

Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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**IN COOPERATION WITH:
The U.S. Department of Transportation
The Federal Highway Administration
The Federal Transit Administration**

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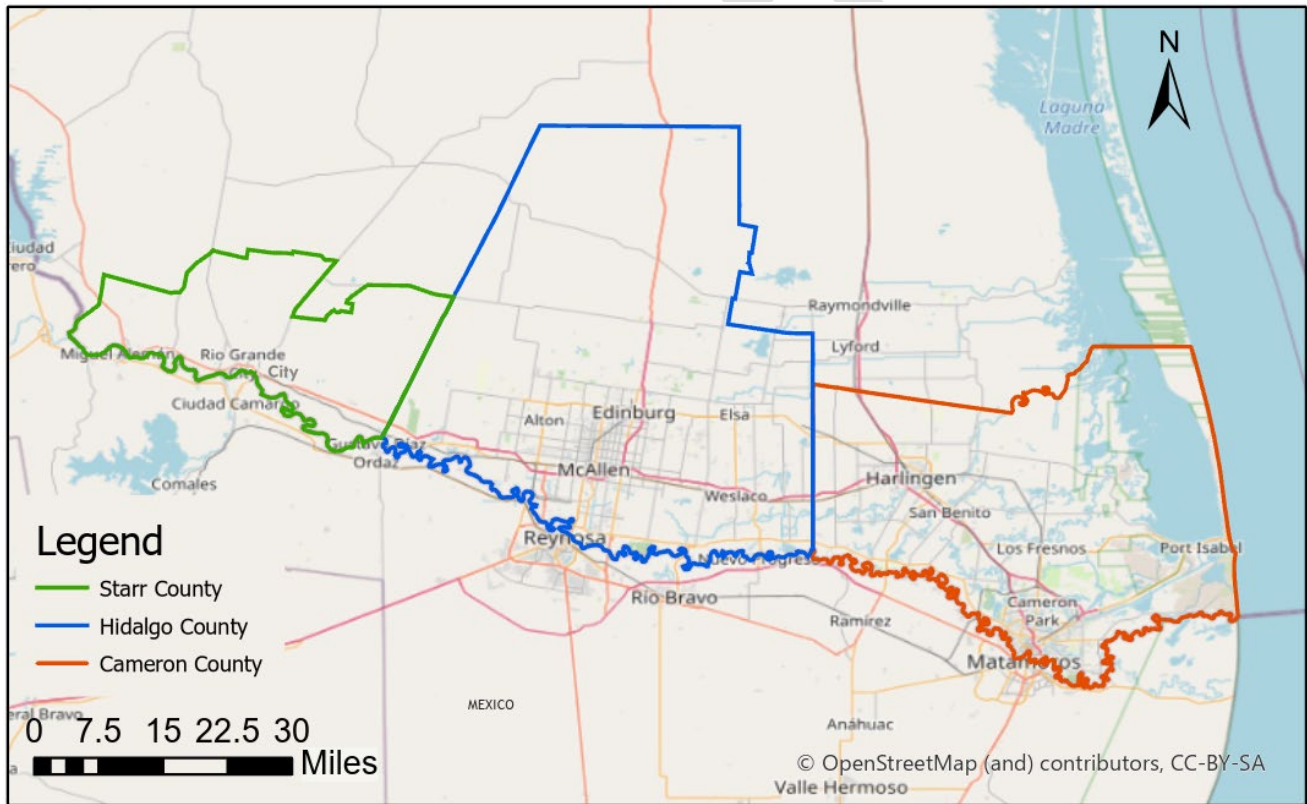
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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) is a collaborative structure of committees and organizations creating partnerships between local, state, and federal entities to address the region’s complex transportation needs. The RGVMPO’s Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) includes Hidalgo County, Cameron County, and Starr County.

Figure 1. Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Metropolitan Area Boundary



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) is to develop and integrate a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system that supports the existing and future mobility needs and economic vitality of the metropolitan areas of Brownsville, Harlingen-San Benito, Hidalgo County, and Starr County under local direction and in accordance with federal and state mandates. This shall be accomplished by protecting the environment, safeguarding social equity, improving quality of life, growing the local economy, and providing safe, efficient, and financially feasible transportation options. This is achieved through the long-range transportation planning process, which includes a comprehensive, continuous, and cooperative approach when partnering with citizens and participating planning members.

COMMITTEES

The Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization is a collaborative structure of committees and organizations creating partnerships to address the region’s complex transportation needs. Key players in this organizational structure include:

I. Transportation Policy Board (TPB) – is established by federal regulations (CFR 23 § 450.104) and is composed of principal elected and appointed officials of general-purpose local governments, as well as elected state congresspersons. All entities listed below are represented on the TPB. The TPB holds the decision-making authority of the RGVMPO and is responsible for setting policy in the transportation planning and programming process.

Each entity shall appoint one representative to serve on the TPB. Representation on the Transportation Policy Board shall be equal to the number of incorporated municipalities, cities, towns, or colonias within the urbanized study area who have representation on the TPB. Each representative will have a weighted number of votes based on the entity’s population. The details of how the weighted votes are determined are outlined in the TPB Bylaws in Section 1.05, Table 1. All members of the RGVMPO TPB shall comply with TPB Bylaws, a copy of which is available on the RGVMPO website (www.rgvmpo.org).

The following is a list of all entities represented on the TPB and their designated number of weighted votes:

| Local Government/Entity | Number of Weighted Votes |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hidalgo County | 7 |
| City of Brownsville | 4 |
| Cameron County | 4 |
| City of McAllen | 3 |
| City of Edinburg | 3 |
| City of Mission | 2 |
| City of Pharr | 2 |
| City of Harlingen | 2 |
| City of San Benito | 1 |
| Starr County | 1 |
| Cameron County RMA | 1 |
| Hidalgo County RMA | 1 |
| Valley Metro | 1 |
| TxDOT Pharr District | 1 |
| Total | 33 |

Members of the public may attend Transportation Policy Board (TPB) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and are afforded the opportunity to speak on any item in the agenda of the meeting. The Public Comment form is available on the website and must be submitted before 1 P.M. prior to a TPB meeting and before 9 A.M. prior to a TAC meeting.

To aid in the process of creating transportation policies and programming plans for long- and short-range planning documents, the Board has created the following committees:

II. Executive Committee (EC)

The Executive Committee (EC) shall be composed of five (5) voting TPB members, and the TPB Chair and the TPB Vice-Chair each serve on the EC in the same capacity. The other three (3) members of the EC will be recommended by the TPB Chair and approved by the TPB. These actions will take place at the meeting during which the election of officers is held. The EC's roles and responsibilities will include review of the business aspect of the MPO, review of the Executive Director, review of contracts and other documents, and other assignments for recommendations to the TPB.

III. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will develop and make recommendations to the TPB on technical issues, including, but not limited to, programming and amending projects, project selection process criteria, and special transportation planning issues. The TAC holds meetings monthly or as needed. Each TAC member entity may appoint one primary TAC member. In the event that the primary member is unable to attend a TAC meeting, the alternate member will be allowed to vote in the place of the member they are representing, provided they are designated in writing prior to the start of any Technical Committee Meeting. An alternate member may be allowed to vote in the place of the member they are representing provided they are designated in writing prior to the start of any Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

Additional Ad hoc subcommittees of membership of the Policy Board may be established and appointed by the Chairperson to assist the Policy Board in the performance of its function. Special Committees or Task Forces may be established and appointed by the TPB to undertake special assignments. These committees may consist of TPB members, TAC members, public officials, citizens, and other individuals the TPB deems appropriate. Standing committees may have separate bylaws, which must be ratified by the Policy Board

IV. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) is a subcommittee of the RGVMPPO's Technical Advisory Committee. The BPAC addresses matters concerning bicycle and pedestrian mobility and presents its recommendations to TAC. Members include appointed TAC Members, bicycle advocates, pedestrian advocates, and organizations with a stake in bicycle and pedestrian mobility. The Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee is an ad hoc body of the RGVMPPO whose mission is to promote walking and biking across the community, including but not limited to incorporating the consideration of the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the transportation system and infrastructure through education and outreach efforts involving city officials, residents, and commercial entities. The Committee evaluates and makes recommendations to the Technical Advisory Committee / Transportation Policy Board regarding general bike-ability and walkability initiatives.

SECTION 2. FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS

Several Federal and State laws and regulations guide the public participation efforts of the RGVMPPO and ensure that input into its various planning and programming activities is received. Laws and legislation relevant to the Public Participation Plan include:

FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION (FAST) ACT

The FAST Act was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The Act reauthorized the federal-aid highway program through fiscal year 2020, while consolidating the number of federal programs to focus resources on key national goals and reduce duplicative programs. The Act also emphasized expedited project delivery. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which reauthorized the federal-aid highway program in 2022, continued these requirements.

The FAST Act continued the previous transportation act's commitment to public participation, directing Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to have a public participation plan that provides people, "affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process."

The FAST Act requires that MPO public participation plans must "be developed in consultation with all interested parties," and "provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan." It further directed MPOs "to the maximum extent practicable" to "hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times," to "employ visualization techniques to describe plans," and to "make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information."

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that transportation planning and programming be nondiscriminatory on the basis of race, color, national origin or disability. The federal statute was further clarified and supplemented by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and a series of federal statutes enacted in the 1990s relating to the concept of environmental justice. The fundamental principles of environmental justice include:

- Avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.
- Ensuring full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- Preventing denial, reduction, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income communities.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) stipulates involving the community, particularly those with disabilities, in the development and improvement of services. The RGVMPO fully complies with these requirements through its ADA plan and policies by making meeting room facilities accessible with wheelchair ramps, and restrooms and elevators that are wheelchair accessible. The RGVMPO facilitates public participation in transportation activities by people with disabilities using the following guidelines:

- Meetings, public hearings, and formal events are held in facilities accessible by persons with disabilities.
- Public notices of meetings and events include a notice of accommodations for individuals who are disabled. Such accommodations will be provided by request with a minimum 24-hour notice.
- Persons needing to arrange for ADA accommodations at any RGVMPO meeting and events may call 956-682-3481 within 24 hours of the event.
- In collaboration with transit stakeholders, the RGVMPO can provide transportation for individuals with disabilities to attend public meetings and events at the RGVMPO offices.

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

A Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) includes a codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

I. 23 CFR §450.316 Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation

(a) The RGVMPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

- (1) The RGVMPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
 - (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
 - (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
 - (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe the MTP and the TIP;
 - (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the Internet;
 - (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
 - (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the

- development of the MTP and the TIP;
- (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
 - (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the RGVMPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
 - (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and,
 - (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
- (2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft MTP and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final MTP and TIP.
 - (3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the RGVMPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the Internet to the maximum extent practicable.
- b) In developing MTPs and TIPs, the RGVMPO shall consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the RGVMPO shall develop the MTPs and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:
- (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
 - (2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and,
 - (3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.
- c) When the MAB includes Federal public lands, the RGVMPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the MTP and the TIP.
- d) The RGVMPO shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

II. 23 CFR §450.324 Development and Content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan

(j) The RGVMPO shall provide individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan using the participation plan developed under §450.316(a).

(k) The RGVMPO shall publish, or otherwise make readily available, the MTP for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) electronically accessible formats and means, such as the Internet.

III. 23 CFR §450.326 Development and Content of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The RGVMPO shall provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP as required by §450.316(a). The RGVMPO shall publish or otherwise make readily available the TIP for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the Internet, as described in §450.316(a).

IV.23 USC 134 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The IIJA makes several changes to include housing considerations in the metropolitan transportation planning process, including adding affordable housing organizations to a list of stakeholders MPOs are required to provide a reasonable opportunity to comment on the metropolitan transportation plan (23 USC 134 (i) (6) (A)) and adding officials responsible for housing as officials with whom the Secretary shall encourage each MPO to consult (23 U.S.C. 134(g)(3)(A)). According to 23 USC 134 (k) (4) (A), the transportation planning process within a metropolitan planning area serving a transportation management area under this section may address the integration of housing, transportation, and economic development strategies through a process that provides for effective integration based on a cooperatively developed and implemented strategy. In carrying out the process, a metropolitan planning organization may consult with state and local entities responsible for land use, economic development, housing, management of road networks, or public transportation (23 USC 134 (k) (4) (B)).

TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

The Texas Administrative Code (TAC) is a compilation of all state agency rules in Texas. The TAC was created by the Texas Legislature under the Administrative Code Act (Government Code, §2002.051-2002.056).

I. 43 TAC § 16.154(k) Transportation Allocation Funding Formulas

Carryover in Category 2 Metropolitan and Urban Corridor Projects. To ensure that the state does not lose the ability to commit allocated funds and other federal funds, the department will annually review the use and programming of Category 7 funds. If at the beginning of a fiscal year an MPO has a carryover equal to more than 200 percent of the previous fiscal year's Category 7 allocation, the department may decrease the amount of the Category 2 carryover, if any, by an amount equal to the difference between the amount of the

Category 7 carryover and 200 percent of the previous fiscal year's Category 7 allocation. The department may redistribute that amount from Category 2 to the corresponding district's Category 11 District Discretionary allocation for use on the district's safety program. The department will report to the commission all proposed redistributions and notify any impacted MPO before the department makes a redistribution under this subsection.

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SECTION 3. GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) serves as a program guide for the public participation process of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO). The PPP provides the RGVMPO policies and principles that guide its communications and coordination with interested parties such as: residents, neighborhood associations, private and public agencies, transportation providers, and other members of the public. Additionally, the PPP serves as a tool for planners and decision-makers to engage residents, community groups, organizations, and businesses in the process of planning the transportation system. The RGVMPO is committed to a public involvement program that will involve all citizens within the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB).

GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The goal of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is to include residents, community and neighborhood groups and associations, non-profit groups, business sector groups, transportation providers, federal, state, and local government agencies, and many others to participate in a proactive, predictable planning effort that provides full access to making key transportation decisions early and during the process. Accomplishing the task of planning for transportation needs in the present day, five, ten and even twenty years from now, requires the RGVMPO to coordinate and collaborate with many types of public and private groups to provide mobility to housing, schools, jobs, recreation, and freight movement. Involving the public in the planning process helps reduce the time and cost of creating short- and long-range plans and projects while providing a forum for public input and collaboration with planning agencies. This allows the public the opportunity to voice their ideas, concerns, issues, and opinions and to help guide decision-makers in determining the transportation system of the future. Public involvement processes must be appropriate, accessible, transparent, accountable, meaningful and inclusive of the region's diverse population and its needs.

