- Environmental assessments.

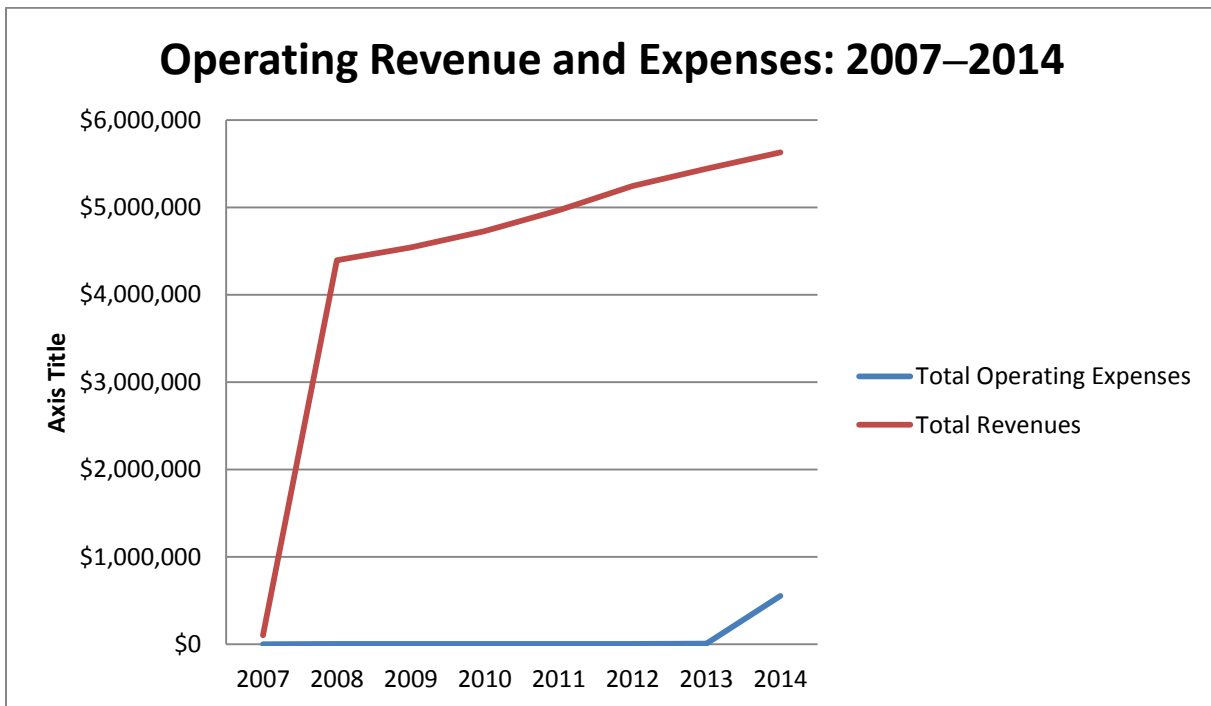
Total Incurred Project Costs: \$64.35M

Finances

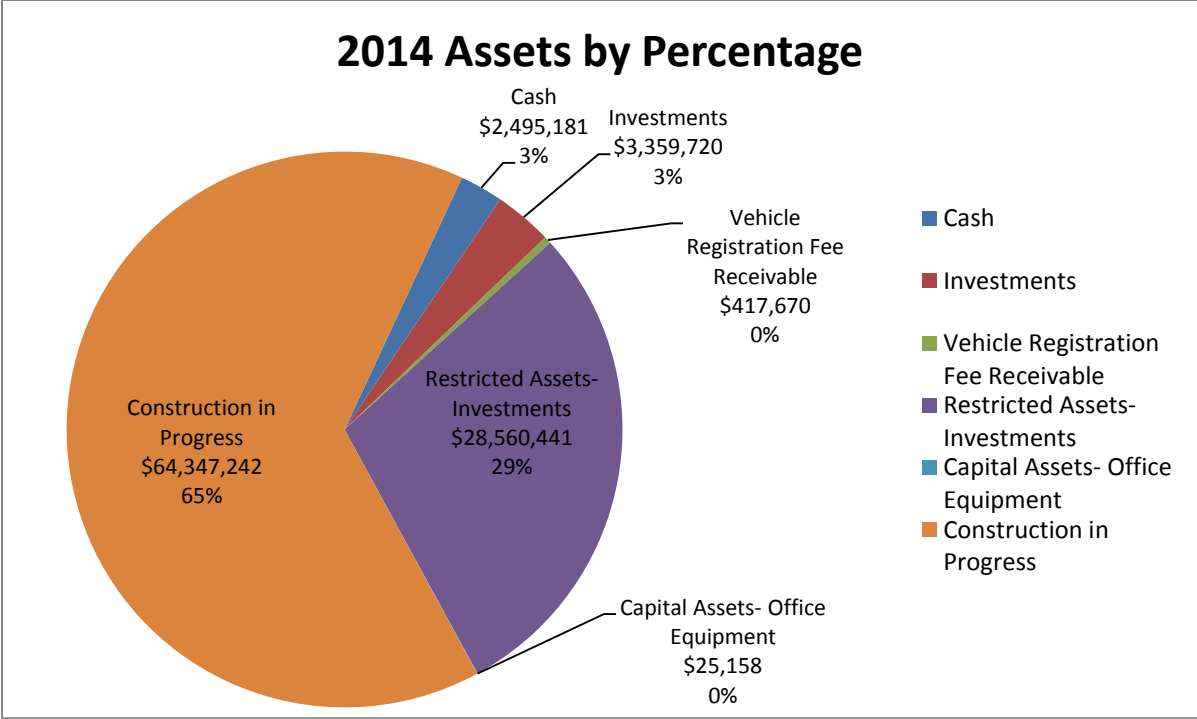
Financial information for HCRMA is presented in the following figures.



Hidalgo County RMA Assets and Liabilities 2007–2014

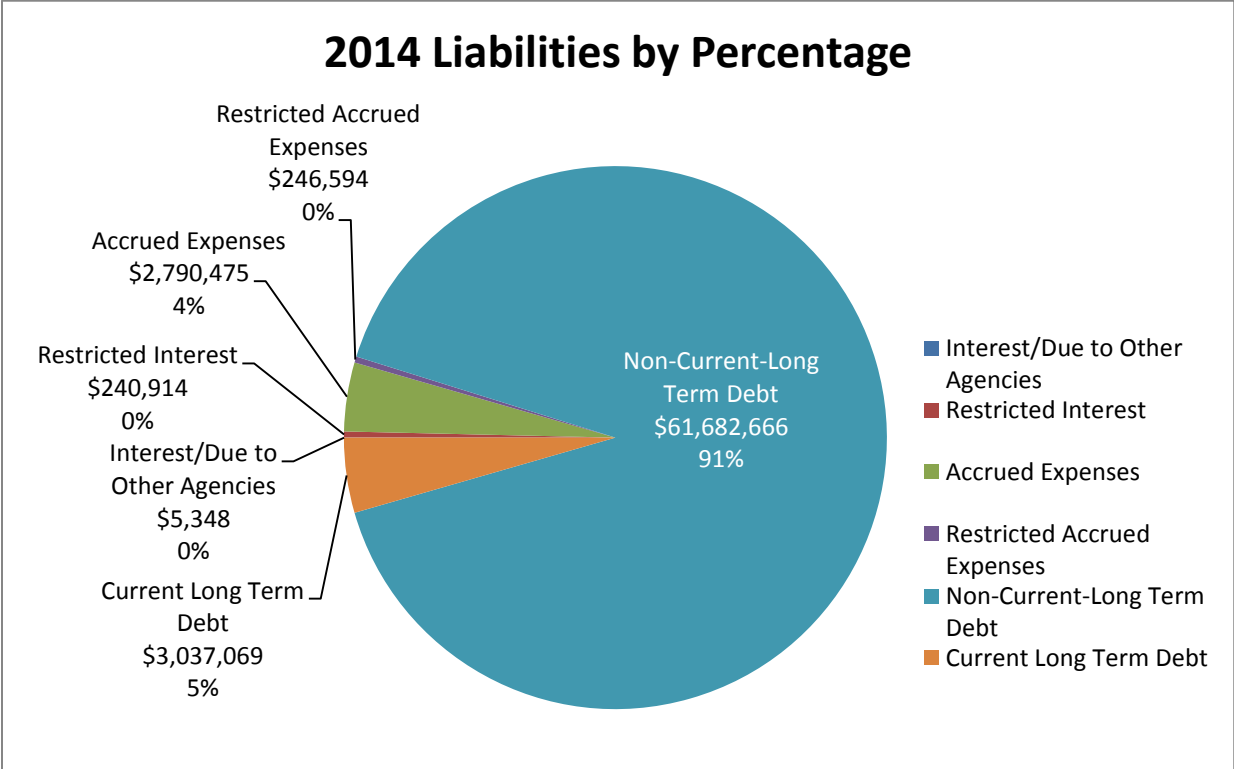


Hidalgo County RMA Operating Expenses and Revenues 2007–2014

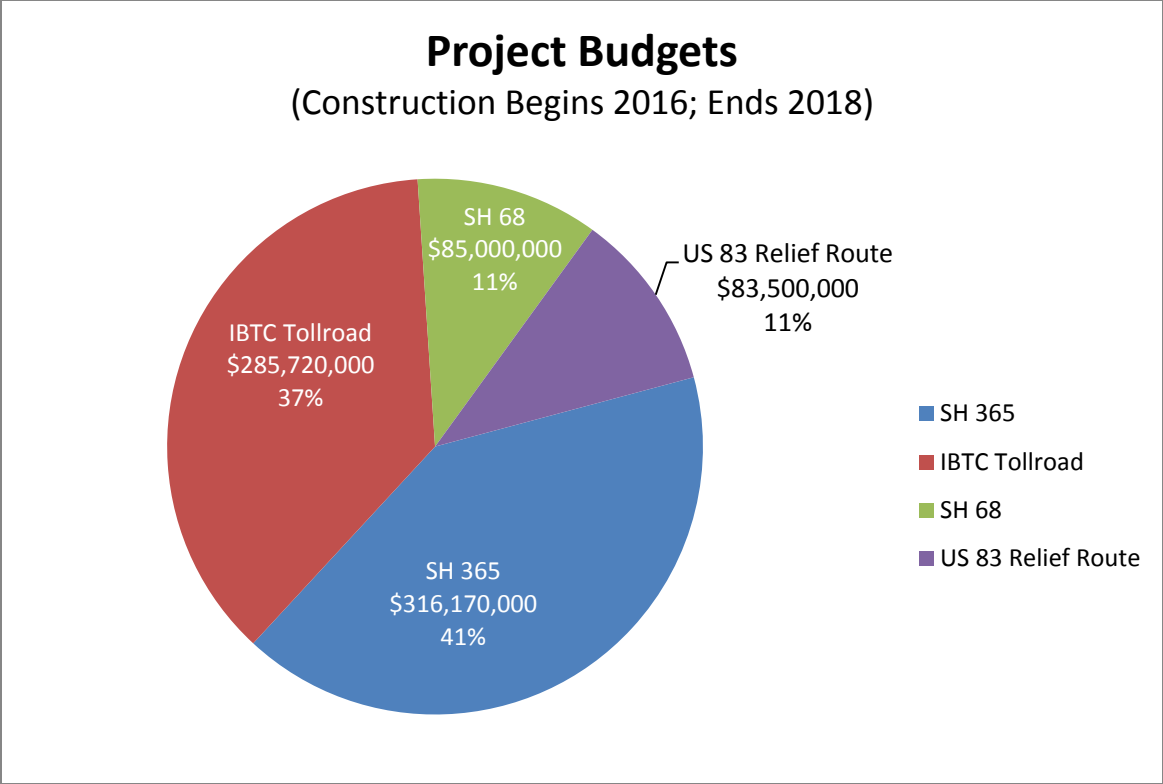


Hidalgo County RMA Assets by Percentage

*Construction-in-progress includes SH 365 and International Bridge Trade Corridor- (SH 68).



