



## 8. INTERREGIONAL PASSENGER TRAVEL

### INTRODUCTION

While the primary focus of Destino 2045 concerns travel within the El Paso region, it is also important to understand how the existing transportation system interfaces with the larger State and National transportation context. Interregional passenger travel usually consists of fixed passenger rail, commercial airways/airports, and long-distance charter bus services (e.g. Greyhound). The El Paso MPO region is served by an Amtrak route stretching southeast to northwest, an international airport, and several private charter bus companies. The following analysis provides an overview of each type of service provided in the region and assesses current ridership trends.

### INTERREGIONAL PASSENGER TRAVEL SERVICES AND TRENDS

#### AMTRAK

El Paso’s Amtrak station is centrally located and serves two passenger train routes: the Sunset Limited (connecting California to Louisiana) and the Texas Eagle (connecting California to Illinois). These two trains operate three times a week. The Amtrak terminal is located in downtown El Paso, as show in Figure 8.2. This provides Amtrak passengers with excellent multimodal connectivity to the rest of the region upon arrival in El Paso, with several local bus lines, bike share stations, and the future El Paso Streetcar all within walking distance of the terminal.

El Paso’s Amtrak serves roughly 820,000 passengers within 25 miles of the station and 980,000 passengers within 50 miles of the station annually. Trips departing from the station average anywhere between 800 to 899 miles, and typically connect to other urbanized areas within the southwest region of the United States. Recent data shows that the El Paso station experienced a total of 14,440 arrivals/departures in 2016, with an average trip of 831 miles and average fare of \$110. Figure 8.1 shows the Amtrak ridership to/from the El Paso station between 2010 and 2016 and shows an increase in ridership by roughly 41% over that period.

FIGURE 8.1: EL PASO STATION AMTRAK RIDERSHIP; 2010-2016

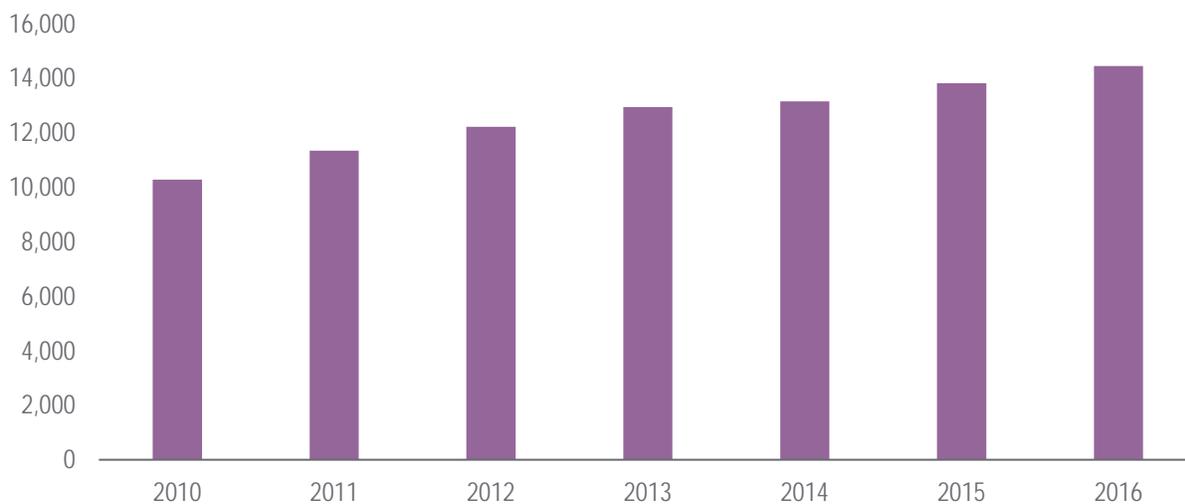
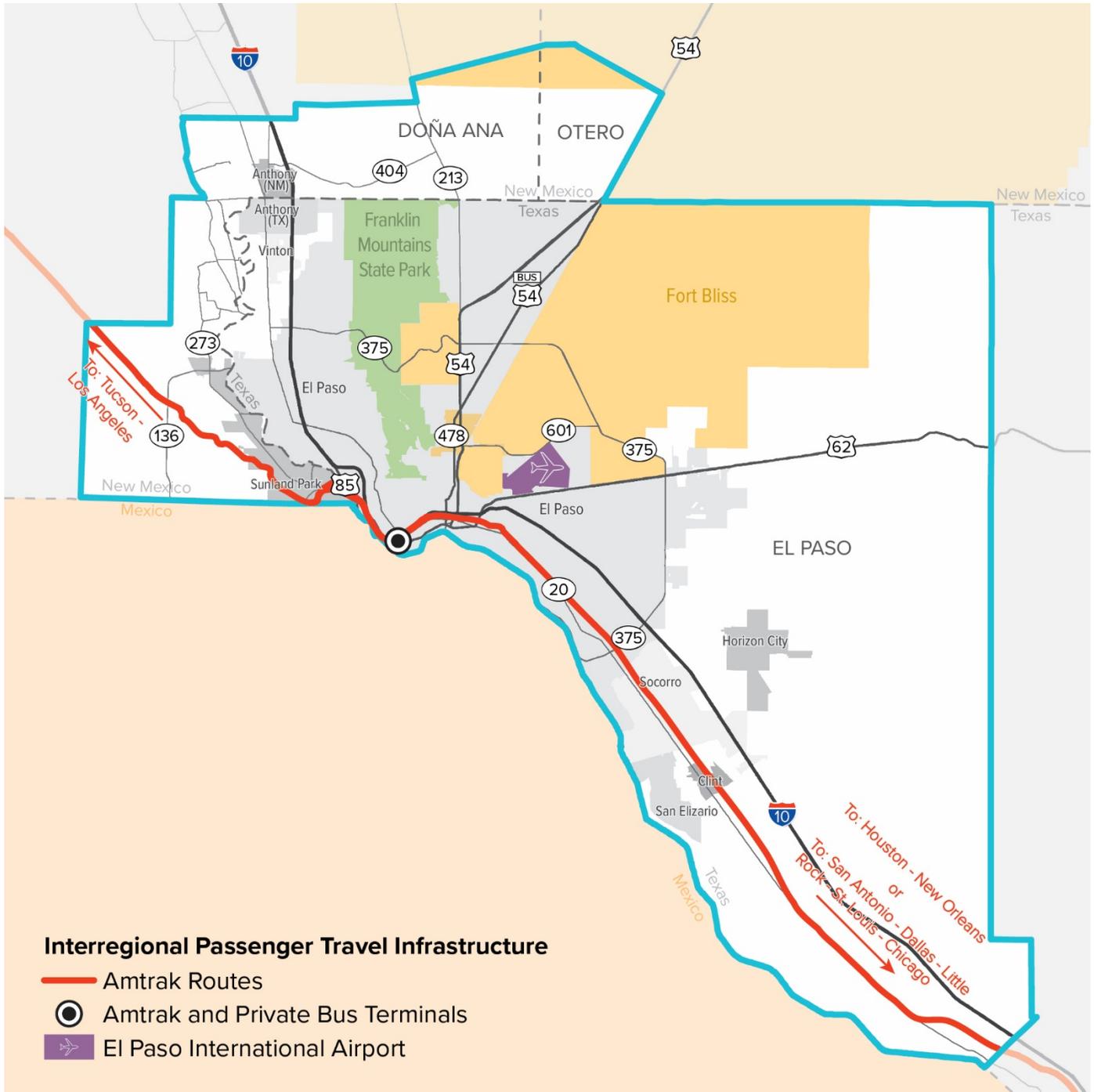