PRINCIPLES OF THE RGVMPO'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

- Access is an essential part of the public involvement process.
- No major public policy decision is reached or a large project implemented without significantly affecting someone.
- Professionals do not have a monopoly on good solutions.
- People are much more willing to live with a decision that affects different interests unequally if the decision-making process is open, objective, and considers all viewpoints.
- Interacting with an official representative of an organization or group is no substitute for interacting directly with that organization or group.
- Effective public notification and participation takes time and effort, and can be expensive, yet it is essential to sound decision-making.

SECTION 4. DEVELOPMENT OF AND REVISIONS TO MPO DOCUMENTS

Any RGVMPO Board member agency may request the consideration of a revision to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Congestion Management Process (CMP), or Public Participation Plan (PPP) on its own behalf or on the behalf of a non-member agency or private group, business or individual. Private parties must work through the RGVMPO member agency that represents them to request a revision to the MTP. All such requests shall be submitted to the RGVMPO Executive Director in writing. A revision to the above-mentioned documents may be initiated by the RGVMPO Executive Director to ensure that it remains in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and regional policy requirements.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DURING DEVELOPMENT AND UPDATE OF RGVMPO DOCUMENTS

Public involvement for the RGVMPO documents varies for different document stages and the status of the document undergoing public review. Public review of all documents must be posted at least 72 hours in advance of a scheduled meeting (as required by the Texas Open Meetings Act). Public review of a new planning or programming document is at a minimum of 30 calendar days (except for the PPP, which requires a 45 calendar days review period). Most updated and amended documents will have the opportunity to have a 30 calendar day review; however, updated and amended documents may have a minimum of a seven (7) day review period before adoption by the TPB, if necessary.

With increased focus on expediting project implementation and funding allocation, there may be rare occasions in which issues arise that require urgent modification of the MTP, TIP, UPWP, and CMP due to funding requirements or timeliness. In these cases, exceptions to the 30 calendar day comment period may be required in order to avoid not being able to secure funding. In these cases, there will be adequate public notice and clear communication of the abbreviated time period. An abbreviated comment period will be at least seven (7) calendar days. Longer comment periods are preferred and will be offered whenever possible. These actions will be emphasized on the TPB meeting agenda which is posted at least 72 hours prior to the TPB posted meeting. In preparation for the public comment period, RGVMPO staff will develop a list of projects and all potential changes of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and/or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) in the current revision cycle.

I. Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a long-range transportation plan with 25-year minimum horizon. The RGVMPO is required to develop this plan every five years, due to the RGVMPO's attainment status. The minimum length of public comment period is 30 calendar days whenever an MTP is developed, updated, or amended. Projects listed in the MTP are intended to meet the travel needs within the region. The plan provides the context from which the region's TIP, a short-range capital improvement program for implementing highway, transit and bike and pathways projects, are drawn. The plan addresses elements including congestion management, public transportation, transit, bicycles and pedestrians, roadways, freight, and finances.

II. Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a short-range, fiscally constrained program that covers a four-

year horizon period. The RGVMPPO is required to develop this plan every four years and to adopt it every two years. The minimum length of public comment period is 30 calendar days whenever a TIP is developed, updated, or amended. Every project in the TIP must also be listed in the MTP and follow the RGVMPPO's Congestion Management Plan.

III. Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a document detailing the transportation planning work to be accomplished by the RGVMPPO staff in a two-year period and is developed every two years and amended as necessary. The minimum length of public comment period is 30 calendar days whenever a UPWP is developed, updated, or amended.

IV. Congestion Management Process

A Congestion Management Process (CMP) is required for all metropolitan areas with populations over 200,000. This process can be formalized in a variety of ways, and the RGVMPPO has elected to adopt it as a formal document. The CMP contains the congestion-focused strategies and projects to be included in the adopted MTP. It is amended on a continuous basis as updated congestion and traffic data become available and as existing projects listed within it are implemented. The CMP document can be found on the RGVMPPO website. The adoption of a wholly new CMP requires a public comment period of 30 calendar days.

V. Public Participation Plan

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) provides the RGVMPPO policies and principles that guide its communications and coordination with the public. The minimum length of public comment period is 45 calendar days whenever a PPP is developed or amended.

VI. Program Management Plan

The Program Management Plan (PMP) is a document that describes a designated recipient's policies and procedures for administering FTA's Section 5310 program in a large, urbanized area. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) is a designated recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program funds to administer to Valley Metro and Metro McAllen. Brownsville Metro services a large enough population to receive their own Section 5310 funds. The RGVMPPO does not produce the Program Management Plan, but the RGVMPPO does facilitate transit project selection for the LRGVDC.

VII. Annual Project Listing

Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.334, the RGVMPPO must submit an Annual Project Listing (APL) within 90 calendar days following the end of the program year. The program year follows the Federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30). Any reference to "fiscal year" in this document refers specifically to the Federal fiscal year. This outreach follows a similar approach to the development and approval of short-range planning and programming efforts, such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The APL includes investments in roadways, transit, maintenance, pedestrian walkways, and bicycle transportation facilities. The APL includes only projects that have received federal funding. Projects funded solely by state and/or local sources are not included. By publishing this listing, MPOs enhance transparency and ensure that the public and stakeholders have access to information about the allocation of federal transportation funds within the region.

The RGVMPO, in consultation and coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation, local governments, and public transit agencies, compiles the project information for the APL. While there is no comment period on the APL, it is published on the RGVMPO website (<https://www.rgvmpo.org>) no later than 90 calendar days after the end of each Fiscal Year (FY).

The MTP, TIP, UPWP, CMP, PPP, PMP, and APL must be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Transportation Policy Board (TPB) when finalized for informational purposes.

| RGVMPO Document | Length of Comment Period | Minimum Notification of Opportunity |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Metropolitan Transportation Plan Transportation Improvement Program Unified Planning Work Program Congestion Management Process Program Management Plan | 30 calendar days | RGVMPO website announcement Known media outlets |
| Public Participation Plan | 45 calendar days [23 CFR 450.316 (a)] | |
| Annual Listing of Obligated Projects | N/A | Posted to the RGVMPO website 90 calendar days after the end of each FY |

AMENDMENTS

As summarized below, the RGVMPO acknowledges three types of revisions to its document revision process. In the course of the life of MPO documents, revisions to the content are frequently made to provide current programming and/or changes adopted by the TPB. A revision is defined as a change to the MTP, TIP, UPWP, CMP, or PPP that occurs between scheduled periodic updates. The RGVMPO follows the TxDOT STIP revision processes. The definitions of these various revisions are as follows:

Tier 1: Primary Amendment – a revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that involves a major change to a project included in a metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope (e.g., changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes). All Tier 1 Primary Amendments require approval by the TPB, a 30 calendar day public review and comment (45 calendar day public review and comment for Public Participation Plan), and a demonstration of fiscal constraint. In the context of a long-range statewide transportation plan, an amendment is a revision approved by the State in accordance with its public involvement process.

