



EL PASO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT - FY 2024

El Paso Transportation Authority is organized to encourage and assist local units of government to join and cooperate to provide and deliver regional multimodal transportation solutions for the residents of the Greater El Paso Community.



JOSE LANDEROS
DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Message from Jose Landeros

It is with great pride that we present the El Paso Transportation Authority's 2024 Annual Report, highlighting a year of transformative progress and steadfast commitment to serving our community's public transit needs.

This year, we celebrated a significant milestone with the launch of ADA Paratransit Service through our new service line, ETA Access. This initiative represents a critical step forward in ensuring equitable mobility for all residents, reflecting our mission to create a more inclusive and accessible transit system.

Additionally, we took bold steps to modernize and update our existing route structure and offerings. These enhancements were designed with our community in mind, enabling us to better connect residents to economic opportunities, healthcare, education, and beyond.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to leveraging innovative solutions and fostering partnerships to expand mobility options while maintaining the highest standards of service. These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our incredible team, the support of our community partners, and the trust of the residents we serve.

On behalf of our incredibly dedicated Board of Directors, thank you for joining us on this journey as we continue to connect communities, empower individuals, and shape the future of mobility in the Greater El Paso community.

In 1994, a comprehensive study sponsored by the County of El Paso and the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recommended the creation of a one transit system to serve the entire county of El Paso. While this concept was seen as essential, funding the county-wide transit system became an issue that stalled its implementation. Another recommendation called for the creation of a Local Government Corporation (LGC), which would be the vehicle advocating for continued improvements and expansion of transit services within El Paso County. Several recommendations from the 1994 study have since been realized and are featured in this report.

In 2016, efforts were renewed to encourage local governments to collaborate in providing regional multimodal transportation solutions and improving mobility options for El Paso residents. Working with Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI), a new report was commissioned that recommended the establishment of a Local Government Corporation (LGC). El Paso County Commissioners Court approved the recommendation and submitted a request to the Texas Secretary of State to establish an LGC in El Paso County. The request was formally approved on November 29, 2021, and the Local Government Corporation became a reality.

On December 31, 2024, the LGC members included El Paso County, the Town of Horizon City, the City of San Elizario, the Town of Clint, the Town of Anthony, and the Village of Vinton.

2025 EL PASO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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CHAIRPERSON



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TOWN OF HORIZON CITY
VICE CHAIRPERSON



JOSE LANDEROS
DEPUTY EP COUNTY
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CITY OF SAN ELIZARIO



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VILLAGE OF VINTON

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KARL RINKUS
CITY EL PASO SUN METRO



HARRISON T. PLOURDE
MPO - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



SERGIO ESTRADA
LEGAL SERVICES (KEMP SMITH -
THROUGH EARLY 2025)



ANNETTE GUTIERREZ
FISCAL AGENT (COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS)



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County Commissioner Carlos Leon served as ETA Chairperson throughout 2024

2025 EL PASO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

COUNTY JUDGE RICARDO SAMANIEGO
COMMISSIONER JACKIE BUTLER
COMMISSIONER ILIANA HOLGUIN
COMMISSIONER DAVID STOUT
COMMISSIONER SERGIO CORONADO

2025 EL PASO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JACKIE BUTLER	EP County Commissioner (Chair)
JOSE LANDEROS	Deputy EP County Administrator
JESSICA MAYEUX	Town of Anthony
ART RUBIO	Town of Horizon City
ANDREA CARRILLO	Village of Vinton
SUSIE RODRIGUEZ	Town of Clint
EDDIE CONDE	City of San Elizario

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

KARL RIMKUS	City El Paso - Sun Metro
HARRISON T. PLOURDE	MPO - Assistant Director
ANNETTE GUTIERREZ	Fiscal Agent (Council of Governments)
SERGIO ESTRADA	Legal Services (Kemp Smith - early 2025)

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MOLLY SAENZ	Chair
GEORGE MUÑOZ	Vice Chair

EL PASO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY STAFF

XAVIER BAÑALES	Interim Director
REYNA MAYORGA	Transportation Planner
JESUS CERNA	Transit Planner

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County Commissioner Carlos Leon served as ETA Chairperson throughout 2024

EL PASO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY PROGRAMS

EL PASO COUNTY FIXED ROUTE PROGRAM (PAGE 6)

The County of El Paso provides transit services to communities within El Paso County, but outside the City of El Paso. A network of fixed routes transport passengers to and from Sun Metro transfer centers where they can transfer to a City of El Paso bus (Sun Metro) and travel to any area of the city.