Hidalgo County RMA Liabilities by Percentage



Hidalgo County Project Construction Budgets 2016–2018

Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (53)

Master Plan

Develop the infrastructure to serve approximately 800,000 residents and 5 international ports of entry.

State Highway 365

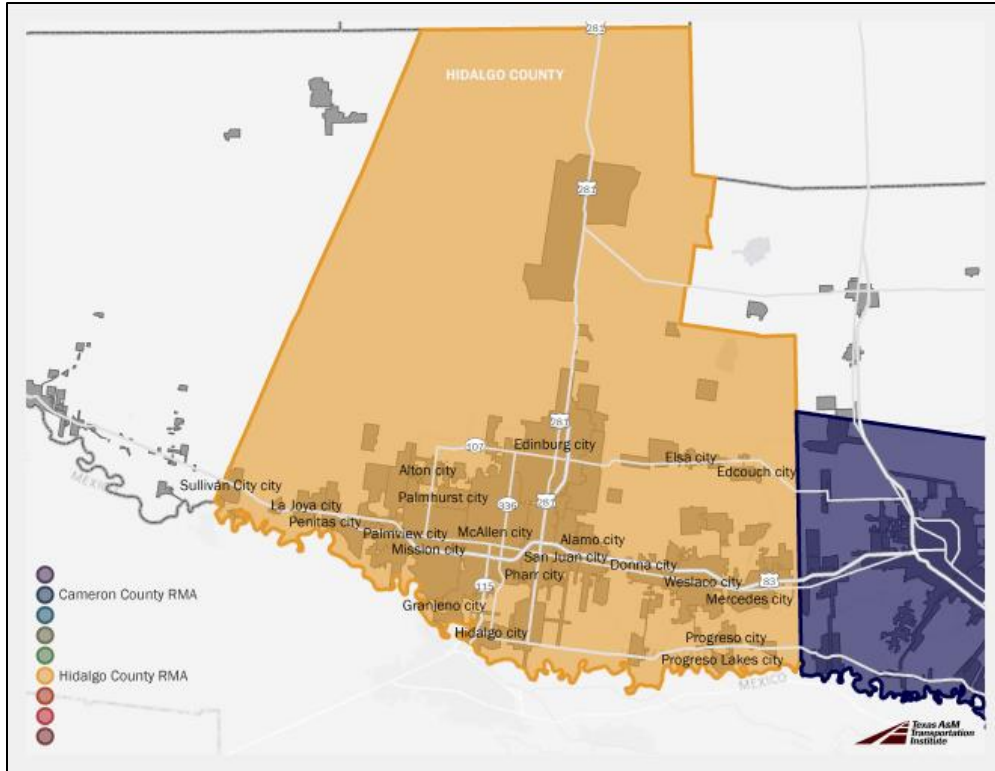
Phase 1: improve from FM 396/Anzalduas Highway to US 281 (15.28 mi); Phase 2: improve FM 1016/Conway Ave. to FM 396/Anzalduas Highway (2.65 mi).

International Bridge Trade Corridor

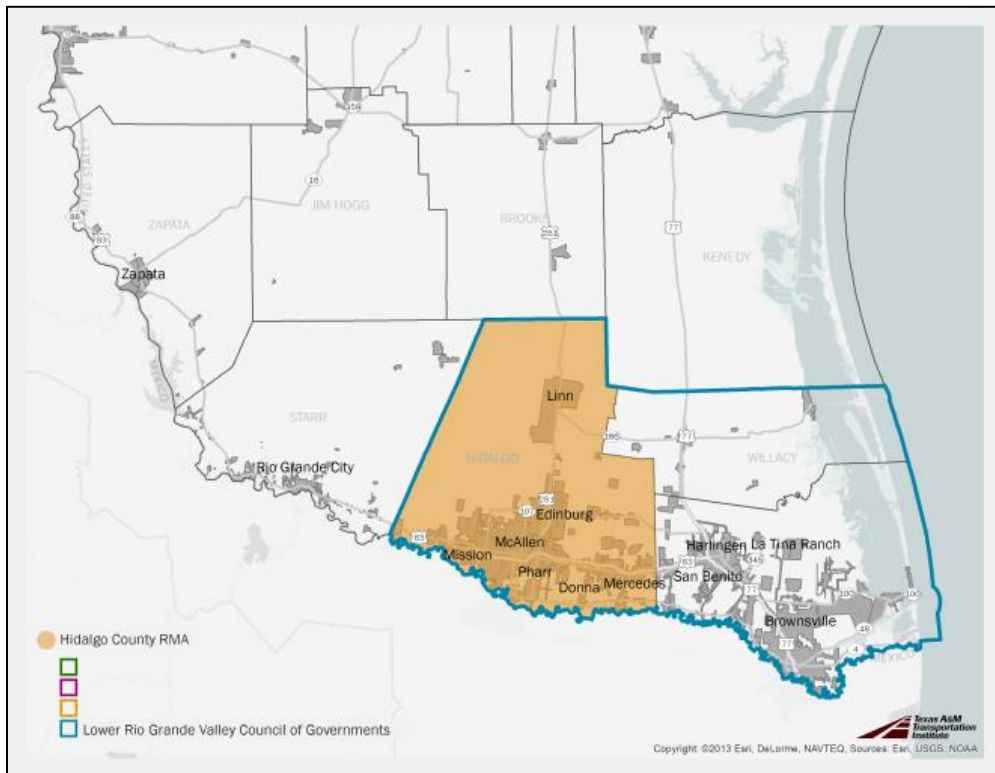
From US 83 to FM 3072 and to FM 493.

Overweight/Oversized Truck Corridor

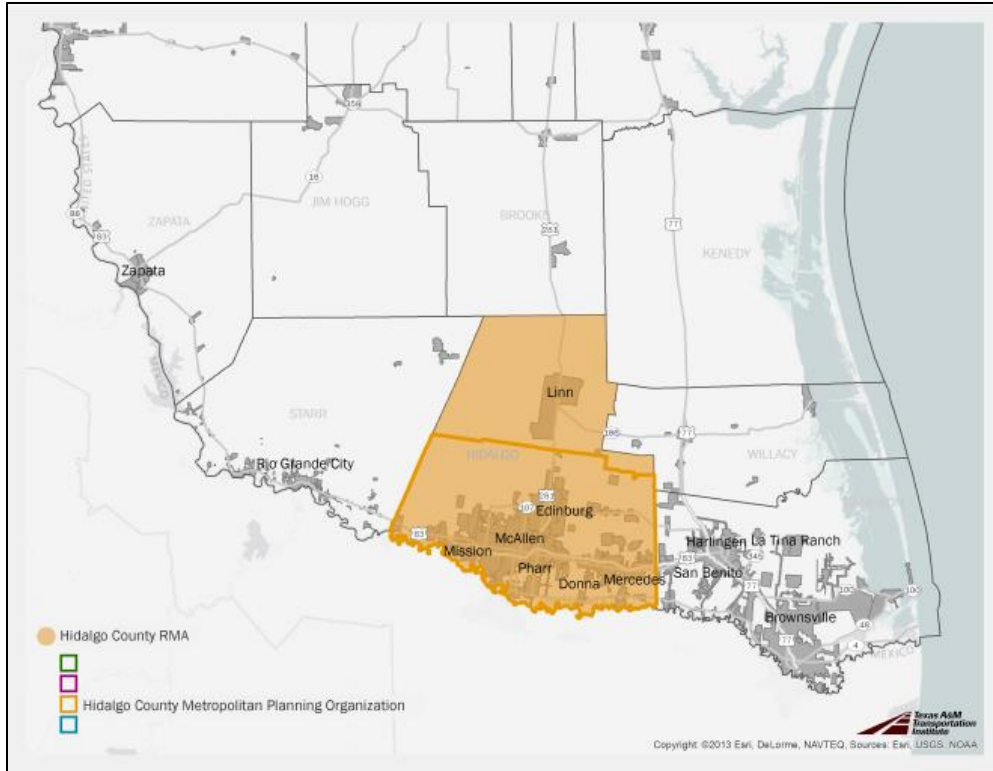
Issue oversize and overweight permits online via HCRMA’s website.



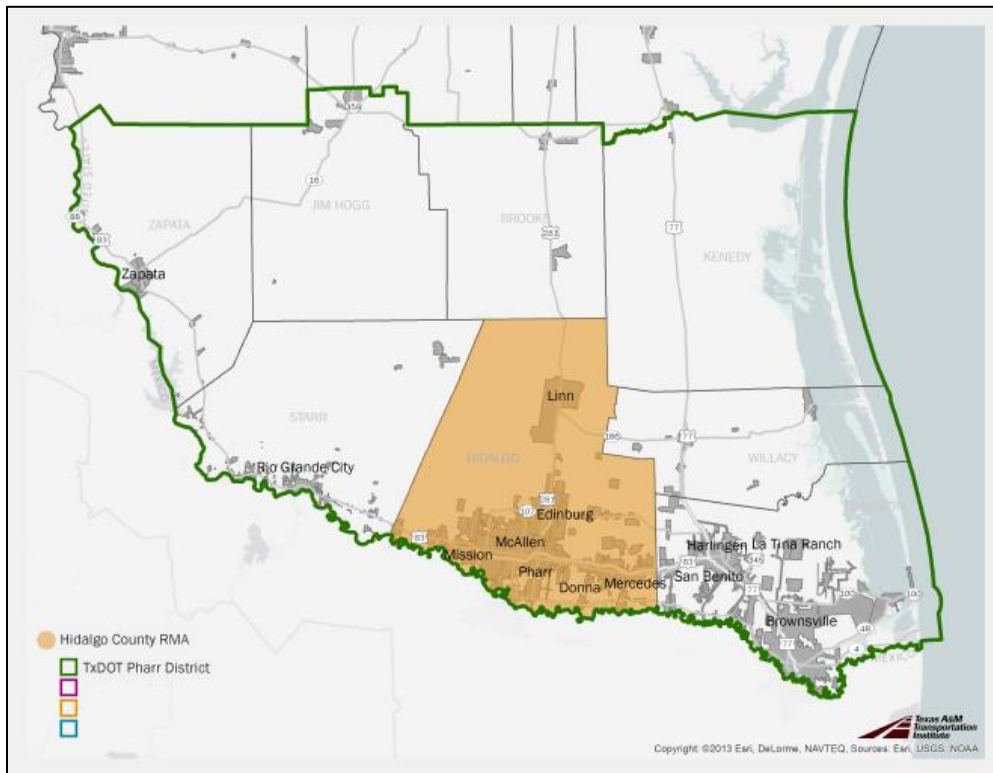
Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority



Lower Rio Grande Valley Council of Governments



Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization



TxDOT Pharr District

RMA Profile: Northeast Texas

History

TTC, finding that the proposed NETRMA satisfied the requisite criteria for approval, created the RMA in October 2004 in Smith and Gregg Counties. The other member counties, Bowie, Cherokee, Harrison, Kaufman, Panola, Rusk, Titus, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood, joined the RMA in subsequent years. The projects that the RMA was initially authorized to develop consisted of the continuation and completion of Loop 49 in Smith County as a four-lane divided highway, including an eastern corridor to extend into Gregg County. As planned, Loop 49 would span approximately 45–50 miles (depending on the eastern route) and link three separate NHS/Truck System highways (US 69, SH 31, IH 20). It was assumed that this project would improve traffic flow throughout the region and eliminate the need to make connections through the city of Tyler’s urban center (54).

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is the city of Tyler. The area is 9,172.15 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 825,430; and the population density is 1293.1.