Revisions that include the following are defined as primary amendments:

For the MTP and TIP:

- Major change in project cost:
 - Significant additional funding for a project (as defined by the TPB): changes in the federal cost exceeding fifty percent (50%) AND resulting in a revised total cost exceeding \$1,499,999 for a highway project or exceeding twenty percent (20%) for a transit project. A primary amendment is

- NOT required when a change in estimated federal cost results in a total project cost of less than \$1,500,000, even if the federal cost increases by more than 50% for a highway project.
- Change from state funding category to federal funding category
 - Adding federally funded projects
 - Adding regionally significant state-funded projects
 - Projects adding significant additional capacity to the RGVMPPO transportation network
 - Changes to a project that requires network models to be run
 - Addition or deletion of a project
 - Major changes in a project's design concept or design scope, and
 - Major changes to project/project phase initiation dates.
 - A major change is considered moving a project into or out of the first four fiscal years of a TIP (as allowed by funding categories).
 - Any other change consistent with those criteria above is considered a Tier 1 Amendment.

For the CMP:

- Not applicable.

For the UPWP:

- Additions or deletions of work tasks or subtasks funded through PL 112, 5303, and 5307 funds
- Additions or deletions of funding sources
- Significant additions or changes to the scope of approved work tasks
 - A consultant or other outside entity contributes effort toward the completion of a task or subtask using RGVMPPO funding sources
 - The scope will increase or decrease by more than one third, as determined by RGVMPPO staff
 - RGVMPPO staff determines that the subject matter covered by the task will change appreciably from that which was approved in the adopted UPWP
- Significant increase or decrease in task costs, which is one that exceeds **ten percent (10%)** of the current task cost
- Any other change consistent with those criteria above is considered a Tier 1 Amendment.

Note: A primary amendment is warranted for the addition of a planning study if the planning study is funded by another federal source. A planning study approved by a TIP, STIP, or MTP amendment that has previously demonstrated a public comment period prior to proposed inclusion to the UPWP would not require a 30-day public comment period. Therefore, a subtask would be included in the UPWP, and the Transportation Policy Board is required to take action regarding the UPWP amendment. The amendment shall be sent for approval by TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

For the PPP:

- Changes to the goals and principles of the PPP
- Changes to the amendment criteria for RGVMPPO documents
- Changes to the public notification schedule for amendments of RGVMPPO documents
- Changes to the meeting procedures that concern venue criteria or public notification

For Title VI

- Updates to RGVMPPO responsibilities, principles, or procedures described within the document
- Any other change consistent with those criteria above is considered a Tier 1 Amendment.

A primary amendment may also be defined by the judgment and direction of the TPB as a consequence of particularities of a project and the forecasted final effects of the implementation of a project. Primary amendments must be presented to the TPB for approval.

Tier 2: Administrative Modification – a minor revision to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that includes minor changes to project/project phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects, and minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint. A modification is also a minor revision to the non-project- based documents covered in the Tier 1 Section of the PPP. This includes, but is not limited to:

For the MTP and TIP:

- Change in CSJ,
- Change in letting date,
- Minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects,
 - Change from one state funding category to another state funding category
 - Change in one federal funding category to another federal category
- Change in the project limits for a state-funded project
- Change in TIP year for a state-funded project
- Addition of a project to a Statewide Program (using a Statewide CSJ)
- Minor changes to project/project phase costs, which are those in which the proposed change to the federal share of a highway project cost does not exceed fifty percent (50%) or result in a revised total cost at or above \$1,500,000; or twenty percent (20%) of the federal share for a transit project. It is still considered a minor change when a change in estimated federal cost results in a total project cost of less than \$1,500,000 for a highway project, even if the federal cost increases by more than 50%. It is also still considered a minor change if a federal increase is less than 50% and the total project cost is over \$1,500,000 for a highway project.
- Minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates.
- A minor change is considered moving a project's funds to another Fiscal Year provided they are not being moved into or out of the first four fiscal years of a TIP (as allowed by funding categories; see paragraph below), and
- Other revisions of a similar nature to those listed above. In cases of ambiguity, a Tier 1 Formal Amendment should be pursued.

For the CMP:

- The CMP is intended to serve as a living document. Amendments to it are made periodically as updated congestion and traffic information becomes available.

For the UPWP:

- Minor changes to task scopes. A minor addition or change to the scope of an approved work task is one in which:
 - Does not change who will complete the task or subtask
 - The scope will not increase by more than one third, as determined by RGVMPPO staff
 - RGVMPPO staff determines that the subject matter covered by the task will not change appreciably from that which was approved in the adopted UPWP
- Minor changes to task costs, which is one that does not exceed a **ten percent (10%) increase** in task or subtask costs
- Revising the description of the RGVMPPO organization or that of its boards and committees in the introduction for consistency with changes approved by the TPB
- Updating references to applicable federal and state regulations
- Updating of boundary maps for consistency with most recent available information
- Other revisions of a similar nature to those listed above. In cases of ambiguity, a Tier 1 Formal Amendment should be pursued.

Note: An administrative modification is warranted for the addition of a planning study if the planning study is funded by another source approved by a TIP, STIP, or MTP amendment and has previously demonstrated a public comment period prior to proposed inclusion to the UPWP. Therefore, a subtask would be included in the UPWP for informational purposes only, a 30-day comment period would not be necessary, and approval from the Transportation Policy Board is not required. However, a “notification for the record” shall be sent to TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA by providing a copy of the updated document.

For the PPP:

- Revising the description of the RGVMPPO organization or that of its boards and committees in the introduction for consistency with changes approved by the TPB
- Updating references to applicable federal and state regulations
- Updating of boundary maps for consistency with most recent available information
- Adding social media accounts or other similar additions to the list of ways the RGVMPPO engages with the public for consistency with current RGVMPPO practices
- Changes to the meeting procedures that do not concern location criteria or public notification procedures
- Modifications to the list of acronyms for accuracy
- Other revisions of a similar nature to those listed above. In cases of ambiguity, a Tier 1 Formal Amendment should be pursued.

For Title VI:

- Updating the description of the RGVMPPO organization
- Updates to statutory references to ensure consistency with current state and federal requirements
- Updating the names of RGVMPPO staff members in Appendix 2: RGVMPPO Organizational Chart of Title VI Responsibilities
- Updating demographic information and maps for consistency with most recent data
- Adding public outreach event summaries to Appendix 10
- Other revisions of a similar nature to those listed above. In cases of ambiguity, a Tier 1 Formal Amendment should be pursued.

Administrative modifications do not require a formal 30 calendar day public review or a demonstration of fiscal constraint, nor do they need to be presented to the TPB for approval purposes. However, the TPB must be notified of any administrative modification(s), especially in the case of grouped TIP projects.

Tier 3: Grammatical and Format Revision – a minor revision required to correct or add grammatical or format errors that do not change the content of the document. Grammatical and format revisions are not required to be presented to the TPB nor do they require a formal 30 calendar day public review or comment, a demonstration of fiscal constraint.

PERIODIC REVIEW

The RGVMPPO is committed to periodic review of the Public Participation Plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies therein to ensure a full and open participation process under 23 CFR 450.316. This review, conducted at least once annually, may result in the identification of best practices to incorporate in the PPP.