EL PASO COUNTY PARATRANSIT PROGRAM (PAGE 7)

In August 2024, ETA introduced paratransit services thus meeting the requirement of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide transit services to persons with disabilities. The service area is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on each side of a county fixed route.

“VAMONOS” VAN POOL PROGRAM (PAGE 8)

This is a partnership with Enterprise that allows participants to carpool to and from work. The program provides a van or SUV to persons who live and work in close proximity. By carpooling, participants save gasoline and wear and tear to their vehicles. Also, fewer vehicles on the road means less pollution, and reduces traffic congestion.

NMDOT & TXDOT PARK & RIDE PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EL PASO COUNTY (PAGE 9)

The Gold Route Program is an express trip that transports passengers from El Paso to Las Cruces and back. The program is popular with students attending NMSU or UTEP, and with people who live in one city and work in the other. Riders find it less expensive than driving a personal vehicle. While on the bus, they can work on a laptop, relax and catch up on sleep, read a book or magazine, or chat with fellow passengers.

EL PASO COUNTY FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT PROGRAM

This program provides transportation services to municipalities that are within El Paso County, but outside the City of El Paso. A network of fixed routes transport passengers to and from towns and cities and connects with Sun Metro Transfer Centers where passengers can travel to any part of the county or the city. The main Transfer Centers used by the County Fixed Route Program are:

- West El Paso Transfer Center, 7535 Remcon Road
- East Side Transfer Center, 1165 Sunmount Dr (Cielo Vista Mall)
- Mission Valley Transit Center, 9065 Alameda

One-way trips cost \$1.50. Passengers can transfer at no cost within the county transit system but pay \$1.50 if transferring to a City of El Paso Sun Metro bus.

Areas served by El Paso County during 2024:

- **Northwest:** Town of Anthony, Canutillo, Village of Vinton.
- **East:** Homestead Meadows North, Homestead Meadows South, Montana Vista, Agua Dulce, Square Dance.
- **Southeast:** Town of Clint, Fabens, Town of Horizon City, City of San Elizario, Tornillo, Agua Dulce, City of Socorro.



Raquel Maria Nuñez has ridden the Anthony bus (Route 10) for over five years, often two times per week. She finds it very convenient and reliable.



Transit bus number 324 arrives at the Sun Metro Transfer Center on Remcon Dr. before heading back on Doniphan to points north before reaching Anthony and returning to the starting point to repeat the trip.

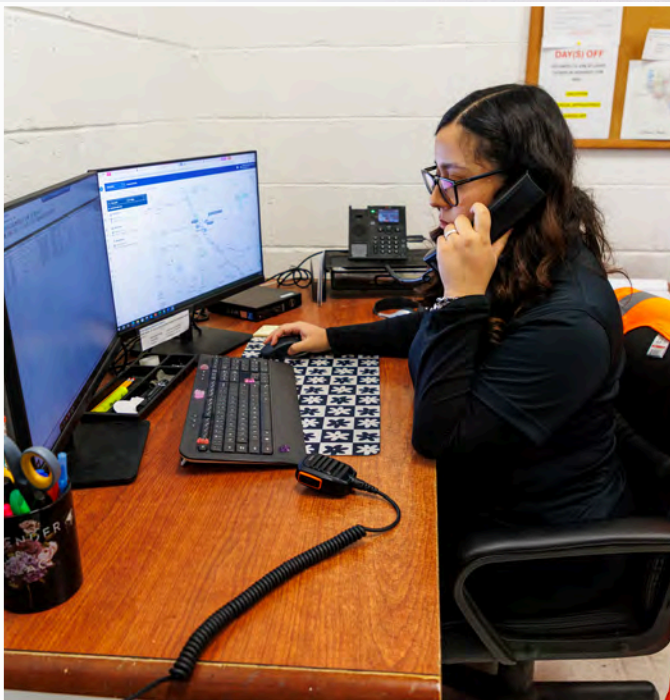
Information regarding the routes and schedule of the six bus routes is available at <https://elpasotransportationauthority.org/>. For more information, call (915) 533-4731.

