

SUN METRO CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Annual Committee Report to El Paso City Council

August 1, 2026

Current Members

Scott White, Chair (Dist. 8)
Keith Andrews (Dist. 1)
Sandy Azcona (Dist. 4)
Angela Ochoa (Dist. 6)
Xavier Bañales (Mayor)

Bill Graham, Vice-Chair (Dist. 3)
Elisa Tamayo-Ochoa (Dist. 2)
Aziz Afravi (Dist. 5)
Sylvia Carreon (Dist. 7)

Staff

Anthony R. DeKeyzer, Director of Mass Transit
Joyce Garcia, Legal Representative

Karl Rimkus, Committee Liaison

History

Created by Resolution on April 26, 1988 as the “Citizen’s Advisory Committee”
Renamed by Resolution on October 11, 2022 as the “Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee”
Bylaws Amended by Resolution on September 3, 2025 to comply with Ordinance No. 019766

Purpose

To advise the Mass Transit Department Board on matters over which the Board has authority.



Meetings and Attendance

Member	July 9, 2025	Sept. 10, 2025	May 14, 2026	July 9, 2026
Afravi, Aziz	P	P	P	
Andrews, Keith	P	P	A	
Azcona, Sandy	P	A	A	
Bañales, Xavier	P	P	P	
Carreon, Sylvia	P	P	P	
Graham, Bill	P	P	P	
Ochoa, Angela	P	P	A	
Tamayo-Ochoa, Elisa	A	A	P	
White, Scott	P	A	P	

P = Present; A = Absent

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

TBD.

Scott White, Committee Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MASS TRANSIT

As Director of Mass Transit, it has been my privilege to participate in Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee (SMCAC) meetings since 2023. Feedback and input on transit policy from committee members is a valuable resource to me and my staff in our efforts to achieve our mission of connecting our El Paso community through high quality transit services. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the valuable service to the community that committee members make in dedicating their time and to thank them for their commitment. I look forward to working with the Committee in the coming year and will continue to support the purpose of the SMCAC.

Anthony DeKeyzer, Director of Mass Transit



SUN METRO ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee has been engaged with Sun Metro staff on several key projects during the past year, including the development and adoption of a vision statement for the Committee, tracking the progress of Sun Metro Rising, and following ridership trends and use of funds for the Veterans Ride Free grant program.

1. VISION STATEMENT FOR THE COMMITTEE

Beginning with the July 9, 2025 Committee meeting, the Committee worked closely with Julie Baldwin-Munoz, Chief Strategy Officer, and Roman Sanchez, Chief Innovation Officer, of the City Manager's Office, to collaboratively develop a vision statement for the Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee (SMCAC). Over the following meetings, Ms. Baldwin-Munoz and Mr. Sanchez led discussions and conducted interviews with committee members to identify key factors that resonated with each member regarding their understanding of the Committee's purpose. The result is the following vision statement, approved by the Committee at its May 14, 2026 meeting:

The Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee advocates for accountable, accessible, and strategically sustainable transit services to meet the transportation needs of our community.

Additionally, the following key priority areas were identified, to guide planning and agenda-setting activities with the Committee for in 2026 – 2027:

- Advocacy
- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Strategic Growth and Sustainability

Sun Metro will continue to coordinate meetings with Ms. Baldwin-Munoz and Mr. Sanchez and SMCAC to help guide committee activities in the coming year.

2. SUN METRO RISING



Sun Metro Rising began as a study that identified how Sun Metro could improve transit service for the community. This study included robust community engagement, including an on-board survey, virtual public meetings, and stakeholder discussions. Information gathered from these activities was used to develop a strategic plan to guide service improvements.

Sun Metro conducted a comprehensive study of its transit system and, guided by community feedback, identified key updates to make service more efficient, reliable, and better aligned with riders' needs. The changes will increase route frequencies, reduce travel times, and reshape service by streamlining existing routes, introducing new ones, and discontinuing routes with low or no ridership.

Recommendations from study:

- Restructure the route network to simplify and strengthen service
- Continue to restore Sunday service
- Interest in more frequent service
- Continue to maximize the potential of the Streetcar

Implementation

Future Goals

3. TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION “VETERANS RIDE FOR FREE” GRANT

The Texas Veterans Commission is the state department of veteran affairs. Its purpose has been to act as the state-appointed advocate of Texas veterans as they attempt to secure the benefits rightfully earned in exchange for their service in our nation's armed forces.

Since 1927, the mission of the Texas Veterans Commission has been to advocate for and provide superior service to veterans that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas veterans, their families, and survivors.

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA or Fund) was created in the 79th Legislature to address the needs of Texas veterans and their families. The Fund is composed of money deposited under the Texas Government Code, the Texas Transportation Code, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, and provides for the awarding of grants related to veterans assistance.

Once grant awards are awarded by the Commission, grants are administered by the staff of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance. Through the Fund, the Commission has awarded **over \$359 Million Dollars** in more than 1,600 reimbursement grants since 2009.



Transportation is a critical need for many veterans. Lack of transportation is a barrier in getting to VA appointments as well as connecting with local services and resources. In the El Paso area, transportation has been identified as one of the top three needs by the TVC Veterans Needs Assessment Survey, conducted by Texas A&M Public Policy Research Institute.

Sun Metro and TVC are working together to address this need by offering the Veterans Ride Free transportation program to veterans, surviving spouses and their dependents. To date, TVC has awarded Sun Metro grants totaling \$283,500 (since 2023).

Funding Year	Funding Amount	Total Expended	Passes Issued	LIFT Tickets	Veterans	Surviving Spouses	Dependents	Unduplicated Veterans Served
FY 24	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	1,378	3,464	632	19	72	723
FY 25	\$113,500.00	\$113,500.00	2,876	10,888	782	18	64	864
FY 26	\$157,000.00	\$120,000.00	2,942	7,904	753	29	63	846 Served Grant ends Aug 31, 2026
FY 27	\$140,000.00	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Pending</i>	<i>Grant begins Sept 1, 2026</i>

DRAFT

