

The Brownsville Metropolitan  
Planning Organization

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
&  
INVOLVEMENT POLICIES**

**DRAFT**

**Proposed Additions are noted  
by underlining of new text**

**Recent additions are indicated  
by yellow shading**

For more information, please contact:

Brownsville MPO Staff  
c/o City of Brownsville - City Plaza  
P.O. Box 911  
Brownsville, TX 78522  
Tel: (956) 548-6150  
Fax: (956) 548-6135  
E-mail: [bmpo@cob.us](mailto:bmpo@cob.us)  
Websites: <http://mpo.cob.us>  
<http://brownsvillempo.org>

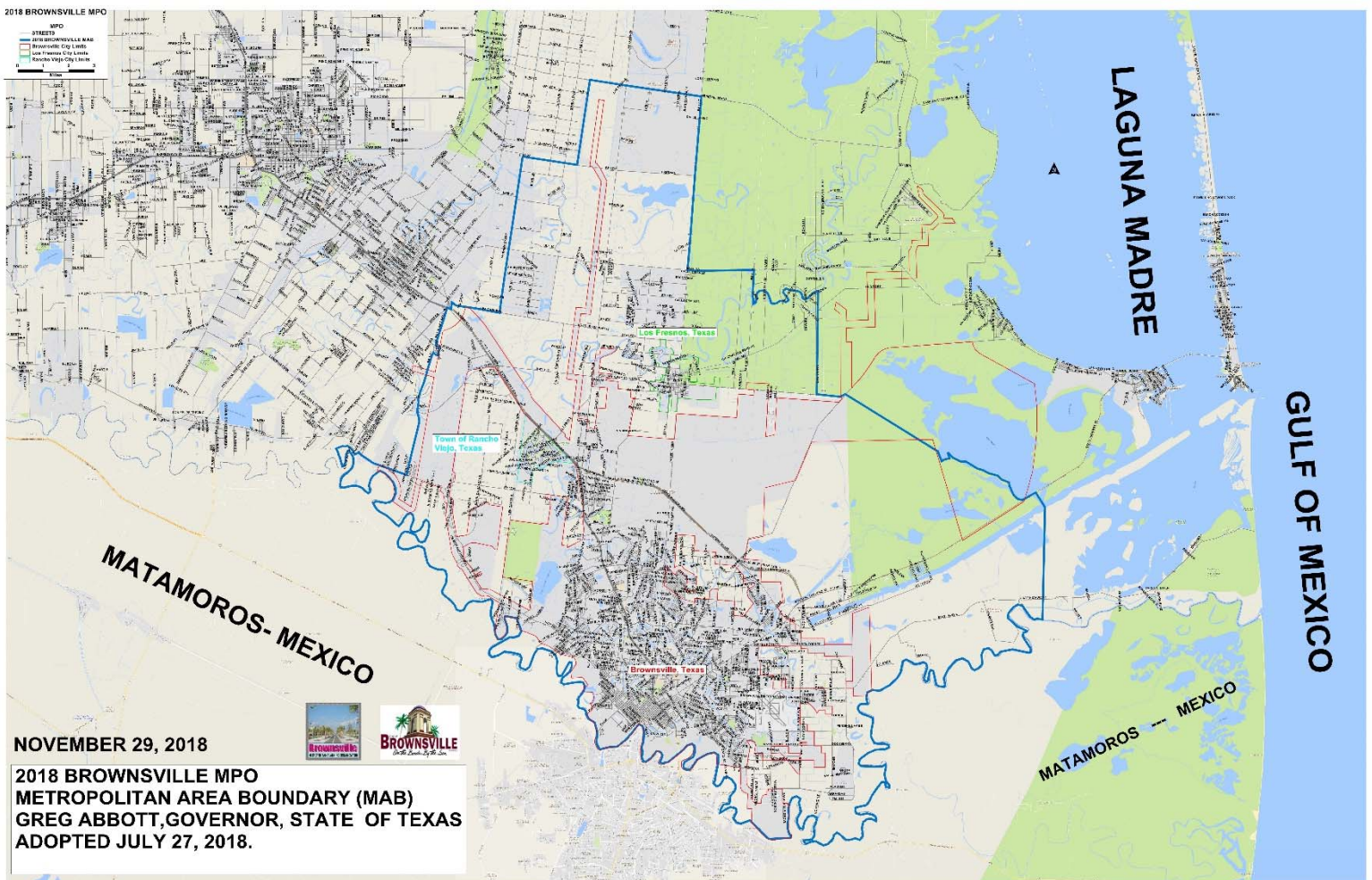
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Organizational Structure.....	3
Goals & Guidelines for the Participation Process.....	3
Public Notifications & The MPO’s Websites .....	4
Stakeholder Input.....	5
Public Meetings .....	5
Public Review .....	6
Public Comment .....	7
Periodic Consultation .....	7
Public Appearances .....	9
Annual Listing of Transportation Projects .....	9
MPO’s Use of Visualization Techniques.....	10
Limited English Proficiency (LEP).....	10
Title VI.....	17

