

“PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN” - POLICY STATEMENT

Transportation affects all individuals; making up the public within a community, bringing communities together as cities, all cities creating a region; but most importantly as citizens of the Rio Grande Valley. Therefore, as public citizens, everyone should have the opportunity to get involved in the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (RGVMPO) transportation planning process. Given increasing demands on limited public funds, transportation programs and projects cannot proceed without public support and acceptance, which comes through open inclusive planning and continuous public participation. As the organization in charge of all transportation needs in the RGVMPO Metropolitan areas, the RGVMPO highly encourages public participation and involvement. Good ideas often occur through an open exchange of information and viewpoints; we encourage the public to voice their opinions, and RGVMPO staff is here to listen.

The organization responsible for transportation planning for the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan area is the RGVMPO. A metropolitan planning organization is a regional planning agency established by federal law to assure a continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative multimodal transportation planning and in decision making process for metropolitan areas containing a population of 50,000 or more. The RGVMPO’s Environmental Justice initiatives will strive to accomplish this by involving the potentially affected public through a Citizen’s Outreach Program. This program consists of MPO staff activities designed to develop partnerships with, and enhance the participation in the transportation planning process, by groups and individuals of “traditionally underserved” communities. These communities include minorities, transit dependent citizens, low income, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Staff activities include, but are not limited to: MPO staff participation in groups and coalitions serving within these communities, targeted communications with local media outlets, conducting meetings at times and locations that are accessible to transit dependent or non-driving individuals when possible and publication of MPO documents in non-technical web based or other easily accessible formats as necessary and appropriate for purposes of obtaining input and comment into the metropolitan transportation planning process and for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) updates. The RGVMPO is committed to a public involvement program that will involve all citizens within the Metropolitan Area Boundaries (MAB). Public participation throughout the planning process is imperative. It allows individuals and organizations to voice their transportation needs, provides suggestions for solutions and is an important part of planning an efficient transportation system for everyone’s use.

The following document constitutes the RGVMPO public participation plan as prescribed by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century” legislation, also known as MAP-21, and upheld by the “Fixing Americas Surface Transportation-Act” (FAST-Act). As such, this document is issued on this date, for public comment for a period of not less than 45 days prior to formal adoption or revision by the RGVMPO Transportation Policy Board (TPB). The public involvement process described herein applies, at a minimum, to the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and other significant transportation studies.

In carrying the public involvement process forward, the RGVMPO **shall** (1) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times per urban region; (2) employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan and short range transportation plans; and (3) make public information available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the MPO website, international/regional print media (The Monitor, Rio Grande Guardian, Brownsville Herald, etc.) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) as appropriate to gain opportunities for consideration of public comment and opinion. The goal of the MPO’s Outreach Program is to ensure that all citizens regardless of race, color, religion, income status, national origin, age, gender, disability, marital status, or political affiliation, have an equal opportunity to participate in the MPO’s decision-making process.

The RGVMPO is responsible for the regional planning process for all modes of transportation. The RGVMPO provides technical assistance to the local governments of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr County in planning, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions for the area. The RGVMPO administers all federal funds for urban transportation improvement in the RGV Urbanized Area Boundaries (UAB), including road and highway expansion, maintaining the existing infrastructure through pavement management systems, safety transportation planning (including the creation of designated freight routes and bicycle/pedestrian paths), emergency response planning, rail studies and transit planning. Starr County is included in the RGVMPO’s MAB but not its UAB. For this reason, the RGVMPO provides technical assistance to the local governments of Starr County but does not administer its federal transportation funds. TxDOT administers these funds.

Federal funds for conducting the transportation planning process are limited to the Brownsville, Harlingen-San Benito and Hidalgo County metropolitan areas, which covers approximately 2224 Square Miles and includes the existing urbanized area and the neighboring area expected to be urbanized within the next 20 years. This urbanized area currently includes its planning partners, which are 37 cities and the unincorporated areas of Cameron and Hidalgo County. After the 2010 Census was conducted, the smoothed out urbanized area was updated to include 1369 square miles and a population of almost 1,284,386.

The principal responsibilities of the RGVMPO include the development of a 25-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the metropolitan area. A metropolitan transportation plan adopted by the TPB. The Plan is updated every 5 years. Projects listed in the metropolitan plan are intended to meet travel needs within the RGV metropolitan area. The plan addresses elements including congestion management, public transportation, transit, bicycles and pedestrians, roadways, freight, and finances.

Planning activities also include the Highway and Transit Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which is a program that identifies federally funded and regionally significant projects funded by non-federal sources that will be implemented each year. The TIP is adopted by the TPB every two years. Projects include roadway improvements, new roadways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, project feasibility and environmental studies. All projects in the TIP must first appear in the metropolitan plan and follow the RGVMPO's Congestion Management Program.

By Federal and State law, all regionally significant multi-modal transportation improvement projects (regardless of funding source) must be included in and be consistent (to the maximum extent feasible) with the MPO's TIP and Metropolitan Transportation Plan in order to be eligible for Federal-aid and State funding.

Therefore, the MPO's TIP is the primary plan that guides all state and federally funded transportation improvements in the urbanized area. Upon adoption of the TIP, the document is sent to TxDOT for inclusion into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is a four-year work program as prescribed by federal law which includes the TIPs for all 25 MPOs in the state of Texas. The TIP's amendments are coordinated with the cycled STIP revisions.

A TIP revision is necessary when "changes in an estimated federal cost exceeds 50 percent and results in a revised total cost exceeding \$1,499,999.00." Further, a TIP revision is not required when a cost revision results in a "change in estimated federal cost resulting in a total project cost of under \$1,500,000.00." When a change in estimated federal cost is under \$1,500,000, it is considered an administrative amendment or modification.

DEFINITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE vs AMENDMENT CHANGES

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a guide for all planning-related work to be completed or continued during the year. Work performed by RGVMPO staff is outlined in each task as it relates to the ten planning factors identified under FAST-Act. Subtasks are specific projects, plans, or programs in which the RGVMPO and local jurisdiction staffs participate. Funding for the year is also identified within the UPWP.

Unless otherwise specified, the definitions in 23 U.S.C. 101(a) and 49 U.S.C. 5302 are applicable to this part.

Administrative modification means 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, or a conformity determination (in nonattainment and maintenance areas).

Amendment means 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). Changes to projects that are included only for illustrative purposes do not require an amendment. An amendment is a revision that requires public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs involving “non-exempt” projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas). 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.

Documents

There are four significant transportation planning documents that the MPO must regularly prepare and make available for public viewing/comment. This process must take place before the MPO Policy Board can approve and adopt the document.

1. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - guides transportation planning for twenty-five (25) years and is updated at least every five (5) years in attainment areas such as the Rio Grande Valley. 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.

2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - is the priority spending program developed out of the MTP, prepared at a minimum of every two (2) years. and is by the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). By Federal and State law, all regionally significant multi-modal transportation improvement projects, regardless of funding source, must be included in and be consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with the MPO’s MTP and TIP in order to be eligible for Federal-aid and State funding. Therefore, the MPO’s TIP is the primary plan that guides all state and federally funded transportation improvements in the urbanized area.

3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - is the MPO’s annual program of projects and budget. It outlines the administrative and transportation planning activities the MPO will undertake in the current fiscal year. The document is divided into work tasks allocating the amount of funding the MPO will spend on each activity during the fiscal year. The MPO operates on the fiscal year October 1 through September 30.

4. Public Participation Plan (PPP) – this plan strives to be proactive by involving the public in transportation planning. The MPO supports and encourages early and continuous opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and become active participants in the decision-making process. This plan is used to satisfy the public participation process for the programming of projects (POP) by grantees with signed memorandums of agreement with the MPO. LRGVDC relies on RGVMPPO’s public participation process to satisfy the Section 5307 POP requirements. This document is continuously reviewed for possible revisions.

Program Adoption	Public Meetings	Comment Period	Remarks
MTP	2 Meetings prior to TPB approval	30 days	Written and oral comments are provided to TPB and available for public review
Highway/Transit TIP & Program of Projects	2 Meetings prior to TPB approval	30 days	
UPWP	N/A	30 days	Public meetings with TPB & TAC
PPP	N/A	45 days	As needed
Annual Project Listing	N/A	N/A	An update is provided by TxDOT at all TPB meetings and made available for viewing at RGVMPO website

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The most current transportation legislation, “Fixing Americas Surface Transportation-Act” (FAST- Act) was signed by President Barack Obama on December 4th, 2015 and became effective on January 1st, 2016. The new legislation upheld public involvement strategies required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and the Moving Ahead for Progress on the 21st Century (MAP-21). FAST-Act requires the MPOs to provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will serve to **advance ten (10)** transportation planning factors identified under FAST-Act as follows [per Section 1201 (h)].

1. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
2. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.

5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
7. Promote efficient system management and operation; and
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
9. water impacts of surface transportation
10. Enhance travel and tourism

Due to the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic, RGVMPO has operated under emergency orders from both state and local governments. Public meetings, committee meetings, and policy board meetings have been held virtually by use of Microsoft Teams and WebEx. Announcements and materials, including direct links for joining online meetings, are posted in advance to the organization’s website, social media outlets, as well as included on all agendas. RGVMPO committee and policy board members are notified via Email of upcoming meetings, including all meeting materials and virtual meeting links. All Transportation Policy Board meetings are video recorded and archived to the RGVMPO website. Videos are listed by date and can be navigated according to each meeting’s agenda. Technical Advisory Committee meetings can also be reviewed by audio recordings uploaded in the same manner. All planning documents and supporting information, including GIS maps, are updated regularly, and posted accordingly. The public has been granted the option to comment online through message boards and designated locations on our website, as well as sharing opinions during RGVMPO committee and board meetings.

Under FAST-Act, and 23 CFR 450.316 the RGVMPO is encouraged to consult with agencies responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) via Section 1201 (g)(3) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed 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.



As part of the development of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, FAST-Act requires that types of mitigation shall be discussed within the 20-year planning document along with potential sites to carry out the activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan. The discussion of potential environmental mitigation shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with Federal, State, and tribal wildlife, land management and regulatory agencies per Section 1201(i)(2)(D)(ii) of FAST-Act.

The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation concerning the development of a metropolitan transportation plan. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate: (i) comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps, if available; or (ii) comparison of metropolitan transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available per Section 1201(i)(5)(B) of FAST-Act.

The MPO shall provide citizens, 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 comment on the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP and major revisions [Section 1201(i)(6)(A)].