Mobility Data

Lane miles in RMA	37,044
Urban lane miles	6,989
Rural lane miles	30,055
Freeway Miles	785
Vehicle Mile Traveled	26,300,783
Top 100 Congested Roadways	0

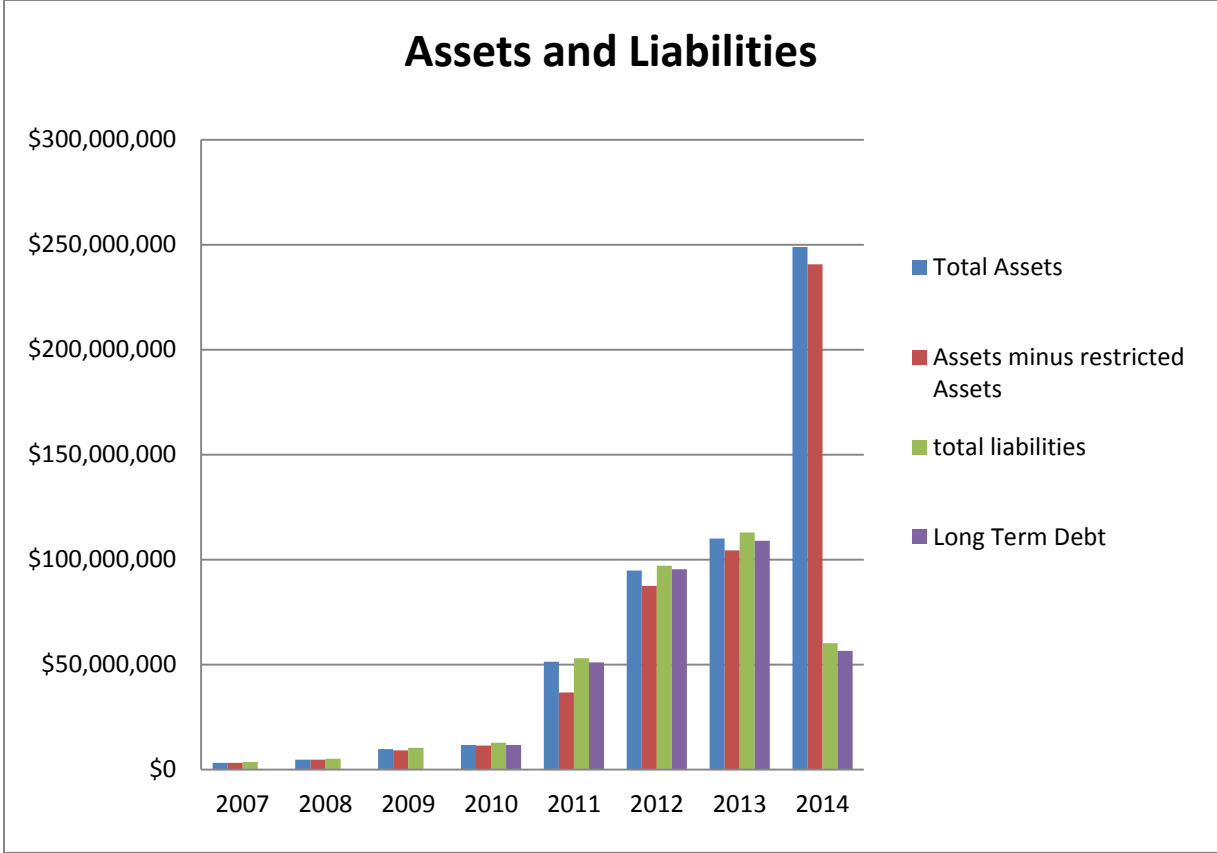
Project Types

- Highway 49 Toll Road.
- Rail plan.
- Transit planning.

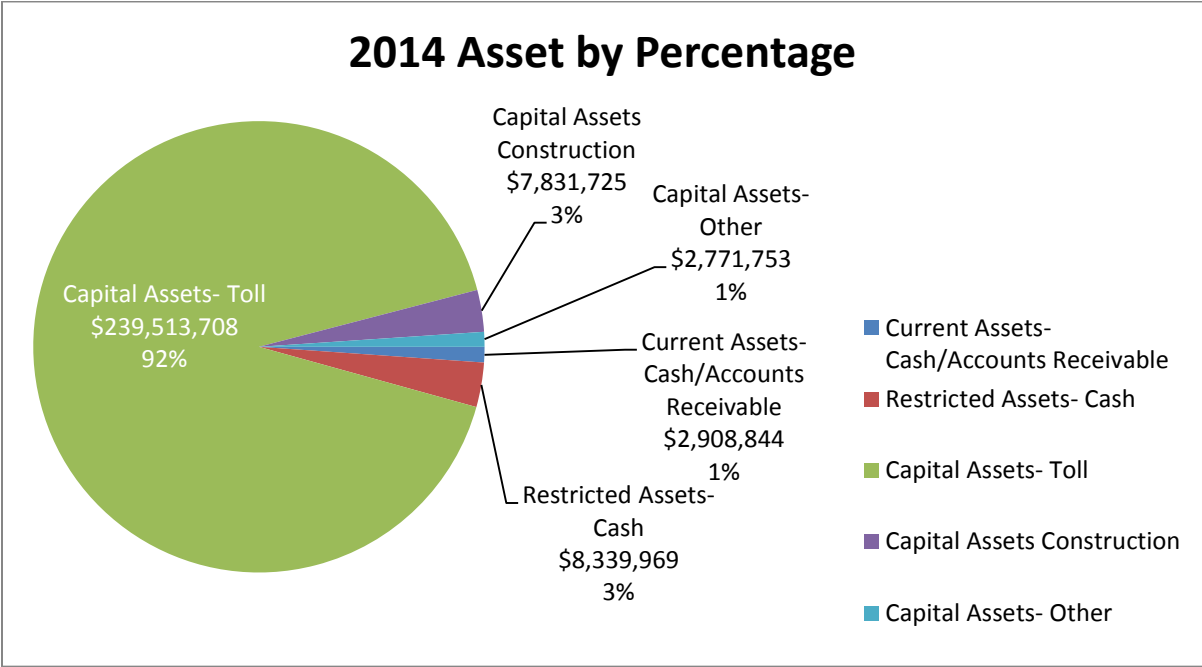
Total Incurred Project Costs: \$242.2 M

Finances

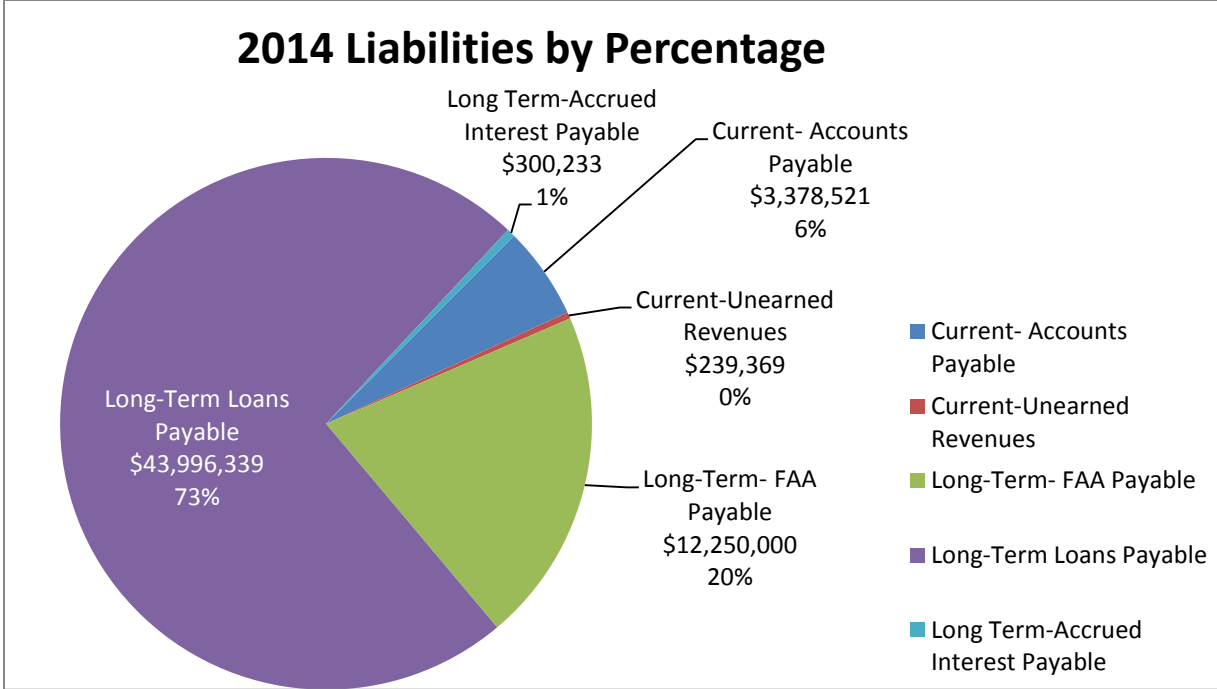
Financial information on NETRMA is presented in the following figures.



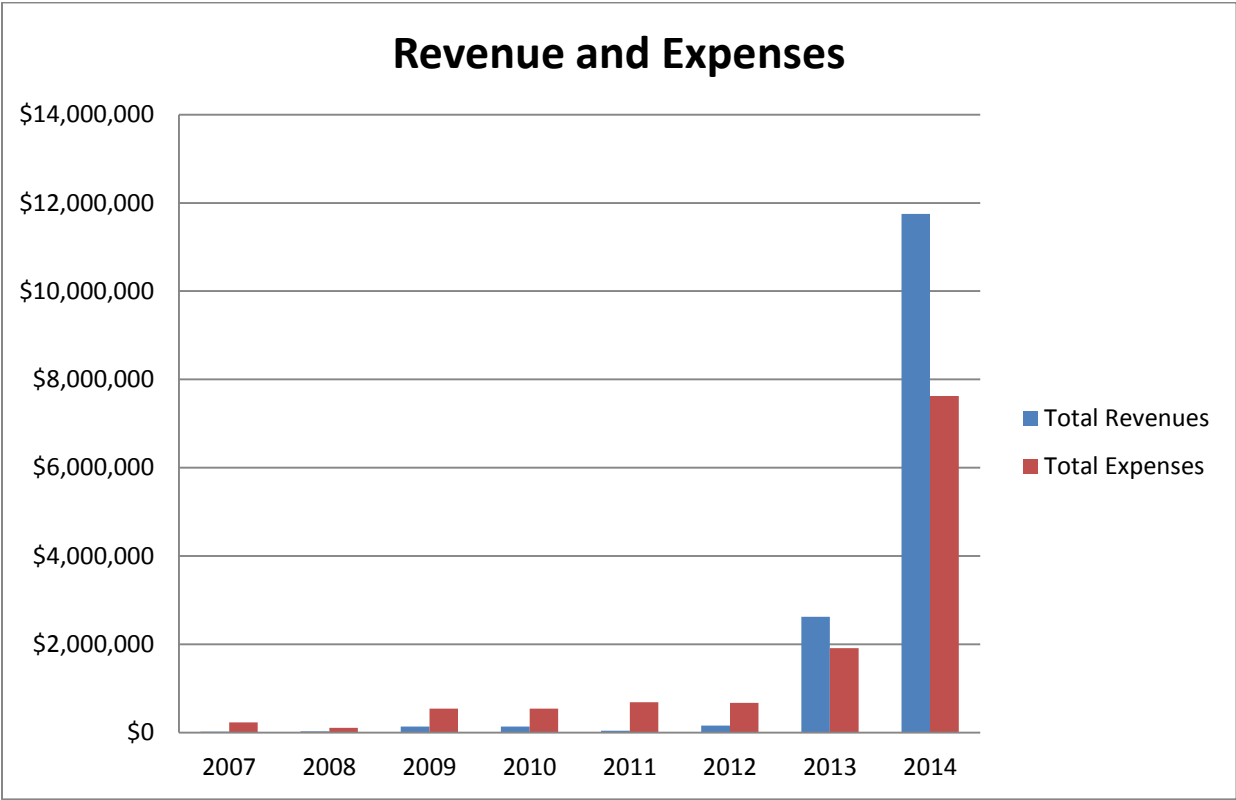
Northeast Texas RMA Assets and Liabilities 2007–2014



