

El Paso County

March 10, 2025

Gibran Lule-Hurtado Acting Regional Program Manager
NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
Serving Interior Regions 6, 7, & 8
12795 W. Alameda Parkway Lakewood, CO 80228

Dear Mr. Lule-Hurtado,

Subject: Request for Extension of RTCA Technical Assistance for the Mission Trail Project

I hope this letter finds you well. On May 15, 2024, the City of El Paso and El Paso Chamber of Commerce were awarded for their participation seeking technical assistance through this program for the Spring 2024 through summer 2025. Thereafter, the City of El Paso approached El Paso County's Economic Development Staff to partner as recipient of this project, which was approved by the County Commissioners Court on June 10, 2024.

On behalf of El Paso County, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program's support in advancing the "El Paso Mission Trail: Heritage on the Move" project. Your team's collaboration has been instrumental in our progress thus far.

As we continue working toward achieving our project goals—specifically, developing transportation, safety, and equitable access infrastructure and securing state and federal legislative support for a UNESCO designation—we have identified several critical tasks that remain pending. To ensure the successful completion of these objectives, we respectfully request an extension of RTCA's technical assistance¹ for an additional year through the 2026 fiscal year.

The following tasks are pending and essential to the completion of our project:

1. Plan a Complete Streets Workshop/Meeting.
2. Develop an engagement process to connect communities to the trail.
3. Support project partners with the implementation of the community engagement process.
4. Identify participants for a UNESCO panel.
5. Conduct outreach to NPS staff, including experts from the San Antonio Missions, Office of International Affairs, National Historic Trails, and UTSA Historic Preservation Director William Dupont, to gain insights into the UNESCO designation process.
6. Facilitate discussions on the pros and cons of a UNESCO designation.

¹ Approved by the El Paso County Commissioner's Court on June 10, 2024 Item 9.A: Approve to direct staff to proceed with participating in the Rivers, Trails, And Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program and join the City of El Paso and El Paso Chamber of commerce as an award recipient.

We believe that an extension of RTCA's assistance will not only support the completion of these tasks but also strengthen the long-term impact of our project by fostering deeper community engagement and enhancing our strategic approach to achieving a UNESCO designation.

The Mission Trail Alliance team and local partners have been historically expected to contribute staff time, meeting space, and financial or technical support to accomplish project objectives and to that end the County has and remains committed to providing staff time and meeting space.

Thank you for considering this request. We are eager to continue collaborating with your team and look forward to the opportunity to bring this project to fruition with RTCA's continued support². Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need any additional information.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your positive response.

Sincerely,

Ricardo Samaniego
El Paso County Judge

² The El Paso County Economic Development Department is prepared to support these efforts by continuing to provide the types of support it has in the past. Such as providing staff time to work on this initiative and secured meeting spaces here at the Courthouse and at Los Portales related to this program.