This MPO's Public Participation Plan shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and shall provide that all interested parties have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the contents of the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP updates and major revisions [Section 1201(i)(6)(B)] *The Public Revisions*.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

A. General Guidelines

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by the MPO for public involvement. As indicated on the FAST-Act and on 23 CFR 450.316, the RGV MPO shall:

1. Develop a documented participation plan that defines a process for 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 reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process, by providing timely information about transportation issues and processes

2. Develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties.
3. Provide reasonable public access and notice of technical and policy information used in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the TIP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times where matters related to transportation programs are being considered, utilizing when feasible visualization techniques.
4. Give adequate public notice of public participation activities, including virtual public involvement activities, utilizing electronic accessible formats and means such as the RGVMPPO website and social media accounts, and allow time for public review and comment, including virtual comments, at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of the Metropolitan Transportation Plans, the Highway and Transit TIP, Section 5307 Program of Projects, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan shall be made available.
5. Respond in writing, when applicable, to public input. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans for the TIP and Metropolitan Transportation Plan developed in cooperation with the Regional Transportation Authority) as a result of the public participation process, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final MTP and TIP.
6. Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, and low-income households who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.
7. Provide a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the PPP and/or any amendments. Notice of the comment period will be advertised on the RGVMPPO website and various other social media platforms prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period. Notice will also be mailed to the entire RGVMPPO mailing list prior to the start of the 45-day comment period
8. Provide a public comment period of not less than 30 calendar days prior to adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the TIP, 5307 Program of Projects, the UPWP, Transit Development Plans, any formal amendments or updates, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. To clarify the adoption process, the public comment period for such adoptions or amendments shall terminate on the month in which the Advisory Committee takes action on the proposed amendments for consideration to the Policy Committee. The required 30 calendar day period shall begin early enough to facilitate the termination of the public period on the Technical Advisory Committee meeting date.

9. Coordinate the PPP with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduces redundancies and costs.

B. Public Participation Goals and Objectives

The RGVMPPO shall actively engage the public in the transportation planning process and employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS systems and/or computer simulation. The RGVMPPO shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continued basis by making all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the MPO's web home page (via internet) and at the MPO office by furnishing CDs and displaying maps, as a visualization technique, to describe transportation actions as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The RGVMPPO staff shall be available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice.

The RGVMPPO shall produce a quarterly newsletter for distribution by mail and via email to the RGVMPPO contact list, available at public libraries and city halls, and available at the RGVMPPO website www.RGVMPPO.org. The newsletter includes, at a minimum, updates on current or recently completed projects, announcements of upcoming meetings, and contact information.

The RGVMPPO shall maintain an internet website that will be compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled users. The website shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available. The website shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

The RGVMPPO shall encourage the involvement of all area citizens in the transportation planning process. The target audiences shall be identified for each planning study conducted by the MPO, including residents, business and property owners and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including but not limited to, low income and minority households, within the study area. The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan identifies populations within the study area with limited proficiency in reading, speaking, or writing in English (See Appendix A). The RGVMPPO shall, when feasible, hold public meetings at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens.

The RGVMPPO shall participate in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction. The MPO shall actively assist the Texas Department of Transportation, local governments and transportation agencies in the development and implementation of public involvement techniques for planning and other studies, including Arterial Investment Studies, Major Corridor/Feasibility Studies, and Project Development and Environmental Studies or other documents to support planning. The RGVMPPO shall cooperate with the Texas Department of Transportation and member cities to implement the MPO Community Assessment Study.

The RGVMPO shall strive to continuously improve public participation. The MPO shall continuously evaluate public involvement techniques. This Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed and adopted, with revisions if necessary, at least every three (3) years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement.

C. Public Participation Techniques

Public participation is an ongoing activity of the RGVMPO. Public participation is also an integral part of one-time activities such as corridor studies and regularly repeated activities such as the annual Transportation Improvement Program process and Metropolitan Transportation Plan updates.

This section contains descriptions of public participation tools currently being used by the RGVMPO:

MPO Website

Description: The site was established to provide basic information about the MPO process, members, meeting times and contact information. The site has been expanded recently to include information about specific projects undertaken by the MPO. Work products, such as the Draft, and Adopted, Public Participation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Process, and other studies are available from the site. Most recently, the website was upgraded to accommodate LEP populations by adding a translator with the capabilities of translating the entire website into over 60 languages, including Spanish, Korean, German, French, etc. Through the website, the citizens can listen to the Transportation Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee meeting minutes in both English and Spanish. Also, citizens can submit comments and sign up to be added to the various distribution lists maintained by the MPO. The site provides many links to other transportation related sites at the local and national level.

The website address is www.RGVMPO.org. The website is maintained and updated by RGVMPO staff and regularly reviewed. Basic statistics are tracked through the website on a monthly basis. Data gathered and logged include the number of visits and the sources of visits to the website.

Activities: The website 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.

MPO Master Database

Description: RGVMPO staff maintains a master database of business, federal, state and local agencies

and interested public. The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses and web sites. The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest groups and homeowner association contacts, and is the foundation of the newsletter mailing list. The database will be used to establish and maintain a list of e-mail contacts for electronic meeting notification and announcements.

Activities: The database is used to enhance public involvement activities.

Social Media



Description: RGVMPO staff currently utilizes various social media to further encourage the interaction between the MPO and the public. Facebook and Twitter are used to present the public with information concerning the MPO and other programs, projects, activities, events, etc.

YouTube, a video-sharing website is used as an education tool for the public about the MPO and the transportation process. YouTube also presents opportunities for disseminating information to public with low literacy. (See Social Media Policy, Appendix E)

Designated RGVMPO 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.

Activities: Public awareness of projects, meetings, workshops, etc. Provides opportunities for public comment and discussion on various MPO and transportation-related topics.

Legal Advertisements

Description: Texas Government Code, Chapter 551 requires posting a written notice of any public meeting where a decision could be made or that may be attended by more than one elected official. The MPO regularly posts notices of the MPO Transportation Policy Committee meetings.

Activities: Regular and other meetings seeking public input are posted.

Quarterly Newsletter

Description: MPO staff produces a quarterly newsletter that is distributed to citizens, municipalities, media, and other agencies. The publication is available to the public in both English and Spanish. Citizens are added to the distribution list by their own request.

Activities: The newsletter is used to promote regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, work

products, on-going projects, and committee member interviews

Display Ads

Description: Publication of ads that are used to promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor study workshops. They are published in selected newspapers, both English and Spanish, to reach a larger audience than those that typically read legal notices.

Activities: Public awareness of project specific meetings, workshops, or open houses.

Other Media

Description: Opportunities are sought for articles in other newsletters produced by municipalities, homeowners' associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the MPO. Opportunities are also sought to present to civic and social agencies, participate on radio talk shows, and provide television news highlights. The MPO further spreads community awareness of planning activities by disseminating public service announcements (PSA) to local news channels, city cable networks and websites, local movie theaters, and local independent school districts and universities.

Activities: Increased opportunities to make public aware of corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

Direct Mailings

Description: Used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area or group of people. Direct mailings are usually post cards but can be letters or flyers. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example avid cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects.

Activities: Project-specific meetings, workshops, open houses, corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

Press Releases

Description: 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 MPO or their committees.

Activities: Corridor or other planning studies, workshops, open houses, public hearings, and other MPO activities.

Project Workshops/Open-Houses

Description: These are targeted public meetings that are generally open, informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. “Walking Workshops” such as the one held to gather input for the Active Transportation Plan can also encourage the public to participate by providing small activities through a selected. Short presentations may be given at these meetings. The purpose of project-specific meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment and a sense of public priorities.



Activities: Metropolitan planning studies, prioritization of projects, public input prior to drafting major multimodal plans such as the Active Transportation Plan and other major MPO activities.

Email Announcements/Internet Message Boards/Calendars

Description: Meeting announcements and MPO information are e-mailed to interested persons that have submitted their e-mail addresses to MPO staff. Interactive message boards are used to facilitate discussion and solicit public comment regarding specific MPO projects or issues. The dates of TPB, TAC, BPAC and all public meetings are posted to the MPO Outlook Calendar as well as other local community calendars and city hall and chamber calendars.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, regular meetings, public hearings, amendments/updates, workshops, open houses, and other major MPO activities.

MPO Logo/QR Codes



Description: A logo representing the RGVMPO is used to identify products and publications of the MPO. A logo helps the public become familiar with the different activities of the MPO by providing a means of recognizing MPO products. A Quick Response (QR) code, much like a bar code is used on MPO publications for the public who are more accustomed to viewing information instantly on all smart phone or tablet devices. The code, once scanned with a code reader app, will direct the public directly to the RGVMPO website.

Activities: A logo is used on all MPO publications; including those developed by consultants.

The QR code is used on MPO publications directed to the public, including flyers, posters, brochures and pamphlets.

Public Hearings

Description: These are public meetings used to solicit public comment on a project or issue being considered for adoption by the RGVMPO. Hearings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to the RGVMPO or another decision-making body. They are recorded and transcribed for the record.

Activities: Metropolitan Transportation Plans, Transportation Improvement Program, corridor studies, Project Development & Environmental studies, and other planning studies as needed for other RGVMPO activities.

Comment Forms Description: Comments forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meeting. Comment forms can be very general in nature or can ask for very specific feedback. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific alignment alternatives being considered during a corridor study or may ask for a person's general feelings about any aspect of transportation. Comment forms can also be included in publications and on web sites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or website. (See Appendix B)

Activities: Public workshops, open houses, hearings and other meetings, general MPO activities.

Surveys

Description: Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to ask very specific questions such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns or areas of improvement within the multimodal system. The MPO currently utilizes Survey Monkey, a free online survey service with features such as PDF printouts, downloadable data with charts, and the ability to share surveys to the MPO website and social media. The MPO also uses brief one-question surveys through the MPO Website and Facebook page to gather public input on general transportation planning issues.

Activities: Conduct online surveys on issues and needs to provide input into the plans, conduct surveys at the transit terminal station or public meetings, and attach surveys or survey links to flyers and ads.

Posters and Flyers

Description: Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed to public places such as City Halls, libraries and community centers for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of a meeting, the time(s) and location(s), and contact information. Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailing and/or newsletters.

Activities: Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, regular and special MPO activities.

Grouping of Projects

Description: MPO's make use of statewide project groupings in their TIP. TxDOT in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration developed statewide programs identified by a statewide project number that provides a more efficient method of identified by a statewide project number that provides a more efficient method of programming and contracting for projects that minimizes the necessity for TIP revisions.

Activities: The RGV MPO recognizes the use of these grouping categories and will use them as appropriate. Individual projects eligible for statewide project groupings may be included in the MPO / TIP for informational purposes only. The information only project lists will be clearly annotated as such and may be included as an appendix.

Annual Project Listings

Description: MPOs publish an annual listing of projects which include investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year shall be published or otherwise made available by the cooperative effort of the State, transit operator, and metropolitan planning organization for public update. The listing shall be consistent with the funding categories identified in each TIP.

Activities: The RGVMPPO posts the projects on the website for public review as the projects are being let.