Northeast Texas Asset by Percentage 2014

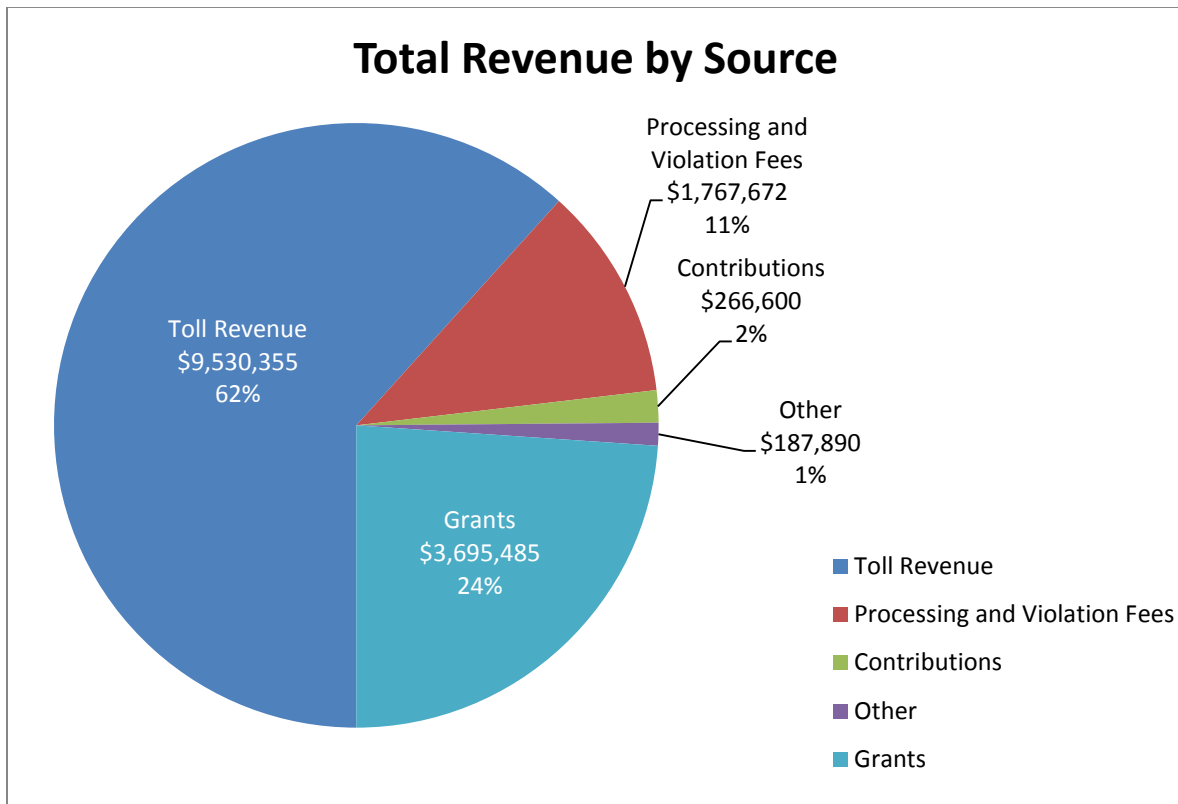


Northeast Texas RMA Liabilities by Percentage 2014

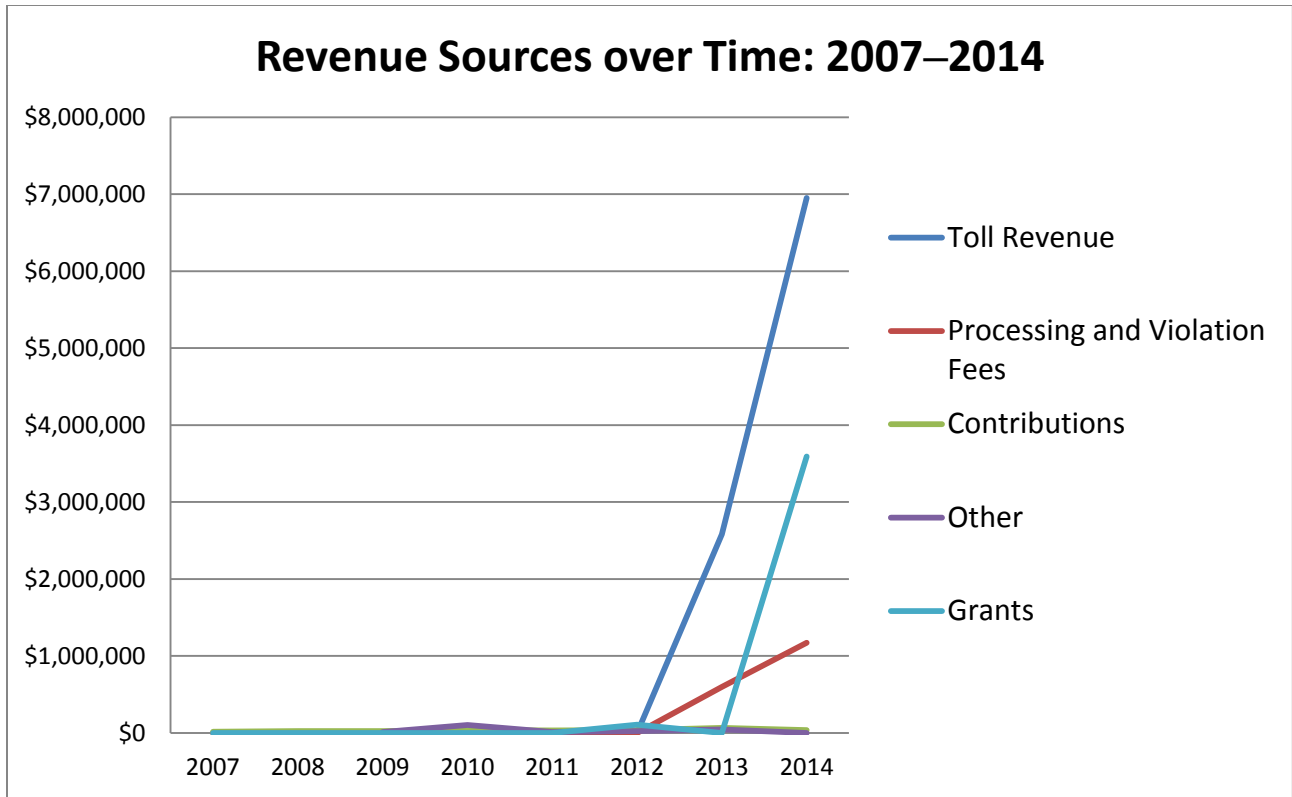


Northeast Texas RMA Revenues and Expenses 2007–2014

Revenues and expenses increased in 2013 due to the completion of Segments 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the Loop 49 Toll road. Revenues and expenses kept up with each other, with general and operating expenses increasing by \$1.9 million, and revenues driven by tolls increasing by \$1.1 million.



Northeast Texas RMA Revenues by Source (2007–2014)



Northeast Texas RMA Revenue by Source over Time 2007–2013

Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (55)

Segments 1, 2, 3A, 3B, and 5 of Loop 49 Toll system in Smith County (Completed)

25.6 miles of Toll 49 Segments 1, 2, 3A, 5, and 3B are complete and in operation.

Toll 49 in Smith County (In Planning)

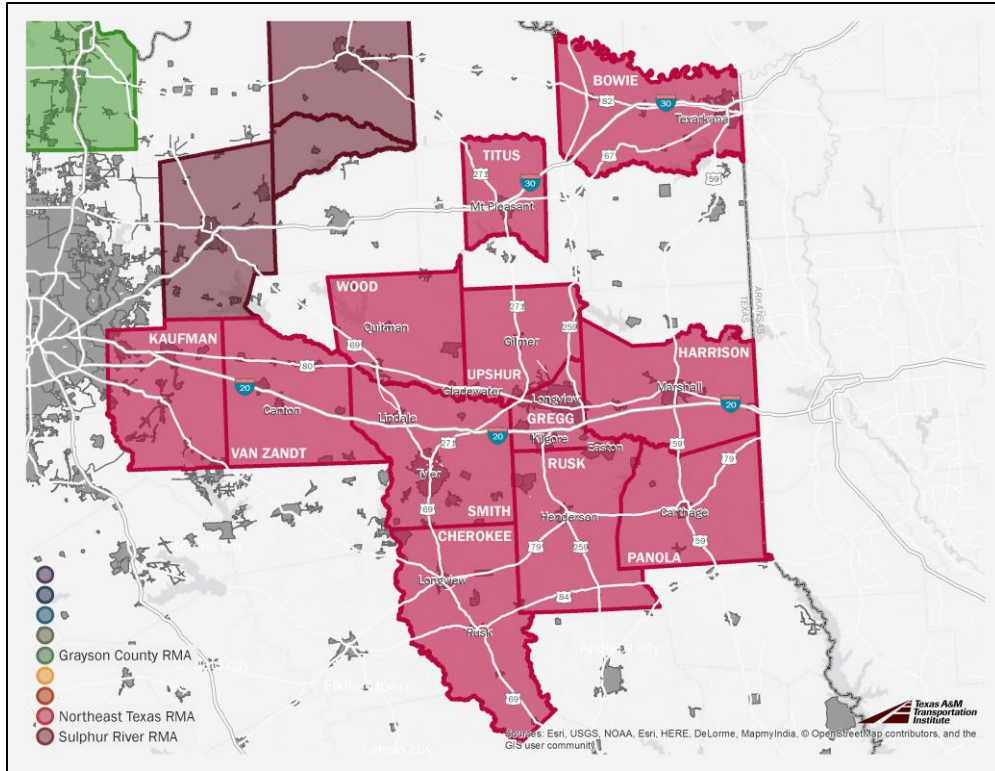
Feasibility study for additional improvements to segment 3B, planning and environmental studies on segment 4, environmental study on segment 7B, consideration of a transportation reinvestment zone in Gregg, Smith, and Upshur Counties.

Loop 571 in Henderson (In Construction)

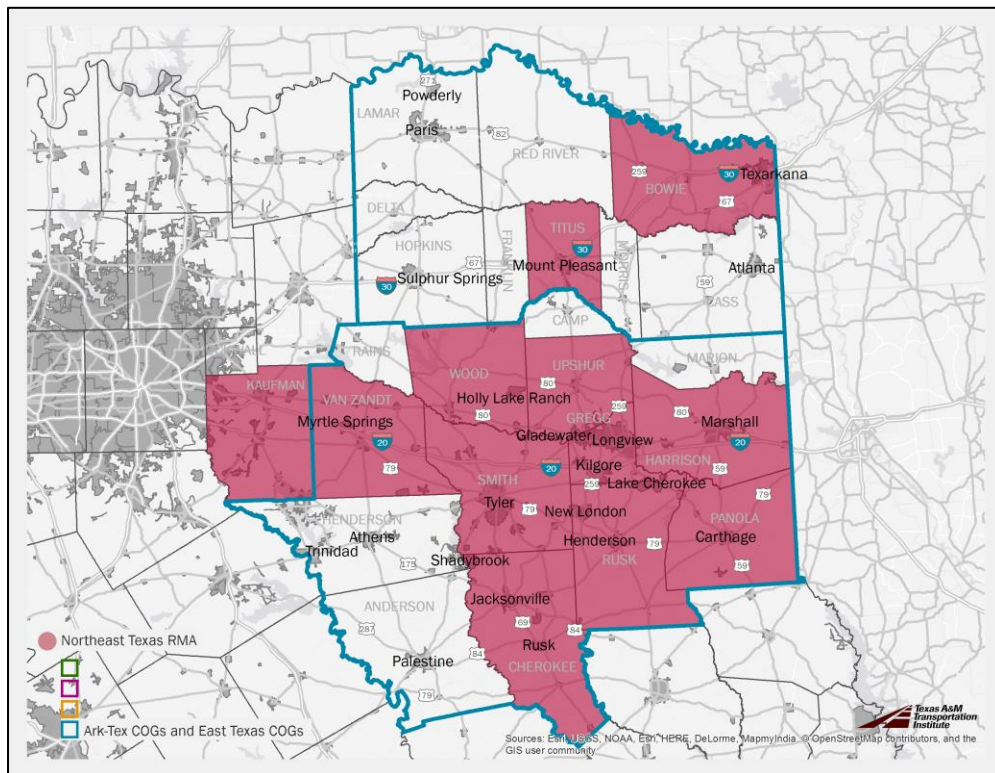
Extend from US 79 to US 259.