FIGURE 8.2: EL PASO MPO INTERREGIONAL PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION



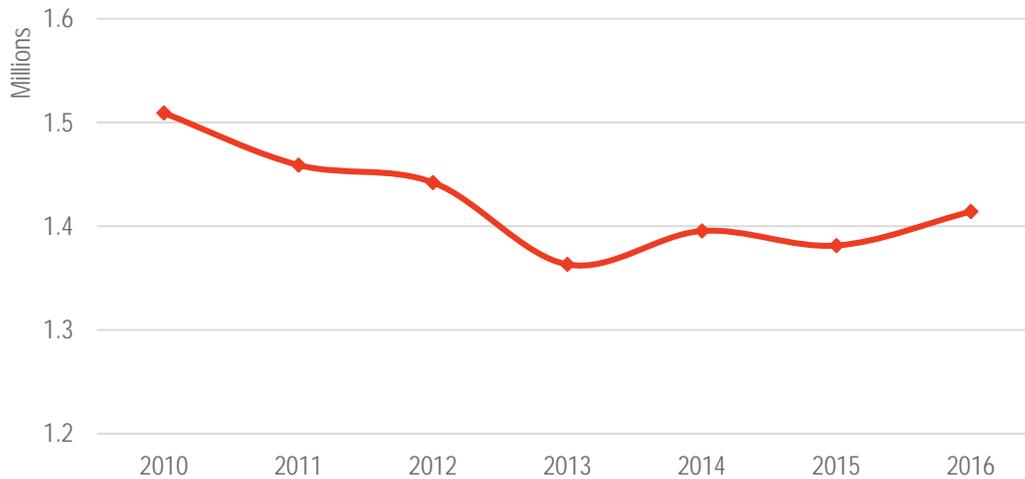


**EL PASO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

The El Paso MPO region contains six airports; however, the El Paso International Airport (EPIA) is the focus of the analysis as it is the only airport with significant commercial service (see Figure 8.2 above). EPIA offers commercial, air cargo, and general aviation services to the region and averages roughly 7,700 passengers a day. The facility offers 45 daily flights with non-stop service to ten different destinations within the United States.

The airport is located east of downtown less than two miles from IH 10 and US 54, making EPIA highly accessible to those living within and outside of the city. Currently the airport is served by ground transportation in the form of automobiles (parking, drop-off, and rental cars) as well as two local bus routes. Given its central location, future connectivity with the region’s passenger transportation network should remain central to airport planning as the region grows. Figure 8.3 reveals a significant decrease in passenger enplanements from 2010 to 2016. EPIA has experienced a decrease of roughly 100,000 enplanements, which is decrease of 6%, over this timespan. There were 1.4 million enplanements at EPIA in 2016.

**FIGURE 8.3: EL PASO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ENPLANEMENTS; 2010-2016**



**INTERREGIONAL CHARTER BUS SERVICE**

The El Paso MPO region is also served by several private transportation services offering interregional travel. These services include private charter bus companies such as Greyhound, Tornado Bus Co., and El Paso-Los Angeles Limousine Express. Figure 8.2 displays the central location of the private bus terminals, located in downtown El Paso near the Amtrak terminal and the Paso Del Norte port of entry (POE). The El Paso Greyhound service provides regional coverage with routes connecting to Southern California, Central Colorado, and throughout Texas. Tornado Bus Company provides services throughout the southeast and midwest and offers limited coverage to the northeast. Service more frequently extends to Texas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Limousine Express offers around 20 daily schedule bus trips to California, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Mexico.