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Americans with Disabilities Act {ADA) - Federal law designed to protect the rights of people with virtually any physical or mental disability. It protects consumers in that it makes discrimination against the disabled illegal in public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications.

Analysis of Alternatives - Understanding how the transportation system and its components work such as information on the costs, benefits and impacts of potential changes to the system.

Apportionment - A term that refers to a statutorily prescribed division or assignment of funds. An apportionment is based on prescribed formulas in the law and consists of dividing authorized obligation authority for a specific program among the States. 2) The distribution of funds as prescribed by a statutory formula.

Appropriation - Authorization of funding expenditures from Congress.

Appropriations Act - Action of a legislative body that makes funds available for expenditure with specific limitations as to amount, purpose, and duration. In most cases, it permits money previously authorized to be obligated and payments made, but for the highway program operating under contract authority, the appropriations act specifies amounts of funds that Congress will make available for the fiscal year to liquidate obligations.

Arterial - A major thoroughfare that is vital for moving people and goods; feeds into the interstate and freeway systems.

Arterial Highway - A major highway used primarily for through traffic.

Arterial Street - A class of street serving major traffic movements (high-speed, high volume) for travel between major points.

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) - is a nonprofit, membership organization established in 1994 to serve the needs and interests of "metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs)" nationwide. AMPO offers its member MPOs technical assistance and training, conferences and workshops, frequent print and electronic communications, research a forum for transportation policy development and coalition building, and a variety of other services.

Attainment Area - An area considered to have air quality that meets or exceeds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) health standards used in the Clean Air Act.

Nonattainment areas are areas considered not to have met these standards for designated pollutants. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a nonattainment area for others.

Audit - Periodic investigation of financial statements and their relationships to planned or permitted expenditures.

and transit infrastructure projects that may not generate sufficient operating income to cover construction costs. Dedication of sales tax for transportation purposes requires voter approval.

Delay - The additional travel time experienced by a driver, passenger or pedestrian due to circumstances that impede the desirable movement of traffic

Demand Responsive Vehicle (Transit) - A nonfixed-route, nonfixed schedule vehicle that operates in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator or dispatcher.

Department of Transportation (USDOT) - Federal agency established by act of congress in 1966 and responsible for highways, mass transit, aviation and ports. The DOT includes the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Developer impact fees - is a fee that is implemented by a local government on a new or proposed development to help assist or pay for a portion of the costs that the new development may cause with public services to the new development within the United States. This type of fees can be used for development of transit centers near planned office buildings or highway interchanges constructed in the vicinity of land which is zoned for malls or shopping centers.

Direct Funding - Funds transferred directly from the Secretary of the Interior to the ITG upon request for programs contracted or compacted under P.L. 93-638 as amended.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) - program intended to ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of DOT-assisted contracts in highways, transit, airport and safety during financial assistance programs.

E

Electronic tolling system - a technological implementation aimed to eliminate the delay on toll roads by collecting tolls electronically. This feature debits the accounts of registered car owners without requiring them to stop.

Emergency Preparedness Plan - A comprehensive plan which identifies potential emergencies and their impact on the community, and identifies operating procedures and actions to put in place during actual emergencies.

Enhancement Activities - Refers to activities related to a particular transportation project that 'enhance' or contribute to the existing or proposed project. Examples of such activities include provision of facilities for pedestrians or cyclists, landscaping or other scenic beautification projects, historic preservation, control and removal of outdoor advertising, archaeological planning and research, and mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff.

Environmental Assessment (EA) - is an assessment of the possible impact-positive or negative-that a proposed project may have on the environment; considering natural, social and economic aspects.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - A report required by the National Environment Policy Act of the potential effect of plans for land use in terms of environmental, engineering, esthetic, and economic aspects of the proposed objective.

Environmental justice: Principles applied to transportation planning efforts that ensure full and fair participation of all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - an agency of the federal government charged with a variety of responsibilities relating to the protection of the quality of the natural environment, including research and monitoring, promulgation of standards for air and water quality, and control of the introduction of pesticides and other hazardous materials into the environment.

Environmentally Sensitive Area - An area of environmental importance having natural resources which if degraded may lead to significant adverse, social, economic or ecological consequences. These could be areas in or adjacent to aquatic ecosystems¹ drinking water sources, unique or declining species habitat, and other similar sites.

Evaluation of Alternatives - A synthesis of the information generated by an analysis in which judgments are made on the relative merits of alternative actions.

Expenditures - Actual cash (or electronic transfer) payments made to the States or other entities. Outlays are provided as reimbursement for the Federal share for approved highway program activities. 2) A term signifying disbursement of funds for repayment of obligations incurred. An electronic transfer of funds, or a check sent to a State highway or transportation agency for voucher payment, is an expenditure or outlay.

Expressway - A divided roadway for through traffic with full or partial access control and including grade separation at all or most intersections. Also, a wide road built for fast moving traffic traveling long distances, with a limited number of points at which drivers can enter and leave it.

F

Facility- The means by which a transportation mode is provided. For example, a sidewalk is a facility, so is an HOV lane.

Farm to Market (FM) -An identifier for a roadway designated by the Texas Transportation Commission to be part of the statewide highway system. Normally associated as a 2-lane

roadway in rural areas, but are located in urban areas and can be a 4 or 6 lane divided roadway. The FM roadway designation is typically given to roads that are located east of IH-35.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act - Bill passed in 2015 to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - is a division of the United States Department of Transportation that specializes in highway transportation. This component administers, plans, funds and regulates the federal highway system.

Federal Register - Daily publication which provides a uniform system for making regulations and legal notices issued by the Executive Branch and various departments of the Federal government available to the public.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)- is a division of the United States Department of Transportation that specializes in highway transportation. This component administers, plans, funds and regulates the federal highway system.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)- is an agency within the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) that provides financial and technical assistance to local public transit systems. This component provides financial and technical assistance to local transit systems.

Ferry Boat-A boat providing fixed-route service across a body of water.

Financial planning- The process of defining and evaluating funding sources, sharing the information, and deciding how to allocate the funds

Financial programming- A short-term commitment of funds to specific projects identified in the regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Fiscal constraint- Making sure that a given program or project can reasonable expect to receive funding within the allotted time for its implementation

Fiscal year -The yearly accounting period beginning October 1 and ending September 30 of the subsequent calendar year. Fiscal years are denoted by the calendar year in which they end.

Fixed-Route -Term applied to transit service that is regularly scheduled and operates over as a set route; usually refers to bus service.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - Allows all U.S. citizens and residents to request any records in possession of the executive branch of the federal government. The term "records" includes documents, papers, reports, letters, films, photographs, sound recordings, computer tapes and disks.

Freeway - A divided arterial highway designed for the unimpeded flow of large volumes. Access to a freeway is rigorously controlled and intersection grade separations. An expressway with fully controlled access.

Freight Rail - an extensive network of railway lines and yards to serve freight traffic and provides transportation of cargo nationwide

Frontage Road - A roadway generally paralleling an expressway, freeway, parkway, or through street designed to intercept, collect and distribute traffic desiring to cross, enter or leave such features. The frontage road may be within the same traffic way as the main roadway or in a separate traffic way.

G

Geographic Information System (GIS) - (no mention) A geographical information system that captures, stores, analyzes, manages, and presents data that is linked to location.

Grants - A federal financial assistance award making payment in cash or in kind for a specified purpose. The federal government is not expected to have substantial involvement with the state or local government or other recipient while the contemplated activity is being performed. The term “grants-in-aid” is commonly restricted to grants to states and local governments

H

Highway- Is any road, street, parkway, or freeway/expressway that includes rights-of-way, bridges, railroad-highway crossings, tunnels, drainage structures, signs, guardrail, and protective structures in connection with highways. The highway further includes that portion of any interstate or international bridge or tunnel and the approaches thereto.

Historic Preservation - no mention - Protection and treatment of the nation’s significant historic buildings, landmarks, landscapes, battlefields, tribal communities and archeological sites, prominent federally-owned buildings; and State and privately-owned properties.

I

Infrastructure - In transit systems, all the fixed components of the transit system, such as rights-of-way, tracks, signal equipment, stations, park-and-ride lots, bus stops, maintenance facilities. 2) In transportation planning, all the relevant elements of the environment in which a transportation system operates. 3) A term connoting the physical underpinnings of society at

large, including but not limited to, roads, bridges, transit, waste systems, public housing, sidewalks, utility installations, parks, public buildings and communications networks.

Intermodal - the ability to connect, and the connections between, modes of transportation

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) - a bill that provides authorization for highways, highway safety, and mass transportation for Fiscal Years 1992-1997. The purpose of the Act was to develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, provides the foundation for the Nation to compete in the global economy and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner. Metropolitan Planning Organizations, in cooperation with the State and key transportation providers, must develop transportation plans and programs for metropolitan areas.

Intersection - A point defined by any combination of courses, radials, or bearings of two or more navigational aids. 2) Used to describe the point where two runways, a runway and a taxiway, or two taxiways cross or meet.

Interstate Highway - Limited access, divided highway of at least four lanes designated by the Federal Highway Administration as part of the Interstate System.

Interstate Highway System - The system of highways that connects the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers of the United States. Also connects the US to internationally significant routes in Canada and Mexico.

L

Light Rail Transit - an electric railway with a “light volume” of traffic capacity, compared to heavy rail and known as “streetcar”, “trolley car” and “tramway”. Light Rail Transit uses rail cars singly or in short trains, powered by electricity usually supplied by over-head wires. The vehicles allow for rapid acceleration, automatic or manual control systems, and platforms at track or car level. Although they can operate in mixed traffic, most light rail vehicles have the exclusive use of their own rights-of-way or lanes on city streets. This allows them to avoid congestion and offer faster, more reliable service. Stations may be located a few blocks apart in dense areas, but are typically spaced about a mile apart.

M

Management Systems – Systems to improve identification of problems and opportunities throughout the entire surface transportation network, and to evaluate and prioritize alternative strategies, actions and solutions. 2) A systematic process, designed to assist decisionmakers in

selecting cost-effective strategies/actions to improve the efficiency and safety of, and protect the investment in, the nation's transportation infrastructure.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – A document providing a general description of the responsibilities that are to be assumed by two or more parties in their pursuit of some goal(s). more specific information may be provided in an associated SOW.

Metropolitan Planning Area - The geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process required by 23 U.S.C. 134 and section 8 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app 1607) must be carried out.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – This is a federally funded agency that has the responsibility to provide development, planning, and programs to the county in a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, manner regarding transportation systems.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - this plan will serve as a blueprint for the necessary investments that the region will need to undertake. This is a 25-year forecast of the MPO's future projects and or tasks.

Mobility – the ability to move or be moved from place to place

Mode – a specific form of transportation, such as automobile, subway, bus rail, or air.