Dallas - Shreveport High Speed Rail (Initiating)

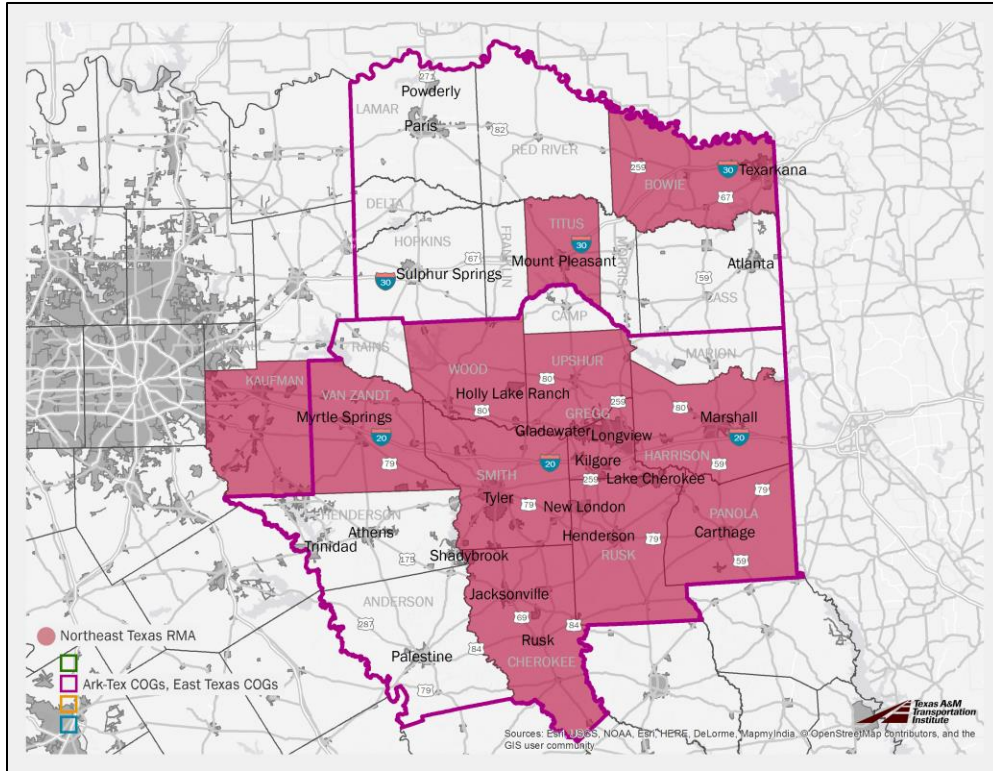
Plan High Speed Rail from Dallas to Shreveport as the Texas Louisiana Rail Coalition.



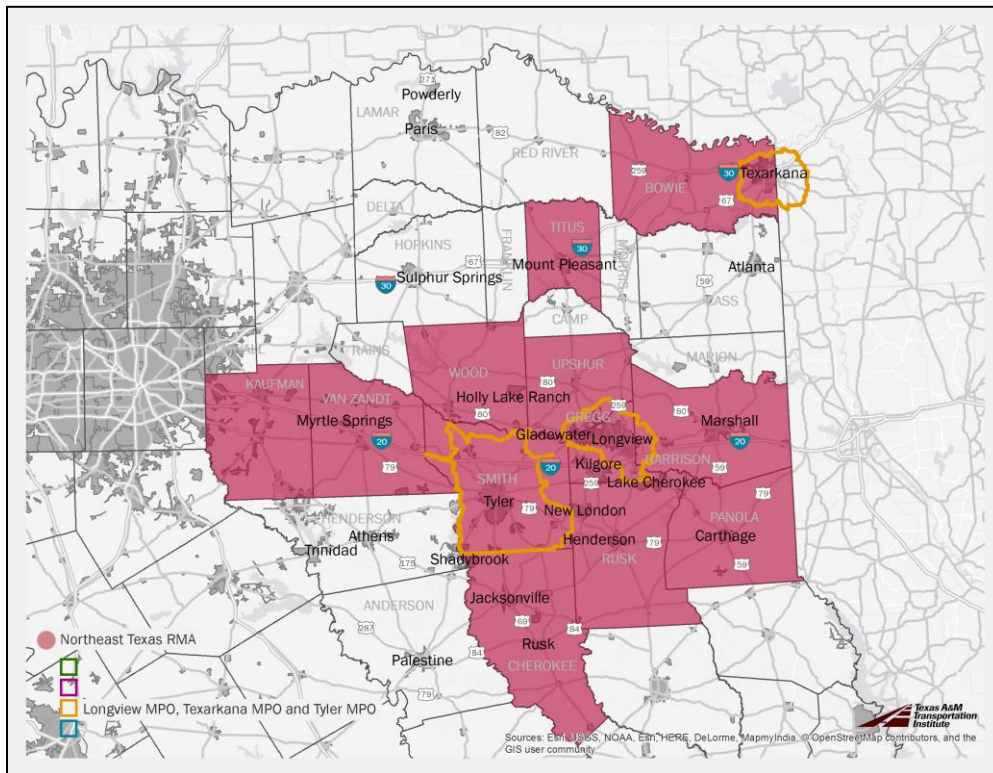
Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority



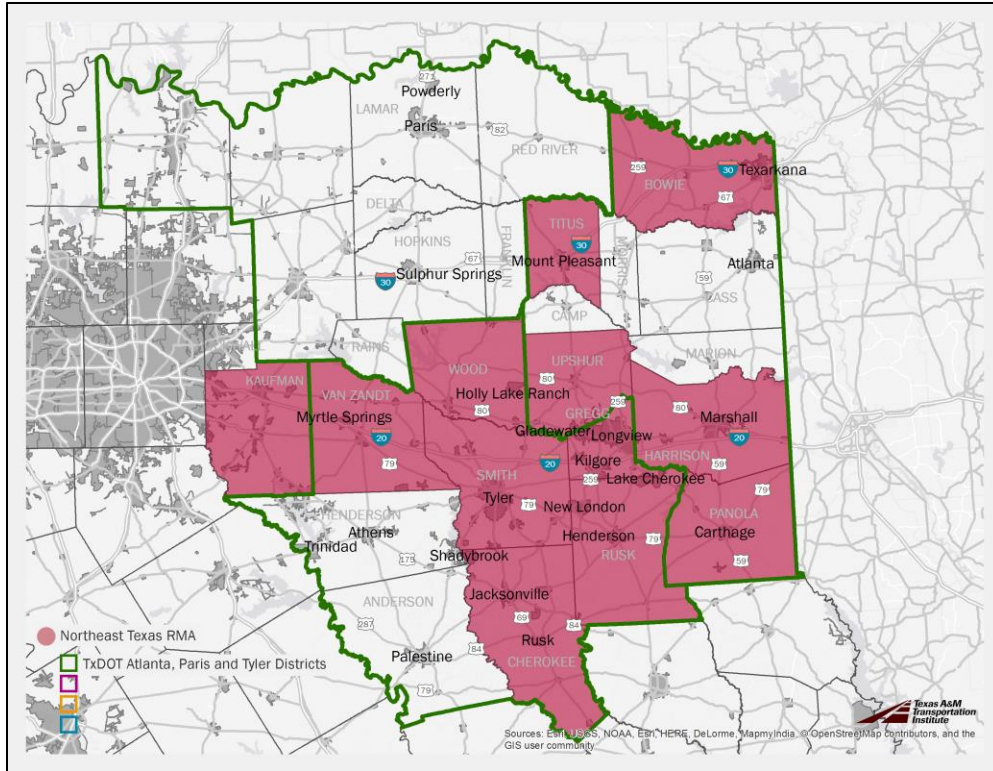
Ark-Tex COGs and East Texas COGs



Ark-Tex COGs and East Texas COGs



Longview, Texarkana, and Tyler Metropolitan Planning Organizations



TxDOT Atlanta, Paris, and Tyler Districts

RMA Profile: Sulphur River

History

The Sulphur River RMA was established in 2008 in the Delta, Hunt, Hopkins, and Lamar Counties.

Geography

The largest city in the RMA is the city of Greenville, in Hunt County. The area is 2004.3 square miles.

Population

The population of the area is 141,712; and the population density is 177.8.

Mobility Data

Lane miles in RMA	8,370
Urban lane miles	1,291
Rural lane miles	7,078
Freeway Miles	119
Vehicle Mile Traveled	4,354,777
Top 100 Congested Roadways	0

Project Types

- Highway capacity

Total Incurred Project Costs: \$38.5 M

Finance

No financial information available at time of writing.

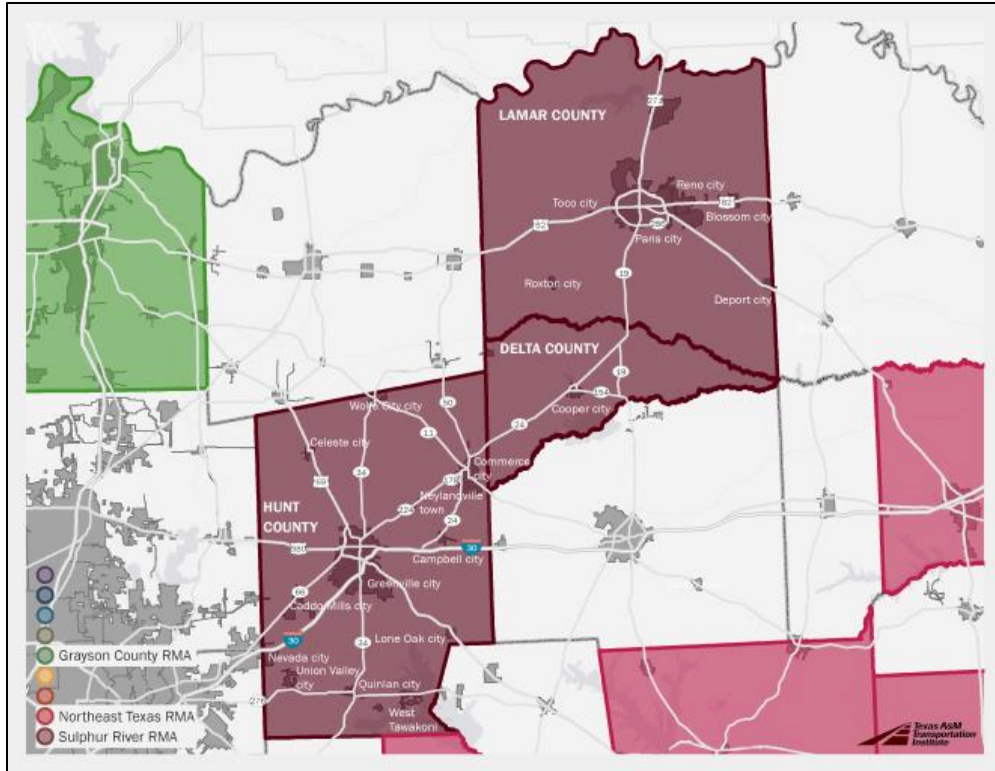
Transportation Plans, Projects, and Programs (37)

