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**El Paso County
Agenda Item Details**

Item Title:	Economic Development - (ARP-1162) First Amendment with UTEP Hunt Mission Trail Gap Analysis (2025-0191)
Submitted By:	Roberto Ransom, Director
Department:	Economic Development Department
Department Phone Number:	915-273-3583
Subject:	(ARP-1162) Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign the First Amendment to the El Paso Mission Trail Gap Analysis Interlocal Service Agreement with the University of Texas at El Paso for the development of an economic gap analysis of the local business climate along the Mission Trail to extend the service period for a six-month term beginning April 7, 2025. There is no additional funding required. (Contract No. 2025-0191)
Background:	<p>Amendment Information: The purpose of this amendment is to extend the scope of work timeline by an additional 6 months to a total 14 months for project completion at no additional cost to the County. This will allow the research institute to gather a richer data set for their contracted analysis.</p> <p>Original Background: This contract is part of the ARPA Economic Impact - Mission Trail Assistance program (ARP-1162) focused on promoting El Paso County's historic sites and, by extension, the surrounding amenities such as galleries, retail stores, entertainment venues, and culinary establishments. By conducting this evaluation of the local business climate along the Mission Trail, the program will provide critical data for County Economic Development to continue its efforts in fostering economic growth in the area.</p>
Fiscal Impact:	<p>Fiscal Impact Historical \$120,000</p> <p>ECON IMP-MISSION TRL ASSIST GARPLAN21 -600000 -605000 -605110</p> <p>Fiscal Impact Projected N/A</p>

Long Account Number: Amount:

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Budget or Unbudgeted Match:

Recommendation:

(ARP-1162) Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign the First Amendment to the El Paso Mission Trail Gap Analysis Interlocal Service Agreement with the University of Texas at El Paso for the development of an economic gap analysis of the local business climate along the Mission Trail to extend the service period for a six-month term beginning April 7, 2025. There is no additional funding required. (Contract No. 2025-0191)

Prior Action:

12/16/24: Approve and authorize the County Judge to sign the agreement with the University of Texas at El Paso to conduct a feasibility study of the local business climate along the Mission Trail in the amount of \$120,000. Funds are available in ECON IMP-MISSION TRL ASSIST. (Contract No. 2024- 0994)

Strategic Plan:

Goal:

2. Transform Economic Development

Objective:

2.2 Develop and implement an impactful, focused economic development strategy

Strategic Plan Information:

n/a

**Estimated Time Needed
For This Item:**

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF EL PASO

FIRST AMENDMENT TO EL PASO MISSION TRAIL GAP ANALYSIS INTERLOCAL SERVICE AGREEMENT

This First Amendment to the Mission Trial Gap Analysis Interlocal Service Agreement (“**First Amendment**”) is entered into between the County of El Paso, Texas (“**County**”), and The University of Texas at El Paso (“**UTEP**”), a Texas State Agency, Texas Public Institution of Higher Education and component institution of the University of Texas System (“**System**”) governed by the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System (“**Board**”) on behalf of its Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness (“**Contractor**”). The County and Contractor may be referred to singularly as a “**Party**” or collectively as “**Parties**.” For the convenience of the Parties, all defined terms appear in **bold face** print when first defined.

WHEREAS on the 16th day of December 2024, the Parties entered into an interlocal services agreement, under County contract #2024-0994 (“**Agreement**”) for the Contractor to provide economic analysis of the Paso del Norte Region to produce high-quality market analysis tools that can strengthen regional and binational cross border economic and social development; and

WHEREAS the Parties now desire to amend the Agreement to extend the scope of work timeline by an additional 6 months and further clarify that the Agreement is an Interlocal agreement pursuant to Chapter 791 of the Texas Government Code by retitling the Agreement from “El Paso Mission Trail Gap Analysis Services Agreement” to “El Paso Mission Trail Gap Analysis Interlocal Service Agreement” (“**First Amendment**”).

NOW, THEREFORE, in light of the mutual promises and obligations contained herein, and in exchange for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged by the Parties, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Adoption of Recitals. The above stated recitals are incorporated herein by reference and are made part of this First Amendment and shall be as effective as repeated verbatim.
2. Effective Date. The Effective Date of this First Amendment shall be April 7, 2025.
3. Amendments.
 - A. This First Amendment retitles the Agreement from “El Paso Mission Trail Gap Analysis Services Agreement” to “El Paso Mission Trail Gap Analysis Interlocal Service Agreement.”
 - B. Attachment A (Scope of Work) of the Agreement shall be deleted in its entirety and replaced with Attachment A attached to this First Amendment.

4. All other terms and conditions not specifically amended herein shall remain in full force and effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties execute this First Amendment to the Agreement which shall be effective on the 7th day of April, 2025.