DRAFT

SECTION 5. METHODS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

By offering information in a variety of formats, the RGVMPPO is able to include more people in the planning process than relying on a limited number of strategies and opportunities. Public participation is an ongoing activity of the RGVMPPO; efforts to inform and gather input from the public include, but are not limited to, the following strategies.

WEBSITE

The website, at <http://www.rgvmpo.org>, is used to list current and topical information on regular and special meetings, audio meeting minutes for TAC & TPB, planning studies, publications, related public events and work products. Documents produced by the RGVMPPO, such as the Public Participation Plan (PPP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Congestion Management Process (CMP), and other studies are available from the site. Also, citizens can submit comments and sign up to be added to the various distribution lists maintained by the RGVMPPO. The site provides many links to other transportation related sites at the local and national level.

The website is maintained and updated by RGVMPPO staff and regularly reviewed. Basic statistics are tracked through the website on a monthly basis, such as the number of visits and the sources of visits to the website. When the RGVMPPO holds a public comment period, for however long it may be, a banner at the top of the RGVMPPO website will disclose that there is a current public comment period, include a countdown until the end of the current public comment period, and link visitors to a form or survey that allows them to input their own public commentary. At the end of this form, there will be an option for the visitor to leave their contact information, in the event that RGVMPPO staff finds any reason to reach out for clarification, updates, etc.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The RGVMPPO staff currently utilizes various social media to further encourage the interaction between the RGVMPPO and the public. Facebook and X, formerly Twitter, are used to present the public with information concerning the RGVMPPO and other programs, projects, activities, events, etc. YouTube presents the opportunity for disseminating information to the public with low literacy. TPB, TAC, and BPAC meetings will be announced on the RGVMPPO's social media. In compliance with Texas Government Code § 551.128, video recordings of Transportation Policy Board meetings are posted online at <https://www.youtube.com/@rgvmpo956>.

Designated RGVMPPO Staff maintain and regularly review all social media sites. Basic statistics are tracked by social media sites and are reviewed monthly by staff. Data gathered and logged include the total number of comments, likes and shares, traffic sources, some demographics, etc.

MEDIA OUTLETS

Formal press releases are sent to local media (newspaper, TV, and radio) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the RGVMPPO or their committees.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

TPB and subcommittee meetings will serve as public comment forums for any draft document and their updates, in addition to all other public meetings.

To facilitate greater participation in public meetings specifically, the following criteria are considered when selecting meeting locations. Ideally the meetings will be held in person; however, under certain circumstances an in-person meeting may not be feasible, the RGVMPPO will hold virtual public meeting(s).

- Meetings will be held in accessible locations, preferably near transit lines or routes, that are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Presentations and supporting documentation, as needed, will be available at meetings.
- As part of the planning processes and adoption of all new planning documents, the RGVMPPO staff will conduct public meetings for planning and programming documents for the exchange of information and public comments regarding final draft versions of the RGVMPPO planning and programming documents. These sessions will provide opportunities for the public to present comments regarding the final draft of planning documents and/or studies developed by the RGVMPPO.
- Upon request, language translation, including sign and foreign language interpreters and handouts in large print or Braille, will be available. Additionally, staff will make every effort to accommodate requests from persons with disabilities. A minimum of ten calendar days advance notice is required for these arrangements to be provided. Public meeting notices will provide the telephone number and e-mail address to request special arrangements.
- When the RGVMPPO is not able to host in-person public meetings, it will provide online participation opportunities such as virtual public meetings to gather input from the community.

AGENDA POLICIES

The agendas for the Transportation Policy Board meetings, the Technical Advisory Committee meetings, and the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee meetings will be posted to the RGVMPPO's website (rgvmppo.org) at least three (3) business days in advance of each meeting of the aforementioned committees, as required by Texas House Bill 1522. The agendas for all of these committees will also be posted physically at the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council at least three (3) business days in advance of each committee's meetings, as required by Texas House Bill 1522. The TPB meetings are traditionally held monthly at the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Center at 301 W Railroad St, Weslaco, TX 78596, in the Ken Jones board room in Building B, unless posted otherwise. The TAC meets monthly in the same location, unless posted otherwise. In compliance with §472.036 of the Texas Transportation Code, the TPB meetings are livestreamed, the link to which can be found on the RGVMPPO website under Committees> Agendas and Packets. As required by the Texas Open Meetings Act §551.128, the recordings of these meetings are made available on the RGVMPPO website, under Committees> Agendas and Packets.

PRINT AND DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS

- Various planning documents and other publications can be viewed via the RGVMPPO website and are available upon request. These documents include, but are not limited to: Metropolitan Transportation Plan,
- Transportation Improvement Program,
- Unified Planning Work Program,
- Congestion Management Process, and
- Public Participation Plan.

APPENDIX A. ACRONYMS

ADA - American Disabilities Act of 1990
APL - Annual Project Listing
BPAC - Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
CFR - Code of Federal Regulations
CMP - Congestion Management Process
CSJ - Control Section Job
RGVMPO - Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency
FAST Act - Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FHWA - Federal Highway Administration
FTA - Federal Transit Administration
LRGVDC - Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
MAB - Metropolitan Area Boundary
MPA - Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP - Metropolitan Transportation Plan
PMP - Program Management Plan
PPP - Public Participation Program
TIP - Transportation Improvement Program
TMA - Transportation Management Area
TPB - Transportation Policy Board
TAC - Technical Advisory Committee
UPWP - Unified Planning Work Program

APPENDIX B. TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

(Approved by the Transportation Policy Board on July 21, 2025)

As a recipient of federal financial assistance and under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related Title VI statutes, the RGVMPPO ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any agency receiving federal financial assistance for programs or activities. All programs funded in whole or in part from federal financial assistance are subject to Title VI requirements. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 extended this to all programs within an agency that receives federal assistance regardless of the funding source for individual programs.

This policy is intended to establish a procedure under which complaints alleging discrimination in RGVMPPO's provisions, services, or activities can be made by persons who are not employees of the RGVMPPO. Any person who believes the RGVMPPO, or any entity who receives federal financial assistance from or through the RGVMPPO (i.e., sub-recipients, sub-contractors, or sub-grantees), has subjected them or any specific class of individuals to unlawful discrimination may file a complaint of discrimination. The RGVMPPO will follow timelines set forth in guidance from the Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Department of Justice for processing Title VI discrimination complaints.

Filing Period

A complaint of discrimination must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged act of Discrimination, or discovery thereof; or where there has been a continuing course of conduct, the date on which said conduct was discontinued. Filing means a written complaint must be postmarked before the expiration of the 180-day period. The filing date is the day you complete, sign, and mail the complaint form. The complaint form and consent/release form must be dated and signed for acceptance. Complaints received more than 180 calendar days after the alleged discrimination will not be processed and will be returned to the complainant with a letter explaining why the complaint could not be processed and alternative agencies to which a report may be made.

Where to File

In order to be processed, signed original complaint forms must be mailed to:

Executive Director/Title VI Coordinator
Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning
Organization 617 W University Dr
Edinburg, TX 78539

Upon request, reasonable accommodations will be made for persons who are unable to complete the complaint form due to disability. A complaint may also be filed by a representative on behalf of a complainant.

