

September 2016

# TIGER Award Grant

On August 1, 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced that the City Brownsville will be receiving \$10 million under the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant Program for the Connecting Communities project.

The Connecting Communities project is led by the City of Brownsville, in partnership with the City of McAllen, the City of South Padre Island, the City of Port Isabel, Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA), Cameron County, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

The Connecting Communities project is comprised by the following components:

**Component 1:** comprised of three transit elements, including capital investments in facilities, vehicles, and bus stops to improve Brownsville Metro and METRO Connect.

**Component 2:** includes the widening of the Queen Isabella Causeway on SH 100 to create a 14-foot wide dedicated, barrier protected bike and pedestrian lane.

The Connecting Communities project will facilitate and improve mobility for area residents by sustaining and improving the multiple modes of transportation utilized by residents to commute to work, school, recreational activities, and to medical facilities.

# Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization



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City Plaza 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
1034 E. Levee St.  
Brownsville, TX



Texting and Driving!



Watch out for Pedestrians and Cyclists at Street Intersections!

## Upcoming Policy Committee Meetings

Wednesday, **September 21, 2016**  
At 10 a.m.

City Hall-Commission Chambers  
1001 E. Elizabeth 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Brownsville, TX 78520

Wednesday, **October 12, 2016**  
At 10 a.m.

City Hall-Commission Chambers  
1001 E. Elizabeth 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Brownsville, TX 78520

Wednesday, **November 09, 2016**  
At 10 a.m.

City Hall-Commission Chambers  
1001 E. Elizabeth 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Brownsville, TX 78520

## MPO's Work Program Submitted/ Pending Approval

The MPO's **Unified Planning Work Program Plan (UPWP)** for F.Y. **2017** has been developed and is pending approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The **F.Y. 2017 UPWP** describes the work plan that the Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization will utilize for the approaching fiscal year, which begins October 1, 2016. The UPWP is required by federal law and by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The MPO allocates federal funds and coordinates the transportation planning activities of all participants in the Brownsville Urbanized Area.

An outline of proposed tasks is provided below:

**Administration** – This task involves the direct support and assistance provided to the MPO policy and technical committees,

as well as MPO Public Involvement activities. Training activities for MPO staff are also charged to this task.

### **Data Development** –

Socioeconomic data is collected by the MPO staff on a continuous basis. One use of this demographic information is to perform travel demand modeling. This "model" is used by MPO staff to forecast future traffic volumes and assignments.

**Short-Range planning** – Activities under this task include the following: Transit/General Development & Comprehensive Planning; Transit/Short-Range Planning; Transit/Transportation Improvement Program, (TIP); Short-Range Planning (Non-Transit); and Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Activities.

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan** – Activities include development of the MPO's Long-Range

Transportation Plan, as well as any amendments of this MPO document. Also, transit planning for long-range purposes is conducted under this task.

**Special Studies** – Special (one-time) activities will be conducted under this task. The MPO has sponsored two studies to be undertaken as follows:

- A. Brownsville Metro Strategic Transit Comprehensive Plan
- B. Rancho Viejo Bicycle/ Pedestrian Master Plan

The **F.Y. 2017 UPWP** was approved by the MPO Policy Committee on July 13, 2016. It was submitted to TxDOT and the FHWA for review and approval. Please call the MPO staff for more information on this topic, or visit either of the two MPO webpages:

[www.brownsvillempo.org](http://www.brownsvillempo.org) or  
<http://mpo.cob.us>

## Flashing **RED** means **STOP!**

The 2016-2017 school year has started and it is very important to keep an eye out for students and buses. Remember to watch for children gathered at bus stops and children who might dart across the street to catch the bus. **STOP** for flashing **RED** lights on a school bus, regardless of which direction you're headed. Continue your trip once the flashing lights have stopped flashing and the bus has moved. Obey the posted speed limits and remember that fines double in school zones.



# Brownsville Metro Comprehensive Strategic Transit Plan

The Brownsville MPO is sponsoring 95% of the costs to undertake the **B-Metro Comprehensive Strategic Transit Plan**. Recently, the Brownsville City Commission approved the awarding of a contract to Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates Inc., for \$173,464 to help conduct this study.



The **B-Metro Comprehensive Strategic Transit Plan** will develop a strategic plan to identify opportunities, provide recommendations and to improve the B-Metro Transit system.

The study will perform a ridership count for each route, evaluate route efficiency, paratransit services, and financial analysis. **The B-Metro Comprehensive Strategic Transit Plan** will help the City of Brownsville maximize its investments in the **short-term**, while also identifying opportunities for **long-range** transit projects. It should be noted that this study will take about one year to complete.



A key factor to make for a successful study is to obtain feedback and input from the riders. Trained surveyors will be onboard to provide surveys and accept any comments. In addition, an online survey will be developed to more fully understand the travel patterns, demographic characteristics, and preferences of current riders.

Please visit the Brownsville MPO websites ([www.brownvillempo.org](http://www.brownvillempo.org) or <http://mpo.cob.us>) for more information about this pending online survey. When we receive more details, MPO staff will post this information.



# Funding of Improvements via Proposition Seven

On November 3, 2015, the Texas Sales and Use Tax Revenue for Transportation Amendment, **Proposition 7**, went to the voters as a constitutional amendment. It was approved. The approval of **Proposition 7** will provide a significant step toward meeting the unmet funding needs for transportation projects in Texas.

**Proposition 7** dedicates a portion of the state's general sales and rental taxes to the State Highway Fund.

**Proposition 7** funds will be utilized to maintain, rehabilitate, build, and purchase right-of-way for non-tolled public roads.