Long Range Transportation Plan

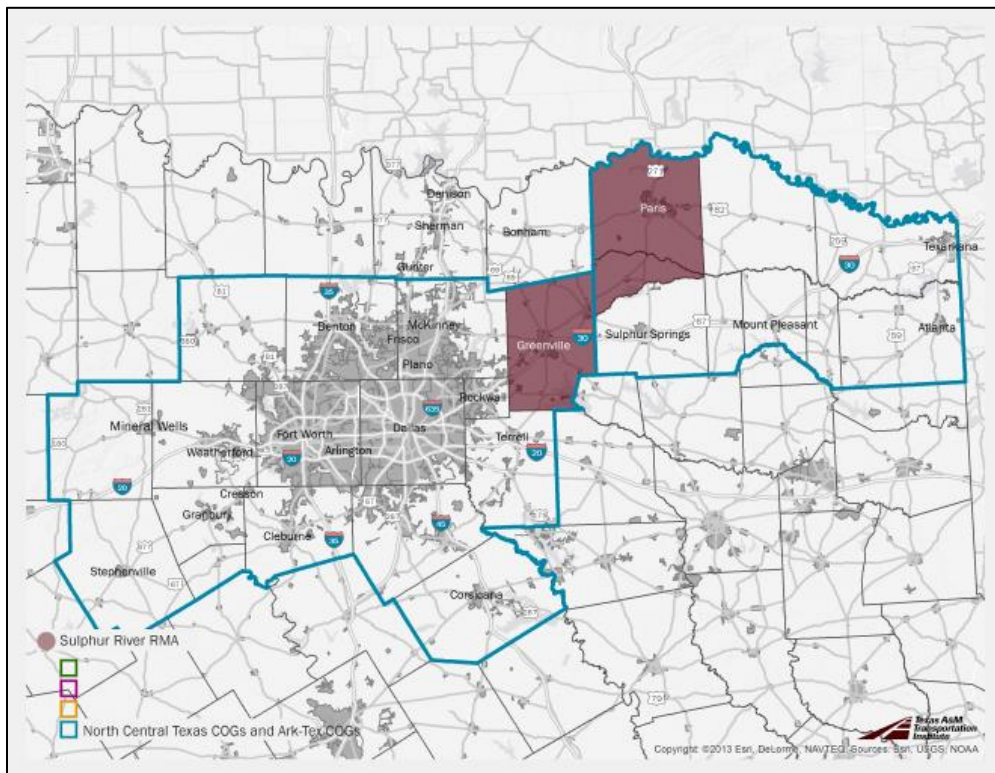
Identify and prioritize transportation needs in the region.

SH 24 Upgrade and Widen

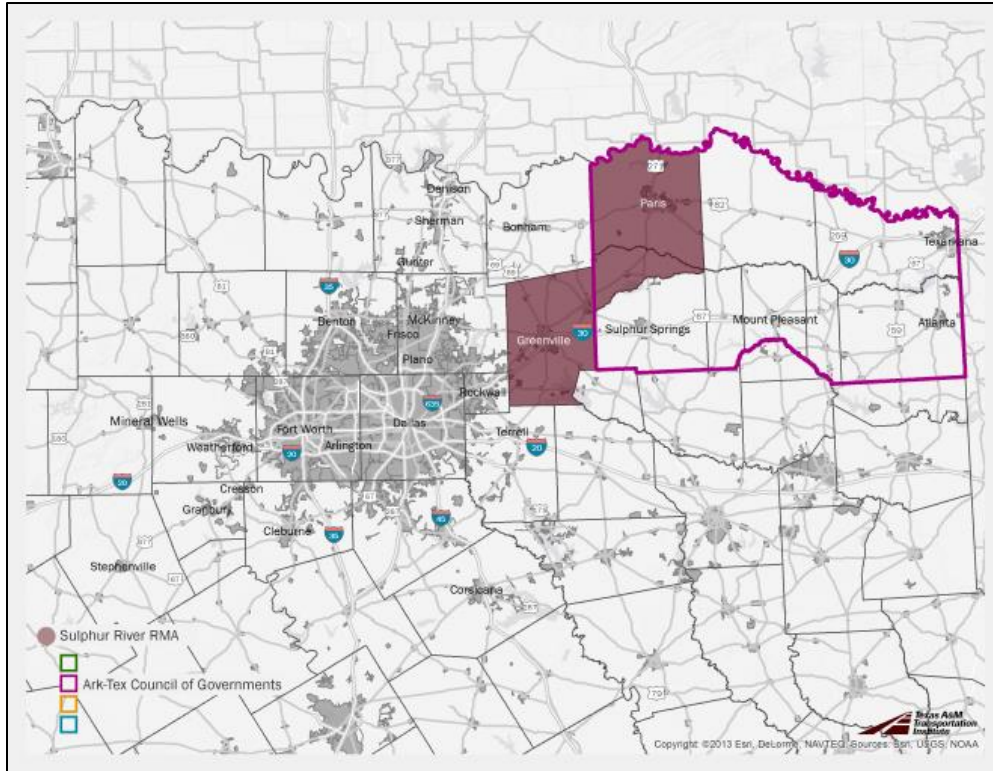
Upgrade and widen from 2-lane to 4-lane between IH 30 exit 101 and the city limits of Paris, Texas; widen between FM 904 at Hunt County line and FM 64.



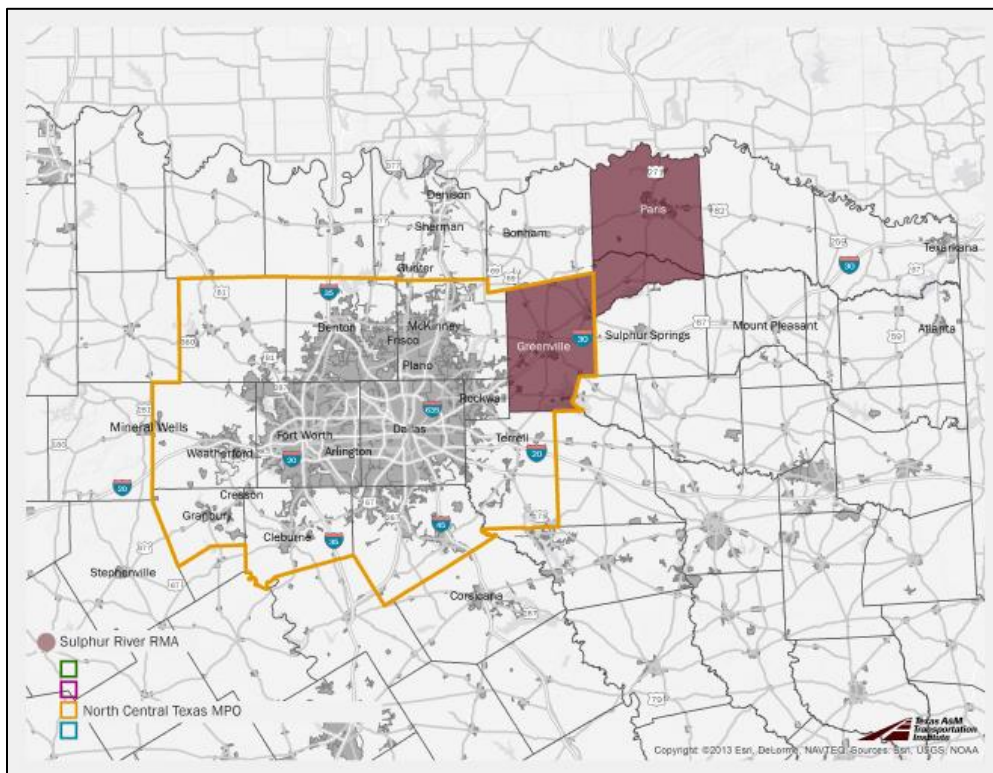
Sulphur River Regional Mobility Authority



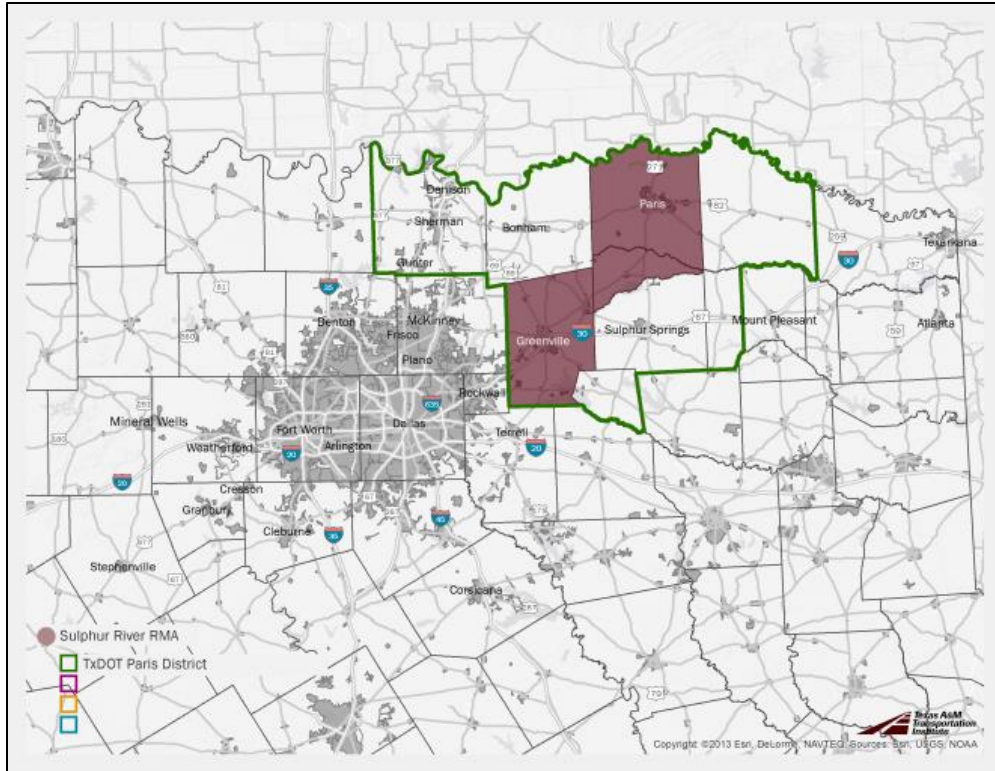
North Central Texas COGs and Ark-Tex COGs



Ark-Tex Council of Governments



North Central Texas Metropolitan Planning Organization



TxDOT Paris District

Appendix 2: Annotated Bibliography of Literature Review Results

A literature search relating to RMAs was conducted and resulted in the annotated bibliography presented below. Prior noteworthy research publications specifically targeting RMAs include works by Katherine Turnbull (2003), Tina Collier (2006), and Ginger Goodin (2006-7).

1. Baker, Richard, Ginger Goodin, Eric Lindquist, and David Shoemaker. *Feasibility of Mileage-Based User Fees: Application in Rural/Small Urban Areas of Northeast Texas*. Report No. 08-11-06. Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), The Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) with NETRMA. Sponsor: The University Transportation Center for Mobility, TTI, TAMUS. College Station, TX. October 2008.
http://utcm.tamu.edu/publications/final_reports/Goodin_08-11-06.pdf, Accessed on June 15, 2015.

This study explores the application of mileage-based user fees, or VMT fees, as an alternative to the fuel tax in rural and small urban areas. The purpose of the study is to identify the issues associated with implementation of a potential new transportation funding system so that public and political concerns in rural communities can be addressed. By reviewing and evaluating the current fuel tax system in Texas, researchers established a baseline for any future alternative financing mechanisms. In partnership with NETRMA, the research team conducted outreach activities, identifying potential issues and challenges to any proposed change to the existing transportation funding system. The information gathered with a variety of data collection tools was used to develop a public acceptance framework for evaluating a future mileage-based user fee pilot project.

2. Bruno, David L. and Charles R. Stevens. "Regional Mobility Authorities in Texas." In *Proceedings of the 2005 Mid-Continent Transportation Research Symposium, Ames, Iowa, August 2005*. Iowa State University. Ames, IA. 2005.
<http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/pubs/midcon2005/BrunoMobility.pdf>, accessed on June 15, 2015.