Multimodal – the ability of transportation options using different modes within a system or corridor

Multimodal Transportation – often used as a synonym for intermodalism. Congress and other frequently use the term intermodalism in its broadest interpretation as a synonym for multimodal transportation. Most precisely, multimodal transportation covers all modes without necessarily including a holistic or integrated approach.

Municipal Utility District (MUD) – Political entities that provide one or all of these utilities: electricity, natural gas, sewer, waste collection, wholesale telecommunications, water, etc., to the residents of that district. Entities have authority to construct and maintain improvements, incur debt and tax the land within its boundaries to pay operating expenses and repay debts.

N

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) - Established a national environmental policy requiring that any project using federal funding or requiring federal approval, including transportation projects, examine the effects of proposed and alternative choices on the environment before a federal decision is made.

National Highway System (NHS) – A system developed by the Department of Transportation in cooperation with the states, local officials and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) that identifies major intermodal highways that connect to major intermodal facilities (port, airports, rail transit, etc.) and are important to the Nation’s economy, defense and mobility.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – The administration was established by the Highway Safety Act of 1970 (23 U.S.C. 401 note). The Administration was established to carry out a congressional mandate to reduce the mounting number of deaths, injuries, and economic losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes on the Nation’s highways and to provide motor vehicle damage susceptibility and ease of repair information, motor vehicle inspection demonstrations and protection of purchasers of motor vehicles having altered odometers, and to provide average standards for greater vehicle mileage per gallon of fuel for vehicles under 1,000 pounds.

National Trails System (NTS) – The network of scenic, historic and recreation trails created by the National Trails System Act of 1968. These trails provide for outdoor recreation needs, promote the enjoyment, appreciation, and preservation of open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources, and encourage public access and citizen involvement.

Nonattainment Area (NAA) – Any geographic area that has not met the requirements for clean air as set out in the Clean Air Act of 1990.

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) – is a trilateral trade bloc in North America created by the governments of United States, Canada and Mexico. The agreement created the trade bloc that came into force on January 1, 1994.

O

Obligation – The Federal government’s legal commitment (promise) to pay or reimburse the States or other entities for the Federal share of a project’s eligible costs.

Obligation Limitation – A restriction or “ceiling” on the amount of Federal assistance that may be promised (obligated) during a specified period. This is a statutory budgetary control that does not affect the apportionment or allocation of funds. Rather, it controls the rate at which these funds may be used.

Occupancy – the number of people, including driver and passenger(s) in a vehicle. Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey occupancy rates are generally calculated as person miles divided by vehicle miles.

Ozone (O₃) – is a triatomic molecule, consisting of 3 oxygen atoms. Therefore, hydrocarbon emissions caused by the operation of trucks, automobiles, lawnmowers, and other gasoline

powered equipment, can contribute to the production of ozone. Ground-level ozone is an air pollutant with harmful effects on the respiratory system of animals.

P

Paratransit – is an alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules and is typically a demand-response door-to-door transportation service intended to meet the needs of persons with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities. This service is required by law in each transit provider’s service area.

Park-and-Ride Lot – any designated parking lot that is serviced with express or limited-express transit service.

Parking Management: is a variety of strategies that encourage more efficient use of existing parking facilities, improve the quality of service provided to parking facility users and improve parking facility design. A strategy for discouraging solo driving and encouraging use of ridesharing, transit, biking, and walking.

- Parking Management approaches include:
 - Preferential parking for car and vanpool patrons.
 - Replacement of subsidized employee parking with a cash payment.
 - Reduced minimum requirements in parking codes.
 - Maximum parking requirements in parking codes.
 - Caps on the overall supply of parking.
 - Timed curb parking
 - Peripheral parking combined with shuttles.

Passenger Rail: The term “passenger rail” is used in this plan to refer to a high-capacity regional transit provided by rail. Passenger rail routes may include one or a combination of technologies.

Pavement Management System: A systematic process that provides, analyzes, and summarizes pavement information for use in selective and implementing cost-effective pavement construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs. Pavement includes all road surface types including paved, gravel, and improved or unimproved earth.

Pedestrian: Any person not in or on a motor vehicle or other vehicle.

Pedestrian Walkway: A continuous way designated for pedestrians and separated from the through lanes for motor vehicles by space or barrier.

Performance Measures: Indicators of how well the transportation system is performing with regard to such things as average speed, reliability of travel, and accident rates. Used as feedback in the decision-making process.

Planning Funds: Primary source of funding for metropolitan planning designated by the FHWA.

Public Participation Plan (PPP): Established guidelines developed to disseminate information to all metropolitan area citizens, groups, agencies, and transportation providers to assure their input in the decision-making process of transportation programs, projects, etc. for the Brownsville, Harlingen-San Benito, Hidalgo County, and Starr County metropolitan planning areas.

Public Participation: The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.

Public Transit: Passenger transportation services, usually local in scope, that is available to any person who pays a prescribed fare. It operates on established schedules along designated routes or lines with specific stops and is designed to move relatively large numbers of people at one time.

Public Transit Agencies: A public entity responsible for administering and managing transit activities and services. Public transit agencies can directly operate transit service or contract out for all or part of the total transit service provided.

Public Transit System: An organization that provides transportation services owned, operated, or subsidized by any municipality, county, regional authority, state or other government agency, including those operated or managed by a private management firm under contract to the government agency owner.

Public Transportation: Transportation by bus, rail or other conveyance, either publicly or privately owned, which provides to the public general or special service on a regular and continuing basis.

Public Road: Any road under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority (federal, state, county, town or township, local government, or instrumentality thereof) and open to public travel.

R

Rail: A rolled steel shape laid in two parallel lines to form a track for carrying vehicles with flanged steel wheels.

Railhead: The end of a rail spur where trains are serviced, stored, loaded and unloaded.

Ranch to Market (RM): Identifier for a roadway designated by the Texas Transportation Commission to be a part of the statewide highway system. Normally associated as a 2-lane roadway in rural areas but are located in urban areas and can be a 4 or 6 lane divided roadway.

Rapid Rail Transit: Transit service using railcars driven by electricity usually drawn from a third rail, configured for passenger traffic, and usually operated on exclusive rights-of-way. It generally uses longer trains and has longer station spacing than light rail.

Regional Planning Organization (RPO): An organization that performs planning for multi-jurisdictional areas. MPO's regional councils, economic development associations, rural transportation associations are examples of RPO's

Regionally Significant Project: A project that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs.

Reversible Travel Lane: A traffic lane which is used to carry traffic in one direction during a specific period of the day, and carries traffic in the opposite direction, or is restricted to turning movements, during another period of the day. Changeable electronic signs are used to inform motorist of how the lane can be used.

Reformulated Gasoline (RFG): Gasoline with a different composition from conventional gasoline (e.g., lower aromatics content) that cuts air pollutants.

Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP): An indicator of the volatility of gasoline and is measured in pounds per square inch (psi).

Right of Way (ROW): Public land reserved for locating infrastructure such as a roadway or a utility line. **Sale/leaseback agreement:** used by public agencies as a cash flow management technique. Government owned facilities, such as a bus maintenance facility, can be sold to private investors, who will expand or rehabilitate the facility and then lease it back to the public agency over a fixed period of time.

Road Class: The category of roads based on design, weatherability, their governmental designation, and the Department of Transportation functional classification system.

Road Functional Classification: The classification of a road in accordance with the Bureau of Land Management.

Rural Highway: Any highway, road or street that is not an urban highway.

S

Safety Management System: A systematic process that has the goal of reducing the number and severity of transportation related accidents by ensuring that all opportunities to improve safety are identified, considered and implemented as appropriate.

Sale of Development Rights: Used by the public sector to capture the potential value of real estate at highway interchanges and along arterials, without giving up ownership of the land.

Shared Roadway: A roadway which is open to both bicycle and motor vehicle travel. This may be an existing roadway, street with wide curb lanes, or road with paved shoulders.

Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV): Any vehicle that contains just one person, the driver.

Smart Growth: A set of policies and programs design to protect, preserve and economically develop established communities and valuable natural and cultural resources.

Special districts: Special Assessment Districts, Benefit Assessment Districts, and Road Utility Districts are used to help recover the capital cost of street or roads or to capture part of the potential value of these improvements for adjoining landowners or commercial businesses. As public entities, these districts can issue bonds secured only by fee income. This affects or benefits specific constituents and can be politically sensitive. Revenues derived from special districts are potentially a good source of funds for maintenance reserve accounts.

Special Infrastructure Development Unit: A working group of planning, engineering and financial specialist which oversees a limited number of major transportation projects that are financed with public and private sector funds. Through a Joint Powers Resolution, the Unit's governance could be shared among local agencies such as the TxDOT Pharr District and a city and/or county transportation department, and the Unit would manage a single pipeline of public/ private sector projects for the region. Project implementation would remain with the relevant state and local agencies. The unit would finance its operations through fees payable at a financial closing.

Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA): Census Bureau delineation for major metropolitan areas in the U.S

State Data Center (SDC): The official repository of census data and demographic data for the State of Texas.

State Highway (SH): Roads, streets and highways maintained by the State.

State Implementation Plan (SIP): A plan required by the 1977 Clean Air Act Amendments which describes how the State of Texas will meet air quality standards.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP): A staged, multi-year statewide, Intermodal program of transportation projects which is consistent with the Statewide Transportation Plan and planning processes and metropolitan plans, TIPs and processes.

Statewide Transportation Plan (STP): The official statewide intermodal transportation plan that is developed through the statewide transportation planning process.

Sub-Allocation: An administration distribution of funds DIA Central Office down to the DIA area.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) (part of ISTEA and TEA 21): A federal program designed to create flexible funding for transit and highway construction. Has since been replaced with the FAST ACT.

Surface Transportation –Transportation Enhancement (STP TE): A funding category used to address projects that are above and beyond what could normally be expected in the way of enhancements to the transportation system.

Surface Transportation Program – Metropolitan Mobility (STP MM): a funding category used to address transportation needs within the metropolitan area boundaries of MPO's having urbanized areas with populations of 200,000 or greater.

T

Tax exempt revenue bonds: Widely used by state and local government to finance revenue producing facilities such as airports, toll roads, sports complexes, hospitals and wastewater plants. It is generally secured only by project revenues, without a backup pledge, and is regarded as off-balance sheet financing for the public agency issuing the bonds, under appropriate arrangements, revenue bonds can also be used for street rehabilitation and maintenance.

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ): are special zones created by a governing authority to help finance the cost of new development or redevelopment in an area that otherwise would not attract sufficient market development in a time-or cost-effective manner. Taxes gained by the new improvement (i.e. tax increments) are set aside to finance public improvements within the zone boundaries.

Telecommuting: Communicating electronically (by telephone, computer, fax, etc) with an office, either from home or from another site, instead of traveling to it physically.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT): The State agency responsible for construction and maintenance of all interstate, U.S, state highways, ranch-to-market (RM) and farm-to market (FM) roads within the state.

Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC): A state agency charged with protecting water and air resources, including regulations of hazardous material sites.