# BROWNSVILLE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & INVOLVEMENT POLICIES

All urbanized areas in the United States with a population of 50,000 or more are required to have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO makes both transportation plans and policies that affect how transportation dollars are allocated and how regional and local needs are addressed.

The Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was established about 1974 and is responsible for short and long range transportation planning for the Brownsville Metropolitan Region. The Brownsville MPO area includes the cities of Brownsville, Los Fresnos and the Town of Rancho Viejo, as well as unincorporated areas in southern and southeastern portions of Cameron County. The MPO study area is located on the Texas border, north of Matamoros in the Republic of Mexico.



## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Brownsville MPO is organized into two committees, as follows:

**MPO Policy Committee**—The MPO Policy Committee approves all federal funding allocations, as well as transportation plans and policies for the Brownsville urbanized area. The Policy Committee takes action based on recommendations from the Technical Committee, and input received from coordination and consultation with other planning entities, interested parties, (eg. individuals or groups representing freight, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, the disabled) and the general public.

**MPO Technical Committee**—This advisory MPO Committee is comprised of transportation planners and other agency staff who are representatives of the same agencies which compose membership of the MPO Policy Committee. This MPO Committee provides technical support and makes recommendations to members of the MPO Policy Committee.

The purpose of the MPO is to provide continuous, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning for the Brownsville urbanized area. Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation bill signed into law in August 2005, emphasizes the importance of early, on-going public involvement in the transportation planning process.

## **GOALS & GUIDELINES FOR THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

It is the intent of the MPO to provide ample opportunities for the involvement of citizens, as well as interested parties and elected officials in the transportation planning process. Recognizing the importance of public participation, the Brownsville MPO has adopted the procedures outlined herein to insure:

- Early and reasonable involvement opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process;
- Timely information concerning transportation issues and processes is disseminated to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects;
- **Solicit the input and understand** the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households which may face challenges accessing employment and other amenities are sought out and considered.

Public participation shall generally be available through the following formats: public notification, public meetings, public review, public comments and public appearances.

## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION & THE MPO'S WEBSITES**

The Brownsville MPO has established **two** websites to make it easier for members of the public to learn more about MPO plans and policies. Also, the MPO's **webpages** helps to communicate about pending meeting dates, as well as explain about the process of adoption of new plans and/or revision of existing MPO plans and policies.

All MPO Policy Committee meetings shall be posted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting date and time, on the Official Bulletin Board at Brownsville City Hall. Notification of start of public review and comment periods regarding adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program, (TIP), the MPO's Public Participation and Involvement Policies and/or revisions shall be placed at least 72 hours in advance of the review and comment period. Notices shall be placed at the following:

The Brownsville Herald  
Brownsville City Hall (Official Bulletin Board)  
Brownsville Cable Channel 12 \*  
The MPO website

\* Note: City of Brownsville staff maintain the notices placed on Channel 12. MPO staff will provide City of Brownsville staff with MPO notice material well in advance of 72 hours, (to provide adequate time for posting). MPO staff cannot guarantee that the notices will appear on the Brownsville Cable Channel 12 at least 72 hours in advance of the MPO's review/comment period.

Notification of upcoming MPO Policy Committee meetings to consider the adoption and/or revision of the MTP or TIP is provided to the public via The Brownsville Herald at least 28 days prior to the Policy Committee meeting, where said action will be considered. The MPO will post these notices on the MPO's website.

Certification of posting on the official bulletin board and a copy of the newspaper publication shall be obtained and retained in the MPO files for a period of **five** years. MPO staff will post both notices of proposed TIP and MTP documents (or summaries describing the proposed TIP/MTP revisions) on the MPO's website. **Upon some occasions, the MPO may utilize the Coastal Current periodical for advertising of MPO special meetings, MPO Open House events and or MPO workshops.**

Also, the MPO's Public Participation and Involvement Policies will be posted on

both MPO websites. One can access the MPO's website by visiting the official site of the City of Brownsville at <http://mpo.cob.us>. Upon reaching this location, the next step is to click on "Brownsville MPO/Transportation Planning". MPO staff will take steps to set up links to the MPO's website from the two other municipalities in the study area: the Town of Rancho Viejo and the City of Los Fresnos.