Starting Fiscal Year 2018 through September 1, 2032, if general state sales and use tax revenues exceed \$28 billion in a fiscal year, the next \$2.5 billion would be directed to the State Highway Fund. Beginning September 2019 (fiscal Year 2020) through September 1, 2029, if state motor vehicle sales and rental tax revenues exceed \$5 billion in a fiscal year, 35% of the amount in excess of \$5 billion would be directed to the State Highway Fund, as well.

**Proposition 7** funds will be used to construct improvements within the Brownsville MPO Study Area. We look forward to undertaking roadway projects to ease congestion, address safety, and maintain our area transportation system.

Brownsville MPO, in collaboration with TxDOT Pharr District, proposes to amend the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to list **Proposition 7** funded projects, as follows:

- **IH-69E NB Frontage Road Overpasses**, CSJ#: 0039-08-100, Project will commence during Fiscal Year 2018. The project will consist of the construction of two structures; a one lane vehicular overpass and a hike & bike trail overpass structure at the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR). Construction site is along IH-69E northbound frontage road, west of Old Alice. The estimated total cost of these two elements is \$15,370,800 and this project would be funded by Category 1, Category 2, (Proposition 7) and Category 7.
- **S.H. 32/ East Loop**, CSJ#: 1426-01-037 Project will begin during Fiscal Year 2018.

Project will consist of the construction of a 4 lane divided roadway. S.H. 32/ East Loop project will run from F.M. 3068. The estimated total cost for this project is \$15,535,909. Funding for the construction of S.H. 32/ East Loop would be from Pass Thru Category 3 funds and local match.

- **S.H. 48/ Boca Chica Median Project**, CSJ#: 0220-05-075, Project is set to begin during Fiscal Year 2019. Project will consist of installing a raised center median from IH-69E to S.H. 4. The estimated total cost for this project is \$3,467,700 and would be funded by Category 2, (Proposition 7).
- **S.H. 32/ East Loop Connector**, CSJ#: 0921-06-288 Project will begin during Fiscal Year 2020. The project will consist of the construction of a two lane roadway from R.L. Ostos Rd. to S.H. 4. The estimated total cost of the S.H. 32/ East Loop Connector Project is \$11,053,132 and this project would be funded by Category 7 and local match.
- **U.S. 281 Widening**, CSJ#: 0220-04-049 Project will begin during Fiscal Year 2020. The project will consist of the construction of a four lane section from F.M. 1421 to 0.4 miles west of F.M. 1577. The estimated total cost of the project is \$16,248,750 and project would be funded by Category 2, (Proposition 7) and Category 7.

Persons with an interest in these projects, are encouraged to stop by the MPO Department at 1034 E. Levee St., 2nd floor, Brownsville, Texas. Also, you may attend the upcoming September MPO Policy Committee meeting to learn more. Written comments may be mailed to the MPO Staff c/o City of Brownsville P.O. Box 911. Brownsville, TX 78522-0911 or may be submitted via email to [bmpo@cob.us](mailto:bmpo@cob.us). Persons may also attend and provide comments during the upcoming MPO Policy Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at 10 a.m., Brownsville City Hall, 2nd floor Commission Chambers, 1001 E. Elizabeth St., Brownsville, TX. Any further questions, please call Mark Lund, MPO Director at (956)548-6150 or send your query via e-mail to [bmpo@cob.us](mailto:bmpo@cob.us). Action on these items is expected at the **October** MPO Policy Committee Meeting.



### WHAT IS AN MPO?

A **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** is a regional policy board, required in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000 and designated by local officials and the governor of the state.

# Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization

c/o City of Brownsville Planning  
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## About Us

The **Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** provides administrative support and technical services to coordinate, carry out and conduct transportation planning for Brownsville, Los Fresnos and the Town of Rancho Viejo to conform to federal highway and transit regulations.

The activities conducted by the **Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization** are intended to identify policies, programs and improvement projects to address area transportation activities and needs. The adoption of transportation plans and policies by the MPO is an integral step in the process of obtaining federal funding of various transportation improvements, including transit activities.

Brownsville MPO would like to inform everyone that Mr. Antonio Zubieta will be assuming the duties of MPO Planner II. Mr. Zubieta will provide support to MPO committees, undertake public involvement tasks and assist with MPO transportation planning activities



## Contact

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[Addressee]  
[Street Address]  
City, ST, Zip Code

| NAME/NOMBRE  | COMMENTS/COMENTARIOS |
|--|----------------------|
| ADDRESS/DIRECCIÓN  |                      |
| PHONE/TELÉFONO ( )   |                      |
| <p>PLEASE HELP US IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION IN BROWNSVILLE BY SENDING US YOUR IDEAS AND COMMENTS. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS CAN BE ADDRESSED TO:</p> <p>Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization<br/>c/o City of Brownsville – Planning Department<br/>PO Box 911<br/>1034 E. Levee Street 2nd floor<br/>Brownsville, TX 78520</p>   |                      |
| <p>POR FAVOR AYUDENOS A MEJORAR EL SISTEMA DE TRANSPORTE EN BROWNSVILLE. ENVÍENOS SUS IDEAS Y COMENTARIOS QUE QUEREMOS ESCUCHAR DE USTED.</p> <p>ENVIE SUS COMENTARIOS Y PREGUNTAS A LA SIGUIENTE DIRECCIÓN:</p> <p>Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization<br/>c/o City of Brownsville – Planning Department<br/>PO Box 911<br/>1034 E. Levee Street 2nd floor<br/>Brownsville, TX 78520</p> |                      |