Texas Transportation Institute (TTI): A state agency that is a member of the Texas A&M University system and engages in research pertaining to all forms of transportation, including all phases of activities concerned with the movement of people, goods, and services and identifies and helps to solve major state and national transportation problems.

Toll Road: A road in which one must pay a toll or a fee to use.

Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ): is a special area delineated by state and/or local transportation officials for tabulating traffic-related data-especially journey-to-work and place-of-work statistics. A TAZ usually consist of one or more census blocks, block groups, or census tracts.

Traffic Counts - The number of vehicles that pass over a section of road.

Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA): A study of how a land use or development will affect traffic in the surrounding area and how such impacts might be mitigated, as necessary, through on-and/or off-site-measures. These documents are typically prepared by a licensed professional traffic engineer or civil engineer in connection with a specified proposed land use (including public uses), subdivisions, or zone change application.

Traffic Serial Zone (TSZ): The smallest geographically designated area used for analysis of transportation activity such as a data collection and travel movements within, into, and out of the urban area.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): Types of development that enhance or support public transit use.

Transportation Bill: The bill refers to the market value of all purchases of transportation services and facilities; it includes all domestic expenditures made by an economy for transportation purposes. Although the transportation bill does not reflect several significant non-market costs, it is a useful indicator of a country's transportation expenditures, and transportation analyst closely follow changes in the bill and its components.

Transportation Control Measures: Transportation strategies that affect traffic patterns or reduce vehicle use to reduce air pollutant emissions. These may include HOV lanes, provisions of bicycle facilities, ridesharing, telecommuting, etc. Such actions may be included in a SIP if needed to demonstrate attainment of the NAAQS.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM): An effort to reduce the number of people traveling by single-occupant vehicles (SOV by promoting non-SOV modes of transportation (e.g., carpools, vanpools, transit). TDM efforts may also discourage the use of SOV's by imposing tolls or taxes.

Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP): A federal program that provides funds for nontraditional improvements adjacent to or within the right of way of a transportation facility. Some examples of improvements are preserving an historic structure, installing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, landscaping and incorporating environmental protection systems.

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21): A law authorizing highway, safety, transit and other surface transportation programs for FY1998- 2003. This new law combines the continuation and improvement of current ISTEA programs with new initiatives to meet the challenges of improving safety as traffic continues to increase at record levels, protecting and enhancing communities and the natural environment and advancing America’s economic growth and competitiveness domestically and internationally through efficient and flexible transportation.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): A document prepared by an MPO that identifies funding for specific transportation projects and studies to be implemented in an area over a three-year period.

Transportation Infrastructure: A federal credit program under which the USDOT may provide three forms of credit assistance – for surface transportation projects of national or regional significance. The fundamental goal is to leverage federal funds by attracting substantial private and non-federal co-investment in critical improvements to the nation’s surface transportation system.

Transportation Management Area (TMA): Term for all urbanized areas with a population of over 200,000

Transportation Policy Board (TPB): The governing body of RGV MPO consisting of locally elected officials and representatives from the Texas Department of Transportation and the LRGVDC.

U

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): An annual work plan prepared by the MPO’s describing transportation planning activities and funding sources that will occur within their specific jurisdiction.

Unified Transportation Program (UTP): A ten-year planning document that guides and controls project development for TxDOT in a feasible and economical manner.

Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR): headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, is the largest and oldest operating railroad network in the United States. Union Pacific operates North America’s premier railroad franchise, covering 23 states in the western two-thirds of the United States.

Urban Highway: Any road or street within the boundaries of an urban area. An urban area is an area including and adjacent to a municipality or urban place with a population of 5,000 or more. The boundaries of urban areas are fixed by state highway departments, subject to the approval of the Federal Highway Administration, for purposes of the Federal-Aid Highway Program.

Urbanized Area: Area that contains a city of 50,000 or more population plus incorporated surrounding areas meeting size or density criteria defined by the U.S Census.

V

Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT): The number of miles traveled nationally by vehicles for a period of 1 year. VMT is either calculated using 2 odometers readings or for vehicles with less than 2 odometer readings, imputed using a regression estimate.

Administrative Amendments in current document

1. Updated requirements from 23 CFR 450.316 –
COVID-19 Pandemic Adjustments for Public Involvement Procedures
2. Updated RGVMPPO logo

*Revised 07/13/2022

PPP Evaluation Guide

As required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the RGVMPO continuously evaluates the effectiveness of public involvement strategies. By evaluating the public involvement process, the RGVMPO can identify areas for improvement, create additional public involvement strategies, or discontinue any activities that are ineffective.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by the MPO for public involvement. The PPP includes descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the MPO and other agencies in the public involvement process. The PPP also lists public involvement techniques that are could be used by the MPO to encourage the public to engage in the planning process.

The following guidebook outlines the various public involvement techniques used by the RGVMPO and the methods for evaluating their effectiveness. This document is intended to be a living document and will be periodically reviewed in conjunction with the Public Participation Plan for possible revisions.

PPP Evaluation Guide

Technique to Inform	Public Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Method to Meet Goal(s)	
Interactive Strategies	MPO Website	# of hits	5% increase in hits per quarter	Placement of website URL on all published media and through use of other PPP tools	
	Social Media	Facebook	# of likes, comments, shares, "fans", etc.	2% increase in # of fans/reach annually	Provide valuable information, activities, workshops, meetings, surveys, etc on a regular basis
		Twitter	# of mentions, retweets, reply's, "followers", etc.	2% increase in # of followers annually	
		YouTube	# of likes, comments, shares, subscribers, etc.	2% increase in # of views annually	
	Media Outreach	Comment Forms	# of responses by phone calls, letters, emails, etc.	25% of meeting attendees filled out comment forms; and/or 2% of website visitors submitted a form	Identify methods for submitting public comment on all notices and through other PPP tools
		Surveys	# of respondents	10% of email/mail recipients respond to survey and/or reach over 150 respondents	Make surveys available on all other PPP tools, including social media and website
		Legal Advertisements	n/a-required	n/a	Advertise all public engagement opportunities on newspapers with large reach and/or
		Press Releases	# of printed or broadcasted press releases per year	2% of press releases sent to media are published	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update media contacts periodically Provide information in a "ready to print" or broadcast format
		Other Media	n/a	n/a	Provide basic information in "print ready" format

Data Distribution	MPO Master Database	# of returned items	Maximum of 10% return per mailing	Make immediate corrections when items are returned
	Quarterly Newsletter	# of newsletters published annually and/or downloaded online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 4 English and 2 Spanish Newsletters annually • 5% increase in published and/or downloaded newsletters annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print articles of the greatest interest to the public • Notify public about newsletter through other PPP tools
	Display Ads	# of meeting attendees with who were notified via mentioned PPP tool		Design eye-catching ads basic information on each flyer; ads should have contact information and link to website
	Direct Mailings	# of meeting attendees who were notified via mentioned PPP tool	10% of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached via mentioned PPP tool	Update mailing list regularly; distribute to areas affected
	Email Announcements/Internet Message Boards/Calendars	# of meeting attendees who were notified via mentioned PPP tool		Update regularly; increase distribution to online websites with high traffic
	MPO Logo/QR Code	None	Recognition of the logo	Placement of logo and QR code on all published media, including materials for MPO sponsored activities
	Posters/Flyers	# of meeting attendees with who were notified via mentioned PPP tool	10% of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached via mentioned PPP tool	Design eye-catching ads basic information on each flyer; ads should have contact information and link to website
	Grouping of Projects	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Annual Project Listings	n/a	n/a	Promote individually on website periodically
	Public Speaking	Project Workshops/Open Houses	# of meeting attendees	
Public Meetings/Hearings		# of meeting attendees'	2% increase in average # of attendees annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule meetings at convenient locations and times

Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

For the Brownsville, Harlingen-San Benito, Hidalgo County,
and Starr County Metropolitan Planning Areas

ADOPTED: 9/25/2019

Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning
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Limited English Proficiency Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Limited English Proficiency Plan is to address the responsibilities of the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency skills. The plan was prepared in accordance to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which states:

“No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance.”

Executive Order 13166

On August 11, 2000, President William J. Clinton signed an executive order, Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, to clarify Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The executive order identifies differential treatment towards those with the inability to speak, read, write, or understand English as a type of national origin discrimination. These individuals have been defined by Executive Order 13166 as persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), therefore are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to a service, benefit, or encounter.

Executive Order 13166 applies to all federal agencies and all programs and operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government, including state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) including the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization, regional transportation agencies, regional, state, and local transit operators. Federal financial assistance includes grants, cooperative agreements, training, use of equipment, donations of surplus property, and other assistance.

Plan Summary

The Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) has developed this Limited English Proficiency Plan to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) who wish to access services provided. As defined by Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. This plan outlines how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available.

In order to prepare this plan, the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization used the four-factor LEP analysis which considers the following factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the RGVMPPO study area.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons meet the RGVMPPO staff.
3. The nature and importance of services provided by the RGVMPPO to the LEP population.
4. The interpretation services available to the RGVMPPO and overall cost to provide LEP assistance.

A summary of the results of the four-factor analysis is in the following section.

FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS

This plan uses the recommended four-factor analysis of an individual assessment considering the four factors outlined above. The Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) has examined each of the following factors to determine the level and extent of language assistance measures required to sufficiently ensure meaningful access to the RGVMPPO's resources. The RGVMPPO based the recommendations on the results of the analysis.

Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons in the study area who may be served by the RGVMPPO.

The Census Bureau has a range of four classifications of how well people speak English. The classifications are 'very well,' 'well,' 'not well,' and 'not at all.' For our planning purposes, we are considering people that speak English 'not well' or 'not at all' as Limited English Proficient persons. Furthermore, the data reflects the approximate LEP population within Hidalgo County, which covers the RGVMPPO study area and the surrounding rural areas within the county.

The RGVMPPO staff reviewed the 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and determined that 276,015 persons in Cameron County (71.1% of the population) speak a language other than English. Of those 276,015 persons, 33.4% have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English "not well" or "not at all", this is approximately 23.8% of the overall population in the study area. See Appendix A. In Hidalgo County, 648,528 persons (82.7% of the population) speak a language other than English. Of those 648,528 persons, 38.1% have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English "not well" or "not at all", this is approximately 31.5% of the overall population in the study area. See Appendix A. In Starr County, 54,387 persons (94.0% of the population) speak a language other than English. Of those 54,387 persons, 42.2% have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English "not well" or "not at all", this is approximately 39.7% of the overall population in the study area. See Appendix A.

Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with the RGVMPO .

The RGVMPO has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the transportation needs of the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Area since 1993. Public meetings and workshops are held at the RGVMPO's office or in locations accessible by transit or bike routes, however efforts to accommodate multiple linear communities within the MPO boundary proves to be a challenge.