As RMAs become more common throughout Texas, the financial impacts are influencing the future of transportation by creating revenue, increasing local government control, and speeding up project timelines that reduce congestion, improve mobility, and increase safety. HB 3588 and its predecessor, SB 342, introduced the methods and procedures of debt-financing transportation infrastructure to Texas. A major departure from the pay-as-you-go philosophy of the past 88 years, it is important to understand how RMAs are formed and how they will affect present and future transportation project financing in Texas. To do this, researchers pursued the following objectives:

- Determine the short-term effects of RMA formation and financing.
 - Determine the long-term effects of RMA formation and financing.
 - Investigate agency cooperation after the formation of an RMA.
 - Determine RMA's improvement over the past system.
 - Describe experiences with the formation of an RMA.
3. Collier, Tina. *Regional Mobility Authority: Creation to Implementation*. Project Status Report 5-4055-01-2, July 2005. <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/5-4055-01-2.pdf>. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University System. College Station, TX. November 2006.

One of the purposes of this implementation project was to document the activities and issues leading to the possible implementation of a toll project on Loop 49 in Tyler, Texas. The Tyler District of TxDOT received interest from several organizations about the purpose and function of an RMA. This report documents the formation of the NETRMA and the continued support it offers to Loop 49 as its primary project. This report provides details of the enabling legislation and the process of the formation, and offers some lessons learned.

4. Goodin, Ginger and Tina Collier. *Case Study Analysis of Urban/Rural Area Toll Road Options – Year 2 Report*. Report No. FHWA/TX-06/5-4055-01-3. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University System. Austin, TX. May 2007. <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/5-4055-01-3.pdf>.

This research primarily focuses on transferring findings and best practices to the toll development process for Tyler Loop 49, as a rural, low-volume toll facility. A second focus is documenting the processes used in evaluating and developing Loop 49 as a toll project so other TxDOT districts can draw on all lessons learned. Concentrating on technology transfer associated with public outreach and documentation of the RMA formation and environmental reevaluation process, the research team formulated lessons learned into a one-day workshop in order to share information. These lessons can be used to develop other tolling projects in Texas, particularly in smaller urban or rural settings.

5. Goodin, Ginger and Tina Collier. *Lessons Learned from Loop 49: Implementation of a New Toll Road in Tyler, Texas*. Report No. FHWA/TX-07/5-4055-01-6. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University System. Austin, TX. January 2007. <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/5-4055-01-6.pdf>.

The final report in a series prepared as a case study analysis of a mid-size urban/rural toll road implementation, this case study focuses on the proposed outer Loop 49 in the Tyler, Texas, area. Development of Loop 49 as a toll facility is documented, including the tolling concept, design, public acceptability, and environmental aspects. Summarizing

lessons learned through the project development process as a two-lane, all-electronic tolled highway, the findings cover various aspects of tolling implementation, including public support, design flexibility, environmental re-evaluation, financial planning, and formation of the RMA. While lessons are from the perspective of a state DOT pursuing tolling in a small urban or rural setting, many have broader application in development of toll projects, particularly in communities new to tolling.

6. Saginor, Jesse, Eric Dumbaugh, David Ellis and Minjie Xu. *Leveraging Land Development Returns to Finance Transportation Infrastructure Improvements*. Project No. UTCM 09-13-12. University Transportation Center for Mobility™, Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University System. Washington, D.C. March 2011. http://utcm.tamu.edu/publications/final_reports/Saginor_09-13-12.pdf, accessed on June 15, 2015.

The combination of declining revenues and higher costs is causing financing shortfalls for new transportation infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure. As one effort to bridge this gap, Texas HB 3588 authorized the creation of RMAs, which have the ability to apply tax-increment finance (TIF) to capture land development returns associated with land development improvements. This research identifies the magnitude of property value increases associated with transportation infrastructure improvements, the assessment levels and investment horizon needed to recapture the costs of transportation infrastructure improvements, and how these revenue streams may be further leveraged to support local and regional investments in transportation infrastructure. Using a quasi-experimental design, property values in areas that recently underwent significant transportation infrastructure improvements were compared to nearby control groups. The relative property value increases determine the relative margin of benefit from which TIF revenues may be drawn against the transportation infrastructure capital costs.

7. Texas Department of Transportation. *Regional Mobility Authorities*. Texas Department of Transportation. Austin, TX. July 2004.

This document provides information about RMAs, including general information and responsibilities, what types of transportation projects possibly eligible for funding, how an RMA is formed and operated, and referenced documents and contacts.

8. Texas Department of Transportation. *Regional Mobility Authorities: A Partnership for Progress*. Transportation Planning and Programming Division, Texas Department of Transportation. Austin, TX. November 2013. <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/tpp/rma/report.pdf>, Accessed on June 15, 2015.

This document provides information about RMAs, including general information and responsibilities, what types of transportation projects possibly eligible for funding, how an RMA is formed and operated, and referenced documents and contacts.

9. Texas Transportation Institute. "TxDOT—Regional Toll Authority: Cooperation & Coordination." In *Texas Transportation Researcher: Multimodal Transportation System*. Vol 39: No. 1. p 13. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University System, College Station, TX. 2003. <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/4055-S.pdf>, Accessed on June 15, 2015.

This article discusses the need for guidelines on the development of regional tollway authorities that would "... provide guidance rather than mandating a specific approach. ... guidelines [that] are flexible to meet the unique characteristics and needs of different parts of the state, while providing a common direction for all groups involved in toll projects," Delvin Dennis, deputy district engineer for the Houston District.

10. Turnbull, Katherine F. *Development of Guidelines for TxDOT – Regional Toll Authority Cooperation and Coordination*. Report No. FHWA/TX-04/0-4055-1. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University System. Austin, TX. October 2003. <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/0-4055-1.pdf>, Accessed on June 15, 2015.

This report presents the results of a research project developing guidelines for TxDOT – regional toll authority cooperation and coordination. Researchers summarize the use of toll authorities and new institutional arrangements in other states and highlight examples of coordination between TxDOT and toll authorities in Texas. The guidelines developed for TxDOT include planning, environmental review, funding, design, construction, monitoring and evaluation, and management and operations. The guidelines are flexible to meet the unique characteristics and needs of different areas, while providing a common direction for all groups involved in toll projects. They provide guidance for agency staff involved in toll projects, rather than mandating a specific approach.

11. Turnbull, Katherine F. *Enhancing TxDOT—Regional Toll Authority Cooperation and Coordination*. Project Summary Report 0-4055-S. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M Transportation Institute. College Station, TX. September 2003. <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/4055-S.pdf>, Accessed on June 15, 2015.

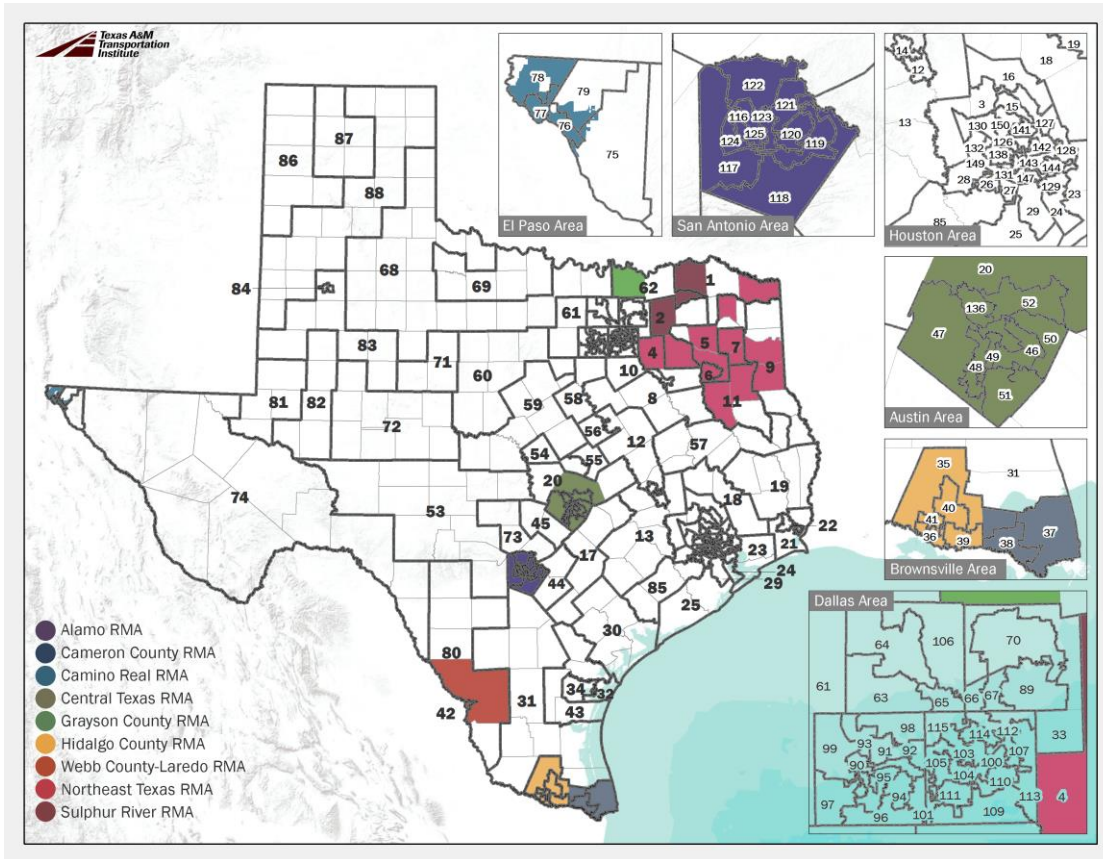
Use of these guidelines by TxDOT staff and personnel at regional toll authorities, RMAs, and other groups will help ensure that toll facilities, the Interstate system, and the state highway system provide for the safe, efficient, and effective movement of people and goods. Enhanced cooperation and coordination among all groups will help address traffic congestion, mobility, and accessibility concerns throughout Texas.

12. Turnbull, Katherine F. *Guidelines for TxDOT-Regional Toll Road Authority Cooperation and Coordination*. Research Project 0-4055-PI. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M University. Washington, D.C. August 2003. <http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/0-4055-P1.pdf>, Accessed on June 15, 2015.
13. Vadali, Sharada, et al. *Transportation Reinvestment Zone Handbook*. Report No. 0-6538 Product P1 Handbook. Texas Transportation Institute, The Texas A&M System, with Texas A&M University Corpus Christi and the University of Texas at Austin. Washington, D.C. 2008. ftp://ftp.mdt.mt.gov/research/LIBRARY/0-6538-P1/TRZSTRFT_USER_GUIDE_V2_PORT-4.PDF, Accessed on June 15, 2015.