EL PASO COUNTY PARATRANSIT PROGRAM

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that municipalities operating a transit system must provide comparable paratransit services to persons with disabilities who are unable to use buses because of his/her disability. Paratransit vehicles are equipped with a hydraulic mobility device (lift).

To receive paratransit services, the person must have a disability and meet certain criteria as listed on the paratransit application form which can be obtained at applyaccess@elpasotransportationauthority.org. The form can also be mailed to the applicant by calling 915-247-0505 between Monday through Friday (9am to 5pm). The ADA Paratransit Application form must be signed by a qualified licensed health professional (physician, social worker, physical therapist, other licensed professional).

Once approved, the applicant can make a reservation within one to seven days in advance and pay a fare of \$2.50 per one-way trip. The trip is a “curb to curb” shared ride and must be within the ETA Paratransit Service Area ($\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on either side of a county bus route).



Jennifer Garcia, Dispatch Supervisor, takes her turn answering telephone calls from persons seeking information about paratransit services, or to schedule a trip within the coming days.



County Commissioner Carlos Leon and ETA Interim Director Xavier Bañales were on hand to receive the first paratransit vehicles received during the year.

EL PASO COUNTY 'VAMONOS' VAN POOL PROGRAM

The Vámonos Van Pool Program, a partnership with Enterprise, helps employees carpool to work by providing a shared vehicle, such as an SUV, for those who live and work near each other. Participants save up to \$6,000 annually on gas and vehicle maintenance while receiving a \$500 monthly subsidy per vehicle. By commuting together, riders reduce wear-and-tear on personal vehicles, cut commuting costs, and contribute to a cleaner environment.

The program is funded through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program, a federal initiative aimed at reducing emissions and easing traffic congestion. CMAQ projects help cut pollution caused by carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate matter, while also addressing traffic delays, idle time, and fuel consumption. Since 1991, CMAQ has funded over 16,000 projects nationwide, investing \$22.7 billion to support alternatives to solo driving and improve air quality.

By reducing vehicles on the road, the Vámonos Van Pool Program not only saves participants money but also contributes to better air quality and reduced traffic congestion in El Paso County. To learn more, search "Commute with El Paso County Van Pool Program" or call 915-834-8242.



Mary Andrade has participated in the Van Pool Program for four years. She finds it "easy to use, convenient, and I save money".

Guy Mc Gunegle has been a van pool commuter for over ten years. He prepares his van to pick up participants at a westside hospital.



NMDOT & TxDOT PARK & RIDE PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EL PASO COUNTY

The Park and Ride Gold Route is a general public transportation service funded through a partnership between the New Mexico Department of Transportation, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the County of El Paso. This express program began on September 1, 2009, and transports passengers from El Paso to Las Cruces, New Mexico with a midway stop in Anthony, Texas.

The program is popular with students attending NMSU or UTEP, and with persons who live in one city and work in the other. Riders find it less expensive than driving a personal vehicle. While on the bus, they can work on a laptop, relax and catch up on sleep, read a book or magazine, or chat with fellow passengers. The service operates on all weekdays, except on designated state holidays. The fare is \$3.00 one-way trip.

In fiscal year 2024, the ridership was 36,212, and the average passenger saved up to \$705 monthly by choosing the Park & Ride Program over driving alone in their private vehicle (assuming 66-mile round trip, 65 cents per mile private vehicle operating and ownership cost, and \$90 monthly pass).

The first ride from El Paso to Las Cruces starts at 4:32am, while the last trip from LC to EP is at 7:20pm. A complete schedule can be found on the internet. Simply search under NMDOT Park & Ride. Or call: [866-551-RIDE](tel:866-551-RIDE) (7433), the NM Park and Ride Dispatch: [505-424-1110](tel:505-424-1110).



For a number of years, Maria Andrade has ridden the Gold Route bus five to seven times per month to visit family in Las Cruces. She starts her trip from the Bert Williams Downtown Transfer Center and travels to Las Cruces to spend time with family.

INTRODUCING ETA TO THE EL PASO COMMUNITY

In the fall of 2024, an outreach campaign began to introduce ETA to city and town councils and other government entities within the county. The presentation included an overview of the development of ETA, and a summary of its programs, goals, challenges, and financial commitments by member entities.