RGVMPO staff has noted frequent contact with LEP persons at public meetings, community outreach events, and in day to day activities. Additionally, there are many LEP persons who encounter RGVMPO partners, such as Valley Metro and the cities located within the RGVMPO study area.

Factor 3: The nature and importance of services provided by the RGVMPO to the LEP population.

The RGVMPO is responsible for the regional planning process for all modes of transportation and provides technical assistance to the local governments of Hidalgo County in planning, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions for the area. However, the RGVMPO does not include any direct service or program that requires vital, immediate, or emergency assistance, such as medical treatment or services for basic needs (like food or shelter).

As the agency responsible for administering all federal funds for urban transportation improvements within the urbanized area of Hidalgo County, the RGVMPO must make sure that all segments of the population, including LEP persons, have been involved or have had the opportunity to be involved with the planning process. The impact of proposed transportation investments on underserved and underrepresented population groups is part of the evaluation process for the use of federal funds in three major areas for the RGVMPO:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Inclusive public participation is a priority in other RGVMPO plans, studies, and programs as well. Transportation improvements resulting from these planning activities have an impact on all residents in the region. Understanding and continued involvement are highly encouraged throughout the process. The RGVMPO encourages input from all stakeholders, and every effort is taken to make the planning process as inclusive as possible.

As a result of the long-range transportation planning process, selected projects receive approval for federal funding and progress towards project planning and construction under the responsibility of local jurisdictions or state transportation agencies. These state and local organizations have additional policies to ensure LEP individuals can participate in the process that shapes where, how and when a specific transportation project is implemented.

Factor 4: The resources available to the RGVMPO, and overall cost to provide LEP assistance.

The RGVMPPO currently uses capable and competent bilingual staff members for in-house translation of documents for Spanish-speaking LEP persons. Additionally, bilingual staff has been utilized for Spanish interpretation at public meetings and community outreach events. The use of in-house translation and interpretation services functions as a cost-effective approach to accommodate the Spanish LEP language group. Although cost-effective, the use of translation services outside the MPO are used when in-house translations are constrained by limited staff time.

The use of translation/interpretation services for LEP groups other than Spanish has yet to become necessary. However, shall the need arise for these services the RGVMPPO will assess the costs to provide these services at an as-needed basis.

SAFE HARBOR STIPULATION

Federal law provides a “Safe Harbor” stipulation so that recipients can ensure with greater certainty that they comply with their obligations to provide written translations in languages other than English. A “safe harbor” means that if a recipient provides written translations in certain circumstances, such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient’s written-translation obligations under Title VI.

The failure to provide written translations under the circumstances does not mean there is noncompliance, but rather provides a guide for recipients that would like greater certainty of compliance than can be provided by a fact-intensive, four-factor analysis. For example, even if a safe harbor is not used, if written translation of a certain document(s) would be so burdensome as to defeat the legitimate objectives of its program, it is not necessary. Other ways of providing meaningful access, such as effective oral interpretation of certain vital documents, might be acceptable under such circumstances.

Strong evidence of compliance with the recipient’s written obligations under “safe harbor” includes providing written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally.

This safe harbor provision applies to the translation of written documents only. It does not affect the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and are reasonable.

Within the RGVMPPO study area, a total of approximately 29.5 percent of the total population is considered LEP. Of the total LEP population, only one LEP language group, Spanish-speaking individuals, meets the population threshold for which written translations of vital documents can be provided to meet the safe harbor standard.

The remaining three LEP language groups located within the RGVMPPO study area, however, do not constitute the 5% or 1,000 persons of population threshold for which written translations of vital documents can be provided meet the safe harbor standard. Based on the RGVMPPO budget and the number of staff, it is deemed that written translations of core documents would be so burdensome as to defeat the legitimate objectives of our programs. It is more appropriate for the RGVMPPO to proceed with oral interpretation options for compliance with LEP regulations for the remaining LEP language groups.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Based on the four-factor analysis above, the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization has decided to implement a plan to meet requirements under Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964, which seeks to improve access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Identifying LEP Individuals

The four-factor analysis above indicates that a large proportion of LEP persons are Spanish-speaking. In comparison, the remaining language groups combined equal approximately 1% of LEP persons within the RGVMPPO study area. All language assistance services for LEP individuals will be focused towards the Spanish-speaking LEP language group, however the RGVMPPO will continue to assess the need for language assistance to other LEP language groups by:

- Posting a notice of the LEP Plan and the availability of interpretation or translation services free of charge in languages LEP person would understand.
- All RGVMPPO staff will be provided with “I Speak” cards to assist in identifying the language interpretation needed if the occasion arises.
- All RGVMPPO staff will be informally surveyed periodically on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.
- When the RGVMPPO sponsors an informational meeting or event, an advanced public notice of the event should be published including special needs related to offering a translator (LEP) or interpreter (sign language for hearing impaired individuals).

Language Assistance Measures

Language measures currently used and planned to be used by the RGVMPPO to address the needs of LEP persons include the following:

- Translation of vital documents in Spanish;
 - Metropolitan Transportation Plan
 - Transportation Improvement Program
 - Unified Planning Work Program
 - Title VI Complaint Form
 - Public Participation Plan
- Translation of meeting minutes for both Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and Transportation Policy Board (TPB) meetings.
- Posting Spanish audio and PDFs of minutes from TAC and TPB meetings on RGVMPPO website.

- Posting advertisements/public notices of public meetings in Spanish (includes posters, flyers, newspaper ads)
- Provide a Spanish version of all online surveys
- Providing Outreach literature in Spanish (includes brochures, pamphlets, handouts, etc)
- Translation of vital documents or other literature for other LEP language groups will be offered upon request at no cost
- Provide oral interpreter services at any meeting or public hearing, with advance notice of seven calendar days. Interpreter to include foreign language and the hearing impaired.
- Posting notices in appropriate languages informing LEP persons of available services on the RGVMPPO website and other social media sites.
- Provide enhanced language translation capabilities on the RGVMPPO website
- Prepare printed information on where to obtain language assistance to give or send to individuals, if necessary

Staff Training

In order to establish meaningful access to information and services for LEP individuals, staff that regularly interact with the public, and those who will serve as translators or interpreters, will be trained on the RGVMPPO's LEP policies and procedures. Training will ensure that staff members are effectively able to work in person and/or by telephone with LEP individuals.

The following training will be provided to all staff:

- Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities
- Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
- Use of the "I speak" cards
- Documentation of language assistance requests
- How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

All contractors or subcontractors performing work for the RGVMPPO will be required to follow the Title VI/LEP guidelines.

Providing Notice to LEP Persons

USDOT LEP guidance says:

"Once an agency has decided, based on the four factors, that it will provide language service, it is important that the recipient notify LEP persons of services available free of charge. Recipients should provide this notice in languages LEP persons would understand. "

The guidance provides several examples of notification including:

1. Signage when free language assistance is available with advance notice.
2. Stating in outreach documents that language services are available from the agency.
3. Working with community-based organizations and other stakeholders to inform LEP individual of the recipient's services, including the availability of language assistance services.
4. Including notices in local newspapers in languages other than English.
5. Providing notices on non-English-language radio and television states about the available language assistance services and how to get them.
6. Providing presentations and/or notices at schools and religious organizations.

The RGVMPPO will provide statements in public information and public notices, as outlined in our Public Participation Plan, that persons requiring language assistance or special accommodations will be provided, with reasonable advance notice to the MPO.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

The RGVMPPO will update the LEP Plan as required. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed and updated when new data from the U. S. Census becomes available, or when it is clear that higher concentrations of LEP individuals are present within the RGVMPPO service area. Updates will include the following:

- The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually.
- How the needs of the LEP persons have been addressed.
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Determination as to whether the need for translation services has changed.
- Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and enough to meet the need.
- Determine whether the RGVMPPO's financial resources are enough to fund language assistance resources needed.
- Determine whether complaints have been received concerning the agency's failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals.
- Maintain a Title VI complaint log, including LEP to determine issues and basis of complaints.

DISSEMINATION OF THE RGVMPPO LEP PLAN

The RGVMPPO will provide access to the LEP Plan on its website at <http://www.RGVMPPO.org>

Copies of the LEP Plan will be provided, on request, to any person(s) requesting the document via phone, in person, by mail or email. LEP persons may obtain copies/translations of the plan upon request. Any questions or comments regarding this plan should be directed to the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Appendix A – Language Spoken at Home.