THE COUNTY OF EL PASO

The University of Texas at El Paso

By _____
Ricardo A. Samaniego
County Judge

By _____
Ahmad M. Itani
VP for Research & Innovation

Attachment A



**UTEP
HUNT INSTITUTE**
FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS



EL PASO COUNTY

MISSION TRAIL ASSESSMENT



2025-0191 First Amendment. CAH

2024-0994 El Paso Mission Trail Gap Analysis Services Agreement. EPU

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I. Project Description

The El Paso Mission Trail is pivotal in American history, situated on the western edge of Texas, bordering Mexico. It served as New Spain's northern frontier for four centuries, embodying the convergence of diverse cultures and histories. With its interconnected network of communities, the Mission Trail provides a tangible link to this complex narrative, tracing its origins from southern colonization to the present day.

The Mission Trail Economic Development Initiative is an effort of El Paso County to foster economic growth and preserve the rich historical and cultural heritage of the El Paso Mission Valley. Spanning a nine-mile stretch, the Mission Trail encapsulates centuries of history, offering a unique blend of cultural, historical, and economic significance.

At the heart of the Mission Trail are three iconic landmarks: the Ysleta Mission, the Socorro Mission, and the San Elizario Chapel. These architectural sites, dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, stand as enduring symbols of religious and cultural heritage, serving as some of the oldest churches in Texas. Their historical significance is further underscored by their status as the oldest working missions in the region.

However, the allure of the Mission Trail extends beyond its religious landmarks. The pathway also has museums, state and national landmarks, art galleries, and restaurants, offering visitors a unique experience that celebrates the rich tapestry of the region's history and culture.

In recognition of the economic potential inherent in preserving and promoting the Mission Trail, El Paso County is committed to leveraging this rich heritage for sustainable economic development. Also, El Paso County plans to foster economic growth through strategic infrastructure and real estate investments, informed by a thorough evaluation of the local business environment conducted by the Hunt Institute. By leveraging existing amenities, supporting local businesses, and understanding the demand for new ventures, the county aims to attract businesses and tourists while preserving historic landmarks and fostering broader economic growth and prosperity in the region.

II. Methodology

The methodology proposed entails a multi-step approach to effectively analyze and map the current infrastructure and business landscape along the Mission Trail. It also seeks to establish a supportive framework for small businesses, fostering broader economic growth and prosperity in the region.

- **Literature Review of Historic Districts:** This literature review explores the Mission Trail's historical significance and cultural impact in El Paso, Texas. It seeks to investigate the Mission Trail's historical development, the role it plays in preserving cultural heritage, its effects on tourism, and its significance to the local community. It will also compare restoration and preservation initiatives from other historic districts in the U.S. that have served the community and promoted economic growth.
- **Mapping Main Infrastructure, and Cultural and Historic Landmarks:** The Hunt Institute will map the existing facilities, attractions, amenities, and businesses along the Mission Trail. This comprehensive mapping effort will identify potential growth areas and feasible projects within the area's current infrastructure.

The mapped data will serve the following purposes:

- Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing infrastructure and providing suggestions regarding possible improvement/enhancement projects.
 - Establishing connections between existing assets to enhance the overall tourist experience.
 - Providing valuable information for the creation of new tourist attractions.
 - Identifying the profile of the local businesses.
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- **Design and Conduct Surveys:** The Hunt Institute will conduct surveys targeting local small businesses and tourists to assess the current landscape and identify any existing gaps within the business community along the Mission Trail, including broadband access, training, and market plan. Two different surveys will be designed. The first survey is designed for businesses within the Mission Trail. This survey will help us understand the current small business landscape and address their needs and future plans. The second survey will be conducted with tourists to get their profiles, needs, and preferences while visiting the Mission Trail. To encourage participation in the survey, every person who completes the questionnaire will be entered into a raffle to win one of ten \$50 gift cards.
 - **Assessing Small Businesses' Needs and Challenges:** The Hunt Institute will use the mapping information and the survey analysis to understand the capabilities, challenges, and needs of small businesses in the Mission Trail area. By understanding these gaps, incoming businesses can strategically fill them, thereby contributing to developing a robust small business ecosystem in the area. Moreover, the surveys will highlight challenges faced by the

small business community. El Paso County can utilize this information to refer businesses to relevant organizations for support in overcoming these challenges or consider providing incentives to encourage their growth.

- **Comprehensive Assessment:** Building on the work described above, the Hunt Institute will make a comprehensive assessment highlighting the challenges faced by small businesses in the area, the infrastructure needed to favor tourist attractions and identify the areas of improvement.

III.Tasks and Deliverables

This analysis will include a **\$120,000 contract fee** that the El Paso County will pay to the Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Hunt Institute Services to be provided:

T1	<p>Task title: Literature Review on Historic Districts</p> <p>Task description: Conduct a comprehensive literature review on the Mission Trail's historical significance and cultural impact in El Paso, TX. Explore its development, role in cultural heritage preservation, influence on tourism, and its importance to the local community. The literature review will also serve to compare historic restorations and preservation initiatives from other historic districts that have served the community and promoted economic growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze the cultural significance of the Mission Trail in preserving heritage.• Investigate the impact of the Mission Trail on local tourism.
T2	<p>Task title: Mapping Main Infrastructure, and Cultural and Historic Landmarks</p> <p>Task description: To comprehensively map the existing facilities, attractions, amenities, and businesses along the Mission Trail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilize geographical information systems (GIS) and other mapping tools to visually represent the current landscape and infrastructure.• Determine feasible projects for enhancing the area's infrastructure and amenities.
T3	<p>Task title: Analysis of the Mapping Data</p> <p>Task description: To leverage the mapped data to enhance tourism infrastructure and support local businesses along the Mission Trail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand and attract small businesses.• Analyze the mapped data to identify critical areas for developing tourism infrastructure.• Establish linkages between existing assets to create cohesive tourism experiences.• Utilize the mapped information to identify opportunities to create new tourist attractions.• Develop strategies and initiatives based on the mapping data to promote tourism along the Mission Trail.