Persons who are not satisfied with the findings of the RGVMPPO may seek remedy from other applicable state or federal agencies.

Requirements for a Complaint

In order to be processed, a complaint must be in writing and contain the following information (See our website at <https://www.rgvmpo.org/resources/title-vi>):

- Name, address, and phone number of the complainant.
- Name(s) and address(es) and business(es)/organization(s) of person(s) who allegedly discriminated.
- Date of alleged discriminatory act(s).
- Basis of complaint (i.e. race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability).
- A statement of complaint.
- A signed consent release form.

Complaint Review Process

The following is a description of how a discrimination complaint will be handled once received by RGVMPPO.

- 1. The RGVMPPO receives a complaint:** Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant or their designated representative. If the complainant is unable to complete the form in writing due to disability, upon request reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure the complaint is received and processed in a timely manner. Complainants wishing to file a complaint that do not have access to the Internet or the ability to pick up a form will be mailed a complaint form to complete. The complainant will be notified if the complaint form is incomplete and asked to furnish the missing information.
- 2. The complaint is logged into the RGVMPPO's tracking database:** Completed complaint forms will be logged into the complaint tracking database; basic data will be maintained on each complaint received.
- 3. The RGVMPPO determines jurisdiction of the complaint:** RGVMPPO's Title VI Public Involvement Liaison will complete an initial review of the complaint. The purpose of this review is to determine if the complaint meets basic criteria. **Criteria required for a complete complaint:**
 - Basis of alleged discrimination (i.e. race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability).
 - Determination of timeliness will also be made to ensure that the complaint was filed within the 180-day period requirement.
 - The program in which the alleged discrimination occurred will be examined to ensure that the complaint was filed with the appropriate agency. During this process, if it is determined that the program or activity that the alleged discrimination occurred is not related to the RGVMPPO program or activity, every reasonable attempt will be made to establish the correct agency. Whenever possible and assuming consent was granted on the Consent/Release form, the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate agency.

If the complaint is a transportation related discrimination complaint and the RGVMPPO or its

sub-recipients are named as the respondent, then the complaint, if related to Texas transportation, shall be forwarded to:

TxDOT Civil Rights Division
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas, 78701-2483

Thereafter, the procedures will follow through as indicated here.

4. **Initial written notice is given to the complainant:** Within 10 business days of the receipt of the complaint, the RGVMPPO will send notice to the complainant confirming receipt of the complaint; if necessary, the notice will request additional information, notify the complainant that the activity is not related to a RGVMPPO program or activity, or does not meet deadline requirements. Conclusions made in step three will determine the appropriate response to the complaint. If any additional information is needed from the complainant, it will be communicated at this point in the process. A copy of the written response, as well as the complaint form, will be forwarded to the appropriate DOT for informational purposes only.
5. **An investigation of the complaint will commence:** The Public Involvement Liaison will confer with the RGVMPPO Executive Director to determine the most appropriate fact-finding process to ensure that all available information is collected in an effort to reach the most informed conclusion and resolution of the complaint. The type of investigation techniques used may vary depending on the nature and circumstances of the alleged discrimination. An investigation may include but is not limited to:
 - Internal meetings with RGVMPPO staff and legal counsel.
 - Consultation with state and federal agencies.
 - Interviews of the complainant(s).
 - Review of documentation (i.e. planning, public involvement, and technical program activities).
 - Interviews and review of documentation with other agencies involved.
 - Review of technical analysis method (if applicable).
 - Review of demographic data.
6. **The investigation will reach a conclusion:** An investigation must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving the complete complaint, unless the facts and circumstances warrant otherwise. A determination will be made based on information obtained. The Public Involvement Liaison and the Executive Director or designee will make a recommendation for action, including formal and/or informal resolution strategies.
7. **The complainant is made aware of the investigation's conclusion and findings:** Within 10 business days of completion of an investigation, the complainant must be notified by the RGVMPPO Executive Director of the final decision. The notification will advise the complainant of his/her appeal rights with state and federal agencies if he/she is dissatisfied with the final decision. A copy of this letter, along with the report of findings, will be forwarded to the to the appropriate DOT for information purposes.

Procedimiento de Quejas del Título VI

Como receptora de ayuda económica federal y dentro del Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964 y los estatutos vinculados al Título VI, La Organización Metropolitana de Planeación de Rio Grande Valley (RGMPO por sus siglas en ingles) garantiza que ningún individuo quede excluido de la participación de, sea negado los beneficios de, o sea víctima de discriminación de ningún programa o actividad que reciba ayuda económica federal por motivo de su raza, color o nacionalidad. Todos los programas financiados por ayuda económica federal en forma parcial o total se encuentran sujetos a los requisitos establecidos en el Título VI. La Ley de Restauración de Derechos Civiles de 1987 extendió estos requisitos a todos los programas dentro de cualquier organismo que recibiese ayuda federal independientemente de la fuente de financiación para programas individuales.

El propósito de esta política es establecer un proceso según el cual los individuos que no son empleados en el MPO del Rio Grande Valley puedan presentar quejas por discriminación por parte de disposiciones, servicios o actividades de la MPO de Rio Grande Valley. Toda persona que crea haber sido víctima de discriminación ilegal, ya sea hacia su persona o hacia un colectivo de individuos específico, por parte del MPO del Rio Grande Valley cualquier entidad que reciba ayuda económica federal del MPO del Rio Grande Valley a través de este (como subreceptores, subcontratistas o subcesionarios), puede presentar una queja por discriminación. Al procesar quejas por discriminación en virtud del Título VI, el MPO del Rio Grande Valley seguirá los plazos establecidos según la guía del Departamento de Transporte, la Administración Federal de Carreteras, La Administración Federal de Transporte Público y el Departamento de Justicia.

Periodo de presentación de la queja

La queja por discriminación debe presentarse dentro de los 180 días calendario de la presunta acción de discriminación o del descubrimiento de este último. En caso de que la conducta se haya manifestado en forma continua, a partir de la fecha en la que se haya interrumpido dicha conducta. Al presentar la queja por escrito debe estar sellada por el correo antes de la expiración del período de 180 días. Se considerará fecha de presentación al día en el que usted complete, firme y envíe el formulario de queja. Para que puedan aceptarse, el formulario de queja y el formulario de consentimiento deben estar fechados y firmados. Las quejas que se reciban una vez que hayan pasado más de 180 días después de la presunta discriminación no serán procesadas y se le reenviarán al reclamante junto con una carta que explique por qué la queja no ha podido procesarse y a qué agencias alternativas se puede dirigir un informe.

Donde presentar la queja

Para procesar la queja, los formularios de quejas originales y firmados deben ser enviados o entregados en persona a:

Director Ejecutivo/Coordinador del Título VI
Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning
Organization 617 W University Dr
Edinburg, TX 78539

Se podrán realizar adaptaciones razonables bajo pedido para los individuos que no se encuentren en condiciones de completar el formulario de queja debido a una discapacidad o a conocimientos limitados del idioma inglés. Asimismo, un representante del reclamante podrá presentar una queja en nombre de este último.

Individuos que no se encuentren satisfechos con la resolución del MPO del Rio Grande Valley podrán recurrir a otras agencias estatales o federales aplicables.