Cameron County, Texas												
	Total		Percent		Percent of specified language speakers							
					Speak English only or speak English "very well"		Percent speak English only or speak English "very well"		Speak English less than "very well"		Percent speak English less than "very well"	
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Population 5 years and over	388,100	±78	(X)	(X)	295,788	±2,951	76.2%	±0.8	92,312	±2,942	23.8%	±0.8
Speak only English	112,085	±4,069	28.9%	±1.0	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Speak a language other than English	276,015	±4,058	71.1%	±1.0	183,703	±3,372	66.6%	±0.9	92,312	±2,942	33.4%	±0.9
SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH												
Spanish	272,888	±4,055	70.3%	±1.0	181,550	±3,365	66.5%	±0.9	91,338	±2,896	33.5%	±0.9
5 to 17 years old	57,532	±2,063	14.8%	±0.5	49,033	±2,040	85.2%	±1.5	8,499	±909	14.8%	±1.5
18 to 64 years old	176,733	±2,428	45.5%	±0.6	117,377	±2,351	66.4%	±1.1	59,356	±2,154	33.6%	±1.1
65 years old and over	38,623	±833	10.0%	±0.2	15,140	±837	39.2%	±2.2	23,483	±1,073	60.8%	±2.2
Other Indo-European	1,246	±327	0.3%	±0.1	1,064	±293	85.4%	±9.1	182	±124	14.6%	±9.1
5 to 17 years old	194	±121	0.0%	±0.1	194	±121	100.0%	±20.5	0	±33	0.0%	±20.5
18 to 64 years old	626	±203	0.2%	±0.1	490	±173	78.3%	±16.7	136	±121	21.7%	±16.7
65 years old and over	426	±186	0.1%	±0.1	380	±187	89.2%	±8.7	46	±31	10.8%	±8.7
Asian and Pacific Island languages	1,520	±242	0.4%	±0.1	747	±207	49.1%	±11.5	773	±217	50.9%	±11.5
5 to 17 years old	61	±58	0.0%	±0.1	45	±49	73.8%	±38.6	16	±27	26.2%	±38.6
18 to 64 years old	1,180	±239	0.3%	±0.1	612	±214	51.9%	±13.7	568	±187	48.1%	±13.7
65 years old and over	279	±62	0.1%	±0.1	90	±59	32.3%	±22.0	189	±83	67.7%	±22.0
Other languages	361	±255	0.1%	±0.1	342	±253	94.7%	±9.1	19	±27	5.3%	±9.1
5 to 17 years old	124	±161	0.0%	±0.1	105	±158	84.7%	±37.6	19	±27	15.3%	±37.6
18 to 64 years old	218	±148	0.1%	±0.1	218	±148	100.0%	±18.5	0	±33	0.0%	±18.5
65 years old and over	19	±31	0.0%	±0.1	19	±31	100.0%	±80.1	0	±33	0.0%	±80.1
CITIZENS 18 YEARS AND OVER												
All citizens 18 years old	236,106	±2,395	(X)	(X)	194,485	±2,848	82.4%	±0.8	41,621	±1,853	17.6%	±0.8
Speak only English	72,212	±2,460	30.6%	±1.0	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Speak a language other than English	163,894	±2,885	69.4%	±1.0	122,273	±2,623	74.6%	±1.0	41,621	±1,853	25.4%	±1.0
Spanish	162,184	±2,853	68.7%	±1.0	120,984	±2,592	74.6%	±1.0	41,200	±1,830	25.4%	±1.0
Other languages	1,710	±256	0.7%	±0.1	1,289	±255	75.4%	±9.7	421	±176	24.6%	±9.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Hidalgo County, Texas												
	Total		Percent		Percent of specified language speakers							
					Speak English only or speak English "very well"		Percent speak English only or speak English "very well"		Speak English less than "very well"		Percent speak English less than "very well"	
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Population 5 years and over	784,145	±62	(X)	(X)	536,931	±4,990	68.5%	±0.6	247,214	±4,988	31.5%	±0.6
Speak only English	135,617	±4,657	17.3%	±0.6	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Speak a language other than English	648,528	±4,662	82.7%	±0.6	401,314	±5,637	61.9%	±0.7	247,214	±4,988	38.1%	±0.7
SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH												
Spanish	639,719	±4,844	81.6%	±0.6	394,912	±5,730	61.7%	±0.7	244,807	±5,077	38.3%	±0.7
5 to 17 years old	154,494	±2,465	19.7%	±0.3	115,888	±3,032	75.0%	±1.5	38,606	±2,266	25.0%	±1.5
18 to 64 years old	415,062	±3,257	52.9%	±0.4	256,193	±4,026	61.7%	±0.8	158,869	±3,740	38.3%	±0.8
65 years old and over	70,163	±817	8.9%	±0.1	22,831	±1,170	32.5%	±1.7	47,332	±1,363	67.5%	±1.7
Other Indo-European	2,239	±562	0.3%	±0.1	1,807	±477	80.7%	±10.4	432	±270	19.3%	±10.4
5 to 17 years old	275	±184	0.0%	±0.1	242	±178	88.0%	±16.5	33	±46	12.0%	±16.5
18 to 64 years old	1,171	±409	0.1%	±0.1	892	±317	76.2%	±18.3	279	±261	23.8%	±18.3
65 years old and over	793	±324	0.1%	±0.1	673	±306	84.9%	±10.9	120	±84	15.1%	±10.9
Asian and Pacific Island languages	6,095	±546	0.8%	±0.1	4,277	±603	70.2%	±6.2	1,818	±367	29.8%	±6.2
5 to 17 years old	720	±249	0.1%	±0.1	588	±231	81.7%	±17.8	132	±138	18.3%	±17.8
18 to 64 years old	4,772	±359	0.6%	±0.1	3,260	±466	68.3%	±7.6	1,512	±359	31.7%	±7.6
65 years old and over	603	±183	0.1%	±0.1	429	±204	71.1%	±20.2	174	±113	28.9%	±20.2
Other languages	475	±343	0.1%	±0.1	318	±342	66.9%	±34.8	157	±89	33.1%	±34.8
5 to 17 years old	22	±81	0.0%	±0.1	22	±81	100.0%	±74.4	0	±33	0.0%	±74.4
18 to 64 years old	344	±265	0.0%	±0.1	242	±265	70.3%	±35.7	102	±71	29.7%	±35.7
65 years old and over	109	±82	0.0%	±0.1	54	±74	49.5%	±46.0	55	±52	50.5%	±46.0
CITIZENS 18 YEARS AND OVER												
All citizens 18 years old	431,229	±3,679	(X)	(X)	339,960	±4,029	78.8%	±0.6	91,269	±2,746	21.2%	±0.6
Speak only English	81,801	±3,228	19.0%	±0.7	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Speak a language other than English	349,428	±3,559	81.0%	±0.7	258,159	±3,675	73.9%	±0.7	91,269	±2,746	26.1%	±0.7
Spanish	344,211	±3,639	79.8%	±0.7	253,959	±3,731	73.8%	±0.7	90,252	±2,715	26.2%	±0.7
Other languages	5,217	±668	1.2%	±0.2	4,200	±606	80.5%	±4.2	1,017	±239	19.5%	±4.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Starr County, Texas												
	Total		Percent		Percent of specified language speakers							
					Speak English only or speak English "very well"		Percent speak English only or speak English "very well"		Speak English less than "very well"		Percent speak English less than "very well"	
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Population 5 years and over	57,825	*****	(X)	(X)	34,894	±1,207	60.3%	±2.1	22,931	±1,207	39.7%	±2.1
Speak only English	3,438	±622	5.9%	±1.1	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Speak a language other than English	54,387	±622	94.1%	±1.1	31,456	±1,201	57.8%	±2.1	22,931	±1,207	42.2%	±2.1
SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH												
Spanish	54,380	±622	94.0%	±1.1	31,451	±1,202	57.8%	±2.1	22,929	±1,208	42.2%	±2.1
5 to 17 years old	13,620	±381	23.6%	±0.7	10,389	±561	76.3%	±3.8	3,231	±537	23.7%	±3.8
18 to 64 years old	34,122	±392	59.0%	±0.7	19,318	±908	56.6%	±2.6	14,804	±895	43.4%	±2.6
65 years old and over	6,638	±247	11.5%	±0.4	1,744	±349	26.3%	±5.0	4,894	±344	73.7%	±5.0
Other Indo-European	4	±7	0.0%	±0.1	4	±7	100.0%	±100.0	0	±33	0.0%	±100.0
5 to 17 years old	0	±33	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	-	**	0	±33	-	**
18 to 64 years old	4	±7	0.0%	±0.1	4	±7	100.0%	±100.0	0	±33	0.0%	±100.0
65 years old and over	0	±33	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	-	**	0	±33	-	**
Asian and Pacific Island languages	2	±5	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	0.0%	±100.0	2	±5	100.0%	±100.0
5 to 17 years old	0	±33	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	-	**	0	±33	-	**
18 to 64 years old	2	±5	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	0.0%	±100.0	2	±5	100.0%	±100.0
65 years old and over	0	±33	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	-	**	0	±33	-	**
Other languages	1	±2	0.0%	±0.1	1	±2	100.0%	±100.0	0	±33	0.0%	±100.0
5 to 17 years old	0	±33	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	-	**	0	±33	-	**
18 to 64 years old	1	±2	0.0%	±0.1	1	±2	100.0%	±100.0	0	±33	0.0%	±100.0
65 years old and over	0	±33	0.0%	±0.1	0	±33	-	**	0	±33	-	**
CITIZENS 18 YEARS AND OVER												
All citizens 18 years old and over	31,224	±850	(X)	(X)	21,582	±975	69.1%	±2.5	9,642	±827	30.9%	±2.5
Speak only English	1,804	±411	5.8%	±1.3	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)
Speak a language other than English	29,420	±873	94.2%	±1.3	19,778	±979	67.2%	±2.6	9,642	±827	32.8%	±2.6
Spanish	29,419	±873	94.2%	±1.3	19,777	±979	67.2%	±2.6	9,642	±827	32.8%	±2.6
Other languages	1	±2	0.0%	±0.1	1	±2	100.0%	±100.0	0	±33	0.0%	±100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Explanation of Symbols:

1. An '***' entry in the margin of error column indicates that either no sample observations or too few sample observations were available to compute a standard error and thus the margin of error. A statistical test is not appropriate.
2. An '-' entry in the estimate column indicates that either no sample observations or too few sample observations were available to compute an estimate, or a ratio of medians cannot be calculated because one or both of the median estimates falls in the lowest interval or upper interval of an open-ended distribution.
3. An '-' following a median estimate means the median falls in the lowest interval of an open-ended distribution.
4. An '+' following a median estimate means the median falls in the upper interval of an open-ended distribution.
5. An '****' entry in the margin of error column indicates that the median falls in the lowest interval or upper interval of an open-ended distribution. A statistical test is not appropriate.
6. An '*****' entry in the margin of error column indicates that the estimate is controlled. A statistical test for sampling variability is not appropriate.
7. An 'N' entry in the estimate and margin of error columns indicates that data for this geographic area cannot be displayed because the number of sample cases is too small.
8. An '(X)' means that the estimate is not applicable or not available.

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Appendix B – Title VI Complaint Form

Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or Local Agency, or with any Federal or State Court?/¿Ha presentado esta queja con cualquier otra oficina federal, estatal o local, o cualquier otra corte federal o estatal?

Yes/Si **No/No**

If yes, check all that apply/En caso que si, sírvase indicar todas las oficinas ante las que ha presentado una queja:

- Federal Agency/Oficina Federal** **Federal Court/Corte Federal**
- State Agency/Oficina Estatal** **State Court/Corte Estatal** **Local Agency/Oficina Local**

Please provide information about a contact person at the agency/court where the complaint was filed./Proporcione a una persona de contacto para la otra agencia o agencias ante las cuales presentó la queja:

Name/Nombre: _____

Address/Dirección: _____

City, State, and Zip Code/Ciudad, Estado, Código Postal: _____

Telephone Number/Número de Teléfono: _____

Signature/Firma

Date/Fecha



**Please mail this form to:
Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan
Planning Organization
617 W University Dr
Edinburg, TX 78539**

**Por favor envíe esta forma a:
Rio Grande Valle Orngaizacion
De Planeacion Metropolitana
617 W University Dr
Edinburg, TX 78539**

Appendix C – Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT NO PERSON IS EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN, OR DENIED THE BENEFITS OF, OR BE SUBJECTED TO DISCRIMINATION IN THE RECEIPT OF ITS SERVICES OR PROGRAMS ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR OR NATIONAL ORIGIN OR ANY OTHER CHARACTERISTICS PROTECTED BY LAW, INCLUDING TITLE I OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, AS AMENDED. FURTHER, UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) OF 1990, NO ENTITY SHALL DISCRIMINATE AGAINST AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROVISION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICE.

TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ON THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION'S NONDISCRIMINATION OBLIGATIONS OR TO FILE A TITLE VI COMPLAINT, CONTACT:

RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
617 W. University Drive
Edinburg, Texas 78539

YOU MAY FILE A WRITTEN COMPLAINT NO LATER THAN 180 CALENDAR DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF THE ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION.

INFORMATION ON NON-ENGLISH ALTERNATIVE FORMATS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION OFFICE.