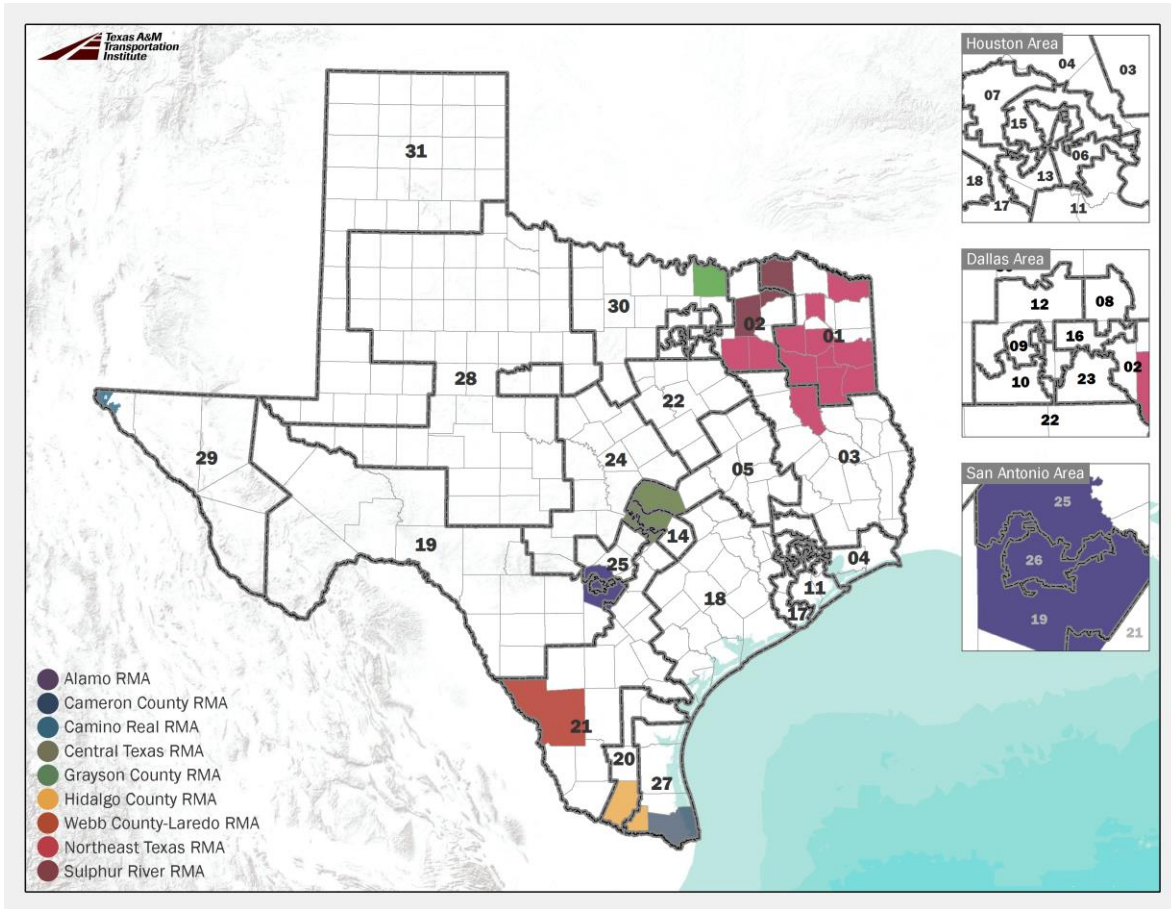
The TRZ Handbook is a practical and easy-to-use reference for TxDOT and other local government entities at all levels and with a variety of backgrounds. Policy makers can also use the handbook to review the key elements associated with various aspects of TRZ projects. The topics covered in the handbook represent a full range of topics that are of interest to practitioners including initiating a TRZ, or issues in Zone Formulation. The Handbook offers guidance based on a handful of field implementations of TRZ projects and, as such, should be considered a living document providing information based on a snapshot in time.

Appendix 3: RMA Legislative Representation Maps

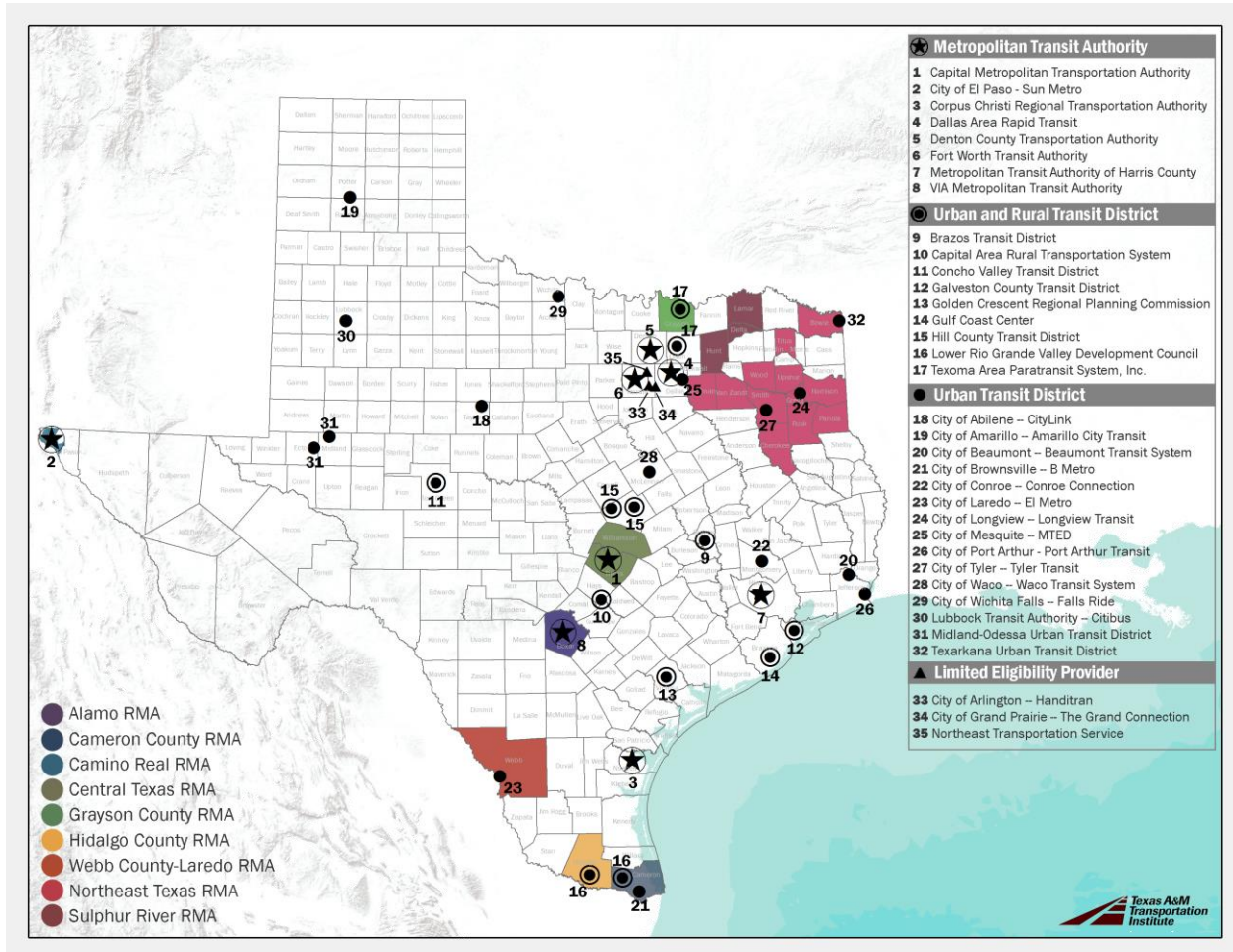
Texas House Representative Districts and RMAs



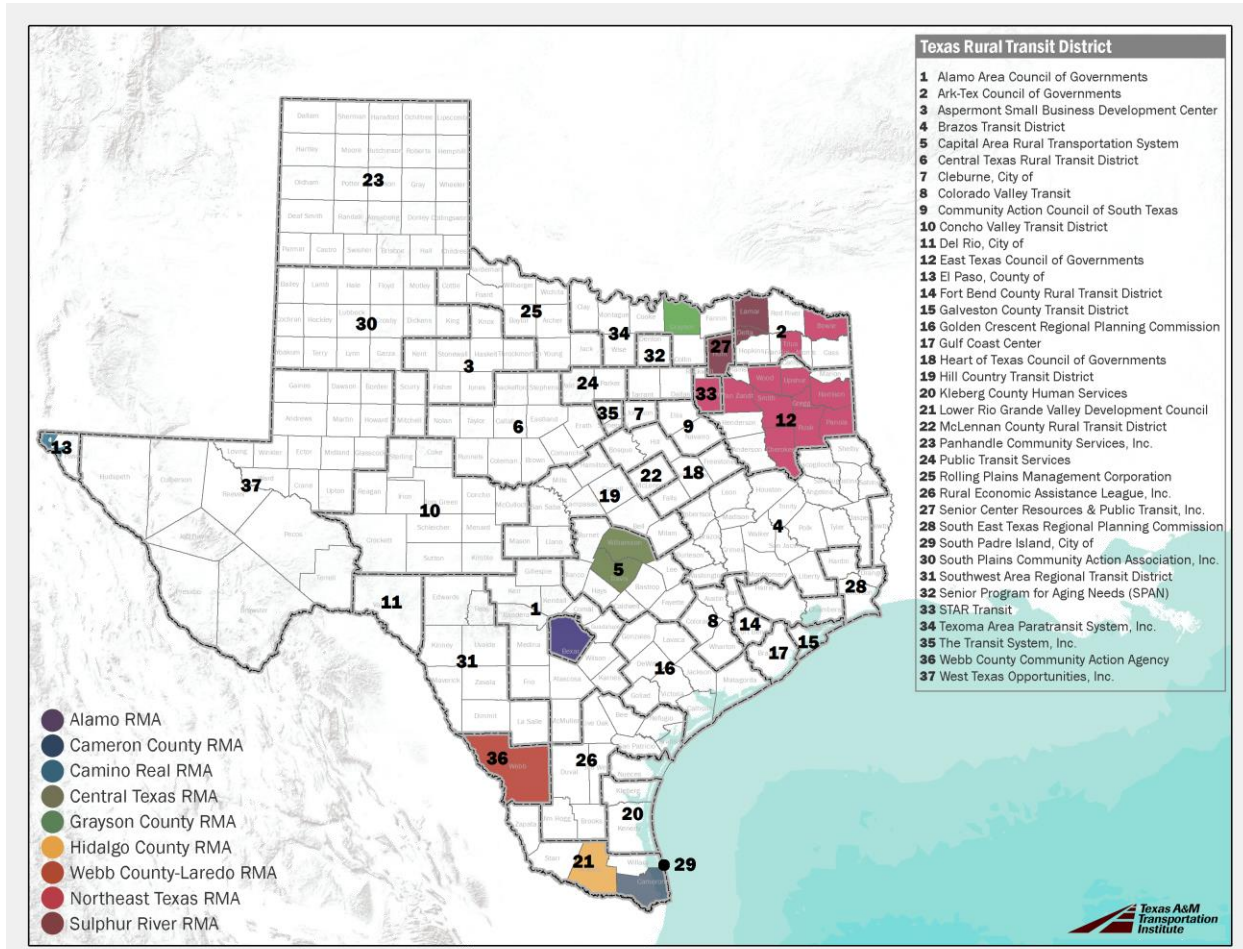
Texas Senate Districts and RMAs



Texas Urban Transit Districts and RMAs



Texas Rural Transit Districts and RMAs



References

- 1 Davila, Vianna. "Bexar County Takeover of Tolling Agency Sparks Discord." San Antonio-Express News. June 28, 2012.
http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Bexar-County-takeover-of-tolling-agency-sparks-3668391.php, Accessed on August 4, 2015.
- 2 *Regional Mobility Authorities: A Partnership for Progress*. Texas Department of Transportation. November 2013. <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/tpp/rma/report.pdf>, Accessed on June 16, 2015.
- 3 *Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority FY 2015 Operating & Capital Budget*. Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority. December 2014.
<http://www.hcrma.net/budget/HCRMA%202015%20Budget%20Book.pdf>, Accessed on May 26, 2015.
- 4 Bruno, David L. and Charles R. Stevens. "Regional Mobility Authorities in Texas." In Proceedings of the 2005 Mid-Continent Transportation Research Symposium, Ames, Iowa, August 2005. Iowa State University. Ames, IA. 2005.
<http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/pubs/midcon2005/BrunoMobility.pdf>, Accessed on June 16, 2015.
- 5 *Texas Senate Bill 342, 77th Texas Legislature*. Texas Legislature Online.
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/Search/DocViewer.aspx?ID=77RSB003424A&QueryText=%22342%22&DocType=A>. Accessed on June 16, 2015.
- 6 *House Research Organization, Bill Analysis, HB 3588*, Krusee, Delisi, 2003, p 1-3.
<http://www.hro.house.state.tx.us/pdf/ba78r/hb3588.pdf#navpanes=0>, Accessed on June 15, 2015.
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