Requisitos de queja

Para que una queja pueda procesarse, debe ponerse por escrito e incluir la siguiente información: (véase Apéndice 3 del Programa del Título VI para formulario de queja o en la página de internet del MPO del Rio Grande Valley en <https://www.rgvmpo.org/resources/title-vi>)

- Nombre, domicilio y número de teléfono del reclamante.
- Nombre(s), domicilio(es) y empresa(s)/organización(es) de la(s) presunta(s) víctima(s) de discriminación.
- Fecha del presunto acto(s) de discriminación.
- Motivo de la queja (por ejemplo: raza, color, nacionalidad)
- Una declaración de queja.
- Un formulario de consentimiento de divulgación firmado.

Proceso de revisión de quejas

A continuación, la descripción del proceso de como una queja discriminatoria será manejada una vez que es recibida por el MPO del Rio Grande Valley:

1. **El MPO del Rio Grande Valley recibe una queja por escrito:** Las quejas deben presentarse por escrito y estar firmadas por el reclamante o un representante designado por este último. Si el reclamante no se encuentra en condiciones de completar el formulario debido a una discapacidad o a conocimientos limitados del idioma inglés y solicita asistencia, se realizarán adaptaciones razonables para garantizar que la queja se reciba y se procese de manera oportuna. Los reclamantes que deseen presentar una queja y no dispongan de acceso a internet o no tengan la posibilidad de ir a recoger un formulario, recibirán un formulario de quejas por correo para que puedan completarlo.
2. **La queja se registra en una base de datos:** Los formularios de quejas se registrarán en la base de datos de quejas para realizar su seguimiento. En todas las quejas recibidas se

conservarán los datos básicos, que incluyen el nombre del reclamante, su información de contacto, el nombre y la organización de la persona(s) de la presunta discriminación, fecha en que ocurrió el presunto acto(s) discriminatorio, el motivo en el que se basa la queja por discriminación, y una descripción de la presunta acción discriminatoria.

3. **Revisión inicial:** El MPO del Rio Grande Valley realizara una revisión inicial de la queja. El propósito de esta revisión es determinar si la queja cumple con los criterios básicos.

Criterios básicos de una queja completa:

- Motivo en el que se basa la queja por discriminación (raza, color, origen nacional)
- Determinación de que la queja ha sido presentada dentro de los 180 días calendario de la presunta acción de discriminación o del descubrimiento de este último
- El programa en el cual se presenta la presunta acción de discriminación será examinado para asegurar que el reclamante a entregado la queja a la agencia apropiada. Durante este proceso, si se ha hecho una determinación de que el programa o actividad de la presunta discriminación no es relacionada a un programa o actividad de la MPO de Rio Grande Valley, se hará todo lo posible para establecer la agencia correcta. Siempre que sea posible y asumiendo que se otorgó el consentimiento en el formulario de Consentimiento, que es parte del formulario de queja, la queja se enviará a la agencia apropiada.

Si la queja es una queja de discriminación relacionada con el transporte y el MPO del Rio Grande Valley sus subreceptores son nombrados como el demandado, entonces la queja, si está relacionada con el transporte de Texas, se enviará a

TXDOT, División de Derechos Civiles, 125
E. 11th Street, Austin, Texas, 78701-2483.

A partir de entonces, los procedimientos seguirán como se indica aquí.

4. **Respuesta inicial por escrito:** Dentro de los 10 días siguientes a la recepción de la queja, el MPO del Rio Grande Valley dará una respuesta inicial por escrito al reclamante para notificar que la queja se ha recibido. Incluido en la notificación se especificará si es necesaria información adicional, notificara al reclamante si la actividad no es relacionada a una actividad o programa de la MPO de Rio Grande Valley, o si no cumple con los requisitos de la fecha límite. Las conclusiones realizadas en Rio Grande Valley 3 determinaran la respuesta apropiada al reclamante. Se enviará una copia de la respuesta escrita y del formulario de queja de discriminación a el Departamento de Transporte según corresponda, solo con fines informativos.
5. **Investigación de la queja:** El Especialista en el Título VI consultará con el Director del MPO del Rio Grande Valley para determinar cuál es el proceso de investigación más adecuado para garantizar que se reúna toda la información disponible y poder llegar a una conclusión y posterior resolución de la queja. El tipo de técnicas de investigación utilizadas variará en función del carácter y las circunstancias de la presunta discriminación. Una investigación puede incluir, entre otros:

- Reuniones internas con el personal y los asesores jurídicos del MPO del Rio Grande Valley
 - Consultas con agencias estatales y federales.
 - Entrevistas con reclamante (s).
 - Revisión de documentación (por ejemplo: planificación, participación del público y actividades del programa técnico).
 - Entrevistas y revisión de documentación con otras agencias involucrados.
 - Revisión de métodos de análisis técnico.
 - Revisión de información demográfica.
6. **Determinación de la Investigación:** La investigación debe finalizar dentro de los 60 días siguientes a la recepción de la queja completa, a menos que los hechos y las circunstancias hagan disponer algo diferente. Se tomará una determinación en base a la información obtenida. El especialista en el Título VI, el Director Ejecutivo y/o la persona designada presentará una recomendación sobre el curso de acción a seguir. La misma incluirá estrategias de resolución formales y/o informales en un informe de conclusiones.
7. **Aviso de Resolución:** Dentro de los 10 días siguientes a la finalización y resolución de una investigación, el Director Ejecutivo del MPO del Rio Grande Valley deberá informar la decisión final al reclamante. El aviso brindará información al reclamante sobre su derecho a apelar ante agencias estatales y federales en caso de no encontrarse satisfecho/a con la decisión final. Con fines informativos, se le enviará una copia de esta carta junto con un informe de los resultados de la investigación a el Departamento de Transporte.

APPENDIX C. TITLE VI COMPLAINT FORM

(Approved by the Transportation Policy Board on July 21, 2025)

Title VI Discrimination Complaint Form

Please read Appendix B. Title VI Complaint Procedures before continuing.

1. First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

2. Who do you believe discriminated against you?

First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name: _____

Name of business/organization: _____

Position/Title: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Person's relationship to you: _____

3. When did the alleged act(s) of discrimination occur? Please list all dates applicable dates mm/dd/yyyy format.

Dates: _____

Is the alleged discrimination on-going? Yes _____ No _____

4. Where did the alleged act(s) of discrimination occur? (Attach additional pages as necessary.)

Name of location: _____

5. Indicate the basis of your grievance of discrimination:

- Race
- National Origin
- Color

6. Describe in detail the specific incident(s) that the basis(es) of the alleged discrimination. Describe each incident of discrimination separately. Attach additional pages as necessary.

Please explain how other persons or groups were treated differently by the person(s)/agency who discriminated against you.

Please list and describe all documents, e-mails, or other records and materials pertaining to your complaint.

[Empty response box]

Please list and identify any witness(es) to the incidents or persons who have personal knowledge of information pertaining to your complaint.

[Empty response box]

Have you previously reported or otherwise complained about this incident or related acts of discrimination? If so, please identify the individual to whom you made the report, the date on which you made the report, and the resolution. Please provide any supporting documentation.

[Empty response box]

Please provide any additional information about the alleged discrimination.