T.4	<p>Task title: Design and Administration of Surveys</p> <p>Task description: To design two surveys for businesses and for tourists to get input about their preferences, needs, and challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and administer a survey to local small businesses to assess their current status and challenges. Design and administer a survey to tourists to know their preferences, needs, and satisfaction while visiting the Mission Trail. Also, we will ask them about the amenities they would like to have in the area.
T.5	<p>Task title: Assessing Small Businesses' Needs and Challenges</p> <p>Task description: To analyze the surveys' results to identify needs and challenges, identify areas of growth linked to tourism and regional opportunities, and create strategies for fostering a stronger small business community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze survey data to map the existing small business community and identify gaps or areas for improvement. Make an assessment available to El Paso County to assist small businesses in overcoming challenges and fostering growth along the Mission Trail.
T.6	<p>Task title: Final Report Preparation</p> <p>Task description: The Hunt Institute will compile all findings and analysis into a final comprehensive report.</p> <p>Monthly progress updates: The Hunt Institute will submit a concise monthly progress report to El Paso County to provide updates on ongoing tasks, preliminary findings, and next steps.</p>

IV. Proposed Timeline

Task Title		Month													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
T.1	Literature Review														
T.2	Mapping Main Infrastructure														
T.3	Analysis of the Mapping Data														
T.4	Design and Survey Administration														
T.5	Assessing Small Business Needs														
T.6	Final Report Preparation														
	Monthly Progress Reports														

Note: Timeline amended February 13, 2025. "Month 1" will begin on January 6, 2025 (01/06/2025), and "Month 14" will conclude on February 27, 2026 (02/27/2026).

V. Budget

Estimated Budget break down of the **\$120,000 contract fee***:

Task Title	Deliverables	Total Cost
T1. Literature Review	1. Literature Review 2. Monthly Report (30 day)	\$6,000.00
T2. Mapping Main Infrastructure	1. GIS Mapping 2. Monthly Report (60 day) 3. Monthly Report (90 day)	\$12,500.00
T3 Analysis of Mapping Data	1. Analyze Mapped Data 2. Monthly Report (4)	\$18,500.00
T.4 Design and Administration of Survey	1. Design Survey 2. Administer Survey - Contract Surveyors - Participant Expenses 3. Monthly Report (5) 4. Monthly Report (6)	\$60,000.00
T.5 Assessing Small Businesses' Needs and Challenges	1. Analyze Survey Data 2. Monthly Report (7)	\$15,000.00
T.6 Final Report Preparation	1. Final Report Delivery 2. Final Monthly Progress Report (8)	\$8,000.00
Total Estimated Direct Costs		\$109,699.00
10.0% Modified Total Direct Cost*		\$10,301.00
Total Costs - Contract Fee		\$120,000.00

Note: * Indirect costs have been adjusted to 10% as requested by El Paso County, in accordance with the El Paso County's standard federally approved indirect rate for ARPA-funded agreements.

VI. Organizational Experience and Qualifications

The Hunt Institute's mission is to foster the economic and social well-being of the communities in the Paso del Norte region by creating and applying theoretical and pragmatic mechanisms. The Institute provides high-level quantitative analysis tools and work products deliberately focused on the region's assets.

Moreover, the Institute possesses a rare and accomplished multidisciplinary team of bilingual economists, researchers, editors, graphic designers, and administrative staff, all of whom are rooted and educated in the region with extensive professional and personal relationships with major economic development actors at the local, state, and international levels. All Hunt Institute research staff members have obtained their Social Behavioral Researchers for Human Subjects Research certification through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program, as mandated by The University of Texas at El Paso. Furthermore, all of the Institute's contracts go through a rigorous and confidential process through the Legal Department and the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects at The University of Texas at El Paso.

The Institute's projects have not only established data and regulatory benchmarks and their institutional organization for the first time in the region but also are produced, curated, and disseminated in such a way as to be accessible and of interest to a broad range of regional, national, and international stakeholders. This diversity of stakeholders allows for the discovery of value-added opportunities amongst the region's assets and the regulatory and economic analysis needed to facilitate realizing such opportunities from both the public and private sectors. Another fundamental element of the Institute's work is its ability to collect, harmonize, and interpret the regulatory and economic characteristics of assets beneficial to the region and neighboring areas. This, along with the Institute's mission, team, and capabilities, naturally aligns with the objectives required to assess the Mission Trail Economic Development Initiative to foster economic growth and preserve the El Paso Mission Valley's rich historical and cultural heritage.