1. Town of Anthony – September 9, 2024
2. Access Advisory Committee – September 17, 2024
3. Village of Vinton – Oct 15, 2024
4. El Paso Regional Planning Committee (WTEP) – Oct 17, 2024
5. El Paso County Commissioners Court – October 28, 2024
6. City of San Elizario – Nov 19, 2024
7. Town of Horizon City – Dec 10, 2024
8. Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority – December 11, 2024
9. Town of Clint – January 13, 2025
10. El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization – January 24, 2025
11. Rio Grande Council of Governments – January 31, 2025
12. City of El Paso’s Mass Transit Board – Scheduled for February / March 2025

Similar presentations will be offered to social service agencies in early 2025.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE – AAC

The AAC was established to obtain input from advocates of the disability community who may have a family member with a disability, may be a volunteer advocate, or work for an agency whose recipients of services are persons with disabilities.

The purpose of the AAC is to provide an ongoing mechanism for participation by individuals with disabilities or groups that represent this community. The committee advises ETA about program services, they preview written materials to ensure they are readable by visually impaired persons, and that ETA’s overall delivery of services are sensitive to El Paso’s disability community.

The work of this committee enhances other public involvement groups and activities through its crucial focus on ADA paratransit and transit accessibility. The AAC is an important part of the process that helps El Paso County provide regional public transit that is accessible to all.

CONTRIBUTION AMOUNTS ALLOCATED TO EL PASO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Service / Member Total	Annual Total Operating Cost	Local Contribution	% Contribution towards Annual Operating Cost
1. EPATS Service Total	\$7,541,900	\$1,101,800	15%
2. City / Local Members	\$1,470,200	\$223,100	15%
3. Anthony	\$182,000	\$27,500	15%
4. Clint	\$90,700	\$12,900	14%
5. Horizon City	\$755,900	\$114,800	15%
6. San Elizario	\$288,100	\$47,400	16%
7. Village of Vinton	\$153,500	\$20,500	13%
8. El Paso County (service not assigned to members)	\$6,071,700	\$878,700	14%

Funding sources for all ETA programs include passenger fares, El Paso County, Town of Horizon City, City of San Elizario, Town of Clint, Town of Anthony, the Village of Vinton, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), and the Federal Transit Administration.

RIDERSHIP TOTALS FY 2022 THROUGH FY 2024*

	FY 2022*	FY 2023	FY 2024
El Paso County Fixed Route	94,815	132,312	145,932
NMDOT / TxDOT / EP County (Gold Route)	27,443	33,031	33,449
Vamonos Van Pool Program	<u>275,846</u>	<u>343,748</u>	<u>379,744</u>
Grand Total	398,104	509,091	559,125

* FY 2022 was the tail end of COVID 19, and all programs experienced a ridership decrease from the previous year. An upward trend developed in FY 2023 and was surpassed in FY 2024.

GRANTS IN PROGRESS

In the last three fiscal years, El Paso County has received approximately \$20,000,000 in grants through TxDOT. All grant requests are approved by El Paso Commissioners Court. These funds stimulate El Paso's economy through employment of drivers, office personnel, purchases from area businesses and contract services from specialized companies.

As Reported to BOD November 20, 2024	% Complete	Amt Awarded
1. Purchase four vans and five CNG buses	40%	\$1,753,000
2. Transit facility Engineering & design Passenger shelters Commuter / Van Pool	15%	\$1,474,000
3. Transit facility Engineering & design	40%	\$1,400,000
4. Commuter bus services and Van pool operations	20%	\$2,815,000
5. ETA Operations Budget admin Third party contractor	15%	\$2,984,000
6. 1 CNG bus Expenses related to vehicle wraps	95%	\$310,000
7. EV pilot project, chargers, seven EV's.	15%	\$2,535,000
8. Benches - Design	100%	\$43,000
9. Purchase five CNG	95%	\$1,042,000
10. Gold Route operations	15%	\$1,120,000
11. Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) contract for services Short range planning	0%	\$270,000
12. Transit facility	35%	\$339,000
13. Transit facility	100%	\$61,000
14. ETA operations Project Admin	95%	\$932,000
15. 5311 Match	5%	\$1,123,000
16. ETA operations	0%	\$586,000

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is an important ingredient in the success of an organization. ETA works closely with the following entities and contractors:

El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization – The EPMPO has an ex officio member on ETA’s board of directors.

Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority – ETA subcontracts with the CRRMA to manage and administer several construction projects. Among these projects is the transit center to be built in far East El Paso and will house administrative offices, buses, vehicle maintenance and training / conference rooms, and passenger shelters to be built in 2025 / 2026.

El Paso & West Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (WTEP) – The regional planning committee is funded by TxDOT. ETA’s Interim Director is Chairperson of the board of directors.

Rio Grande Council of Governments – The Rio Grande Council of Governments is ETA’s fiscal agent and provides administrative support to ETA’s board of directors.

Kemp Smith – This law firm provided legal support through 2024.

City of El Paso Sun Metro – Interlocal Agreements exist whereby the City and County collaborate various services between them. Sun Metro has an ex officio member on ETA’s board of directors.

Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) – This is an agency of the State of Texas and member of The Texas A&M University System. TTI provides technical support to ETA as it addresses complex transportation challenges and opportunities.

Transdev United States – Transdev is a national corporation that administers numerous transportation contracts throughout the US. They operate the EP County Fixed Route Program and the Paratransit Program.

Barracuda PR – Information about ETA programs is released to the public through a marketing and promotional campaign coordinated by this firm. Barracuda PR also developed and maintained ETA’s website.

Hatch – This company coordinates planning and design work related to building charging stations at the Sun Metro Westside Center on Remcon Cir. Electric buses (to be purchased in late 2025 / early 2026) will be charged at this location.

HDR – Technical reports (such as environmental studies) related to the purchase of property for the ETA Transit Center are being prepared by this firm.

Gennett Flemming Eng. Inc. – This firm worked on the design and construction drawings for passenger shelters.

Adkins & Realis – At year’s end, this firm provided consultant services for various construction projects.

El Paso Electric – Planning and installation of charging stations to power electric buses is under the supervision of El Paso Electric Company.

ETA acknowledges and appreciates the support provided by El Paso County departments whose support is greatly appreciated.

Special “Thanks” are extended to Centro San Vicente, Amistad, Volar – CIL, and EP County Senior Centers. These social services / health agencies are assisting the process to determine eligibility for paratransit users.



ETA staff joined representatives from other transit organizations at a Paratransit Conference held in October 2024 sponsored by the El Paso & West Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Committee funded by TxDOT. Vince Huerta, Director of Transportation with the East Texas Council of Governments was the keynote speaker. Mr. Huerta is also President of the Texas Transportation Association, a national association that supports and advocates for transit programs throughout the nation. Mr. Alfredo Gonzales, Public Transportation Coordinator, represented TxDOT and monitors grants awarded to ETA.

(L to R: Mr. Gonzales, Mr. Bañales, Mr. Vince Huerta)



Panelists at the Transportation Conference included: Anthony Dekeyzer, City of El Paso Director of Mass Transit; Reyna Mayorga, ETA Transportation Planner; David Armijo, Executive Director, South Central Regional Transit District; Mike Pacheco, Amistad Transportation Operation Coordinator; and Victor Reta, Director of Communications, City of Socorro.



Many Navarrete transported members of the El Paso Historical Commission to a dedication of a historical marker in Sunset Heights, the site of an early school in El Paso that educated thousands of students from El Paso and Juarez. The school operated for fifty years and closed in 1952.



Karl McElhaney, EP County Sr. Policy Advisor – Precinct 1, presented the ‘Welcoming Address’ to attendees at the October 2024 Paratransit Conference. Mr. McElhaney has extensive experience with various levels of government.

Jesus Cerna, ETA Transit Planner, presented an overview about the Paratransit Program to the Access Advisory Committee (AAC) January 2025. The AAC provides input to ETA on topics related to the delivery of services to El Paso’s disability community.



Mr. Jose Rocha, one of thirty-two EP County drivers, prepares to resume the round trip from West El Paso (Sun Metro Transfer Center) to Canutillo, Vinton, and Anthony, Texas.

SEALS OF THE MEMBER CITIES AND TOWNS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORPORATION



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