7. If an advisor will be assisting you in the complaint process, please provide his/her name and contact information.

First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name: _____

Name of business/organization: _____

Position/Title: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

8. This complaint form must be signed and dated in order to address your allegations. Additionally, this office will need your consent to disclose your name, if needed, in the course of our investigation. The Discrimination Complaint Consent/Release form is attached. If you are filing a complaint of discrimination on behalf of another person, our office will also need this person's consent.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided is accurate and the events and circumstances are as I have described them. I also understand that if I am assisted by an advisor, my signature below authorizes the named individual to receive copies of relevant correspondence regarding the complaint and to accompany me during the investigation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title VI Discrimination Complaint

Consent/Release Form

Please read the information on this form, in its entirety, carefully before you begin.

First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

As a complainant, I understand that in the course of an investigation it may become necessary for the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization to reveal my identity to persons at the organization or institution under investigation. I am also aware of the obligations of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization to honor requests under the Freedom of Information Act. I understand that as a complainant I am protected from retaliation from having taken action or participated in action to secure right protected by nondiscrimination statutes and regulations which are enforced by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Please check one:

- I CONSENT** and authorize the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO), as part of its investigation, to reveal my identity to persons at the organization, business, or institution, which has been identified by me in my formal complaint of discrimination. I also authorize RGVMPO to discuss, receive, and review materials and information about me from the same and with appropriate administrators or witnesses for the purpose of investigating this complaint. I have read and understand the information at the beginning of this form. I also understand that the material and information received will be used for authorized civil rights compliance activities only. I further understand that I am not required to authorize this release and do so voluntarily.

- I DENY CONSENT** to have the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) reveal my identity to persons at the organization, business, or institution under investigation. I also deny consent to have RGVMPO disclose any information contained in the complaint with any witnesses I have mentioned in the complaint. I have read and understand the information at the beginning of this form. I further understand that my decision to deny consent may impede this investigation and may result in an unsuccessful resolution of my case.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Formulario de Queja por Discriminación del Título VI

Lea detenidamente la información en la primera página de este formulario antes de comenzar.

1. Nombre, Inicial de segundo nombre, Apellido:

Dirección: _____

Ciudad: _____

Estado: _____ Código Postal: _____

Teléfono: _____ Email: _____

2. ¿Quién crees que te discriminó?

Nombre, Inicial de segundo nombre, Apellido: _____

Nombre de la empresa/organización: _____

Cargo/ Título: _____

Dirección: _____

Ciudad: _____

Estado: _____ Código Postal: _____

Teléfono: _____ Email: _____

Relación de la persona con usted: _____

3. ¿Cuándo ocurrió el presunto acto(s) de discriminación? Por favor, enumere todas las fechas aplicables en el formato mm/dd/yyyy.

Fechas: _____

¿La presunta discriminación continua? Si _____ No _____

4. ¿Dónde ocurrió el presunto acto(s) de discriminación? (Adjunte paginas adicionales según sea necesario).

Nombre de la ubicación: _____

5. Indique la base de su queja de discriminación:

- a. Raza
- b. Origen Nacional
- c. Color

6. Describa en detalle el incidente(s) específico(s) de la base(s) de la supuesta discriminación. Describa cada incidente de discriminación por separado. Adjunte páginas adicionales según sea necesario.

Explique cómo otras personas o grupos fueron tratados de manera diferente por la(s) persona(s)/agencia que lo discriminaron.

Enumere y describa todos los documentos, correos electrónicos, y otros registros y materiales relacionados con su reclamo.

Indique e identifique cualquier testigo(s) de los incidentes o personas que tengan conocimiento personal de la información relacionada con su queja.

¿Ha denunciado anteriormente esta incidente o actos relacionados de discriminación? De ser así, identifique a la persona a la que hizo el informe, la fecha en que realizó el informe y la resolución. Por favor proporcione cualquier documentación de respaldo.

Por favor proporcione información adicional sobre la supuesta discriminación.

7. Si un asesor le asistirá en el proceso de reclamo, favor de proporcionar su nombre e información de contacto.

Nombre, Inicial de segundo nombre, Apellido: _____

Nombre de la empresa/organización: _____

Cargo/ Título: _____

Dirección: _____

Ciudad: _____

Estado: _____ Código Postal: _____

Teléfono: _____ Email: _____

8. Este formulario de queja debe estar firmado y fechado para dirigir sus alegatos. Además, esta oficina necesitara su consentimiento para dar a conocer su nombre, si es necesario, en el curso de nuestra investigación. Se adjunta el formulario de Consentimiento/Liberación de quejas por Discriminación. Si esta presentando una queja de discriminación en nombre de otra persona, nuestra oficina también necesitara el consentimiento de esta persona.

Yo certifico según me conocimiento que la información que he proporcionado es precisa y los eventos y circunstancias son tal como los describí. También entiendo que, si me ayudará un asesor, mi firma a continuación autoriza a la persona nombrada a recibir copias de la correspondencia pertinente con respecto a la queja y a acompañarme durante la investigación.

Firma: _____ Fecha: _____

Queja por Discriminación del Título VI
Formulario de Consentimiento/Liberación

Lea la información en la primera página de este formulario antes de comenzar.

Nombre, Inicial de segundo nombre, Apellido: _____

Nombre de la empresa/organización: _____

Cargo/ Título: _____

Dirección: _____

Ciudad: _____

Estado: _____ Código Postal: _____

Como queja, entiendo que en el curso de una investigación puede ser necesario que la Organización de Planificación Metropolitana del Rio Grande Valle (RGVMPO) reveles mi identidad a personas de la organización o institución bajo investigación. También soy consciente de las obligaciones de del MPO del Rio Grande Valley cumplir con las solicitudes bajo la Ley Libertad de Información. Entiendo que como demandante estoy protegido de represalias por haber actuado o participado en acciones para garantizar el derecho protegido por leyes y reglamentos do no discriminación que se aplica por la Administración Federal de Carreteras (FHWA) del Departamento de Transporte de los Estados Unidos (USDOT).

Por favor marque una opción:

- Yo doy CONSENTIMIENTO** y autorizo a del MPO del Rio Grande Valley, como parte de su investigación, a revelar mi identidad a personas de la organización, compañía, o institución que he identificado en mi queja formal de discriminación. También autorizo a RGVMPO para que reciba y revise materiales e información sobre mi de la misma y con los administradores o testigos apropiados para investigar esta queja. Al hacerlo, he leído y entiendo la información al comienzo de este formulario. También entiendo que el material y la información recibida se usaran solo para actividades autorizadas de cumplimiento de los derechos humanos. Además, entiendo que no estoy obligado a autorizar este lanzamiento; es voluntariamente.
- Yo NIEGO CONSENTIMIENTO** a del MPO del Rio Grande Valley a revelar mi identidad a personas de la organización, compañía, o institución que he identificado bajo investigación. También yo NO autorizado a RGVMPO para que reciba y revise materiales e información sobre me de la misma y con los administradores o testigos apropiados para investigar esta queja. A hacerlo, he leído y entiendo la información al comienzo de este formulario. Además, entiendo que mi decisión de negar mi consentimiento puede impedir esta investigación y puede dar como resultado la resolución infructuosa de mi caso.

Firma: _____ Fecha: _____