Appendix D – “I Speak” Identification Cards

2004 Census Test	United States Census 2010 LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION FLASHCARD
<input type="checkbox"/> ضع علامة في هذا المربع إذا كنت تقرأ أو تتحدث العربية.	1. Arabic
<input type="checkbox"/> Մարդու՞մ ե՞նք նշում՞ կատարե՞ք այս քանակություն, եթե խոսում՞ կամ կարդում՞ եք հայերեն:	2. Armenian
<input type="checkbox"/> যদি আপনি বাংলা পড়েন বা বলেন তা হলে এই বাক্স দাগ দিন।	3. Bengali
<input type="checkbox"/> ល្អបញ្ជាក់ក្នុងប្រអប់នេះ បើអ្នកអាន ឬនិយាយភាសា ខ្មែរ ។	4. Cambodian
<input type="checkbox"/> Motka i kahhon ya yangin ûntûngnu' manaitai pat ûntûngnu' kumentos Chamorro.	5. Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> 如果你能读中文或讲中文，请选择此框。	6. Simplified Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/> 如果你能讀中文或講中文，請選擇此框。	7. Traditional Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/> Označite ovaj kvadratić ako čitate ili govorite hrvatski jezik.	8. Croatian
<input type="checkbox"/> Zaškrtněte tuto kolonku, pokud čtete a hovoříte česky.	9. Czech
<input type="checkbox"/> Kruis dit vakje aan als u Nederlands kunt lezen of spreken.	10. Dutch
<input type="checkbox"/> Mark this box if you read or speak English.	11. English
<input type="checkbox"/> اگر خواندن و نوشتن فارسی بلد هستید، این مربع را علامت بزنید.	12. Farsi

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cocher ici si vous lisez ou parlez le français.	13. French
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kreuzen Sie dieses Kästchen an, wenn Sie Deutsch lesen oder sprechen.	14. German
<input type="checkbox"/>	Σημειώστε αυτό το πλαίσιο αν διαβάζετε ή μιλάτε Ελληνικά.	15. Greek
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make kazyè sa a si ou li oswa ou pale kreyòl ayisyen.	16. Haitian Creole
<input type="checkbox"/>	अगर आप हिन्दी बोलते या पढ़ सकते हैं तो इस बक्स पर चिह्न लगाएँ।	17. Hindi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kos lub voj no yog koj paub twm thiab hais lus Hmoob.	18. Hmong
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jelölje meg ezt a kockát, ha megérti vagy beszél a magyar nyelvet.	19. Hungarian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Markaam daytoy nga kahon no makabasa wenno makasaoka iti Ilocano.	20. Ilocano
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marchi questa casella se legge o parla italiano.	21. Italian
<input type="checkbox"/>	日本語を読んだり、話せる場合はここに印を付けてください。	22. Japanese
<input type="checkbox"/>	한국어를 읽거나 말할 수 있으면 이 칸에 표시하십시오.	23. Korean
<input type="checkbox"/>	ໃຫ້ໝາຍໃສ່ຊ່ອງນີ້ ຖ້າທ່ານອ່ານຫຼືປາກົດພາສາລາວ.	24. Laotian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prosimy o zaznaczenie tego kwadratu, jeżeli posługuje się Pan/Pani językiem polskim.	25. Polish

<input type="checkbox"/>	Assinale este quadrado se você lê ou fala português.	26. Portuguese
<input type="checkbox"/>	Însemnați această casuță dacă citiți sau vorbiți românește.	27. Romanian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Пометьте этот квадратик, если вы читаете или говорите по-русски.	28. Russian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Обележите овај квадратик уколико читате или говорите српски језик.	29. Serbian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Označte tento štvorček, ak viete čítať alebo hovoriť po slovensky.	30. Slovak
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marque esta casilla si lee o habla español.	31. Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/>	Markahan itong kuwadrado kung kayo ay marunong magbasa o magsalita ng Tagalog.	32. Tagalog
<input type="checkbox"/>	ให้กาเครื่องหมายลงในช่องดำผ่านหน้าหรือทุกภาษาไทย.	33. Thai
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maaka 'i he puha ni kapau 'oku ke lau pe lea fakatonga.	34. Tongan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Відмітьте цю клітинку, якщо ви читаете або говорите українською мовою.	35. Ukrainian
<input type="checkbox"/>	اگر آپ اردو پڑھتے یا بولتے ہیں تو اس خانے میں نشان لگائیں۔	36. Urdu
<input type="checkbox"/>	Xin đánh dấu vào ô này nếu quý vị biết đọc và nói được Việt Ngữ.	37. Vietnamese
<input type="checkbox"/>	באציכנט דעם קעסטל אויב איר לייענט אדער רעדט אידיש.	38. Yiddish

Appendix E – Social Media Policy



Social Media Policy

1. Vision & Purpose for Using Social Media

In support of the RGVMPO’s Public Participation Plan’s guidelines and goals, the RGVMPO is seeking to further engage the public in the transportation planning process by developing outreach strategies using various social media tools.

The RGVMPO’s social media outlets serve as discussion and information sharing opportunities between the RGVMPO and the public about the RGVMPO, and/or other transportation-related programs, projects, activities, and events. The comments and opinions of others on official RGVMPO social media sites do not represent the opinions or views of the RGVMPO or its staff. The RGVMPO encourages the public to submit any comments, questions, or concerns as related to the discussion topics presented on any social media sites, however the RGVMPO will moderate all comments and reserves the right to remove comments which violate the social media policy guidelines provided below.

2. Definition of Social Media

As defined by the Federal Highways Association (FHWA), “Social Media and Web 2.0 are umbrella terms used to define the various activities integrating Web technology, social interaction, and user-generated content. Examples of Social Media/Web 2.0 technologies include, but are not limited to, blogs, wikis, podcasts, social network sites, and internet-based services that emphasize collaboration and sharing (such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube).”¹

3. Employee Access

Access to social media sites will be reserved to RGVMPO Staff authorized by the RGVMPO Executive Director based on their role within the agency. Authorized staff will be restricted to professional use of the RGVMPO’s official social media sites. While approved staff is expected to check on social media daily (see *Account Management*), staff time must be properly allocated to higher priority tasks, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or Executive Director.

Personal use of social media is limited to access through personal devices. (Employees may consult the LRGVDC Employee Handbook on “breaks”.) Employees shall be advised to maintain proper privacy settings on personal accounts to prevent misrepresentation of the RGVMPO as an organization. While personal accounts are not linked to official RGVMPO social media sites, it is recommended for staff to refrain from publicly posting information that would reflect negatively on staff and the organization.

4. Account Management

Technology is ever-changing, as are the social media outlets used by the public to communication and gather new information. The RGVMPO currently utilizes Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as a means of communicating with the public and sharing information about local transportation issues, however the need may arise in the future for the creation of other social media tools. The following are guidelines for managing social media accounts:

¹ FHWA Order 1370.14, FHWA Social Media/Web 2.0 Management, March 16, 2011.

1. The creation and closing of social media accounts must have final approval from the Executive Director of the RGVMPO.
2. The Executive Director and assigned staff will retain a record of all passwords and login information for all RGVMPO social media accounts. If for any reason the assigned staff members are removed from social media tasks or are no longer employed for the RGVMPO, all passwords will be reset and stored.
3. A log of social media statistics shall be kept by assigned staff members and shall be updated every first workday of every month.
4. No posts shall be deleted once posted. Should a correction need to be made, staff shall clarify the mistake on the same post or create an additional one.
5. Social media sites should be checked on a daily basis and responses to public comments must be answered within at least 5 working days.
6. Staff will be responsible for moderating social media sites.

5. Employee Conduct

All staff approved to use or maintain social media shall abide by the following guidelines:

1. Staff shall not post personal opinions on any official RGVMPO social media sites.
2. All information must be presented in a politically neutral, informative, and respectful manner. No vulgar language will be tolerated.
3. Staff shall respond to comments relevant to the discussion topics. Responses should be positive, polite, and neutral.
4. Staff shall present accurate information. Information that is later found to be incorrect shall be publicly corrected.
5. Staff shall respect the privacy of the public interacting on social media sites.
6. Employees should refrain from posting information that would bring embarrassment to themselves or the RGVMPO.
7. Staff shall abide by all federal regulations, including Title VI/LEP policies.

6. Content

Information placed on all official RGVMPO social media sites shall relate to the RGVMPO transportation planning process, MPO-related projects, events, activities, and/or news, research, discussion topics related to transportation planning. The RGVMPO staff will not promote information not related to topics previously discussed, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director. All content shall remain politically neutral and shall not endorse or promote specific political parties or organizations. All content is the sole responsibility of the RGVMPO unless cited as otherwise. Information presented forth on RGVMPO social media will be used for discussion and does not represent the views or opinions of the RGVMPO.

7. Security

As a security measure, the use of instant messaging (IM) through approved social media sites will not be allowed, unless deemed appropriate by the Executive Director. Additionally, the exchanging of files will be limited and will only be allowed through trusted sites. While most information is considered public record, staff is advised to never send confidential information via social media. When in doubt as to whether to send certain information via social media, staff shall consult with the Executive Director.

8. Legal Issues

The use of social media by RGVMPPO staff is limited as a business communication tool for reaching the public about MPO and other transportation-related topics. Although informal, staff is required to adhere to all federal, state and local regulations. Additionally, all information posted to social media sites is considered public record. Any violations by staff will be handled on a case by case basis at the discretion of an immediate supervisor and the Executive Director.

9. External User Guidelines (Citizen Conduct)

The RGVMPPO encourages the public to submit any comments, questions, or concerns on any of our official social media sites, however please note that all sites will be moderated and the following guidelines will apply:

1. We review all comments and reserve the right to delete any comments containing inappropriate and/or offensive content.
2. We do not allow obscene, graphic or discriminatory content that may infringe upon a person's Title VI rights under the Civil Rights Act of 1964²
3. We do not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
4. All comments shall remain constructive and relevant to the posted discussion topics.
5. All comments are subject to public record.

All questions or concerns regarding the RGVMPPO social media sites can be forwarded through the following outlets:

Mail To:
RGVMPO
Edinburg Office: 617 W University Dr.
Edinburg, TX 78539

Brownsville Office: City Plaza – Mezzanine Floor 1034 E. Levee St.
Brownsville, TX 78520

Email: Info@RGVMPO.org
Website: www.RGVMPO.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/RGVMPO
Twitter: www.twitter.com/RGVMPO
[LinkedIn : www.linkedin.com/company/rgvmpo](http://www.linkedin.com/company/rgvmpo)

² Please see our Title VI Nondiscrimination Statement

Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

Edinburg Office: 617 W
University Drive Edinburg,
TX 78539

Brownsville Office: City
Plaza – Mezzanine Floor
1034 E. Levee Street
Brownsville, TX 78520

Phone:

(956) 682-3481

*Please ask to be
transferred to the
RGVMPO.*

Email:

info@rgvmpo.org