Posting of notices and other MPO information is not limited to the MPO webpage via the City of Brownsville website. In addition, the MPO maintains a separate website <http://brownvillempo.org>. This independent website affords more flexibility for hosting surveys, etc.

## **STAKEHOLDER INPUT IS ENCOURAGED VIA A VARIETY OF MEANS & METHODS**

The Brownsville MPO will coordinate our public involvement policies with TxDOT, when possible, to enhance public knowledge, as well as encourage public input.

The MPO shall maintain a list of interested groups, stakeholder agencies and individuals, including state, county and local government officials, news media, special interest groups, resource agencies (such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), transportation providers, etc. The interested groups, individuals, etc. shall be provided with a written notice of significant MPO meetings. For example, MPO Policy Committee meetings for consideration of TIP and/or MTP adoption, or revision, constitute significant action by the MPO. Information packets on these significant issues will be mailed upon request. The MPO formulates and distributes the Brownsville Newsletter several times a year. This is another means of keeping citizens and interested parties advised of MPO plans, policies and opportunities to provide input.

The list of interested groups, individuals and stakeholder agencies will be updated on a periodic basis by the MPO. This list shall be made available upon request. Those agency staff and/or interested parties who wish to be added to this list should contact the MPO staff to submit or make their request.

## **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

All meetings of the Brownsville MPO Policy Committee and other public meetings shall be held in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to participate at every public meeting. Public meetings shall be recorded and the records shall be retained by the MPO for a period of five years. Those attending public meetings will be asked to sign a roster. The roster shall be retained by the MPO for a period of three years. The MPO shall prepare minutes of the meeting documenting comments, speakers and other

pertinent information and shall make available the information to interested parties after final adoption by the Policy Board.

One or more public meetings will be held to present updates to the MTP and take comments, prior to MPO Policy Committee adoption. At least one of these meetings shall be held a minimum of 30 days prior to adoption of the plan.

One or more public meetings will be held to present amendments or updates to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and take comments prior to MPO Policy Committee adoption. One of these MPO-sponsored meetings shall be held a minimum of 30 days prior to adoption of the TIP by the MPO Policy Committee.

The MPO shall hold at least one meeting every three months. This meeting shall be held for the purpose of:

1. Taking any actions necessary
2. Informing the public of any plan and/or plan amendments in process
3. Inviting public input
4. Giving public status reports

All MPO meetings will be held at convenient and accessible times and locations. Some of these meetings may be held in the evening. Evening MPO meetings are typically held to solicit comments on MTP updates, which affords convenience to citizens to attend the MPO meetings and make comments. And, when feasible, some meetings may be held at locations near to or in those areas being affected by Transportation Plans, Projects or Problems.

## **PUBLIC REVIEW**

In order to afford the public an opportunity to review major plans in detail, a public review period shall be announced. For updates or major revisions to the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the public review period will last a minimum of 30 days before adoption. Similarly, prior to updates or major revisions of the Transportation Improvement Program, (TIP), the public will be afforded a public review period of a minimum of 30 days prior to adoption. During the public review period, the MPO shall make available at its offices a copy of the document(s) proposed for updates or major revisions. The public may review the document(s) at the MPO offices during normal working hours. In addition, staff will be available to discuss the document and answer questions. The public review period may run concurrently with the public comment period. The draft documents, such as MTP proposals and/or TIP information (including significant revisions) will be made available on the MPO's webpage to notify interested persons about the contents of these documents.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

A public comment period lasting a minimum of 20 days prior to the adoption of an updated or amended TIP, MTP or the MPO Thoroughfare Plan shall be created to solicit public opinion. Any written comments received by the MPO during the comment period regarding Transportation Plans will be given due consideration by the MPO staff and the MPO Policy Committee. Written comments submitted to the MPO after the closing of the comment period may or may not be considered by the MPO staff and forwarded to the MPO Policy Committee for consideration.

Written comments received during the 20 day public comment period will be summarized and the summary shall be given to the Policy Committee prior to adoption of the program or plan. The summary shall be retained in the MPO files for a **five** year period and copies sent to interested parties upon request. If requested, the MPO staff will provide written responses regarding any comment received.

Interested persons who wish to submit comments, after the MPO's written comment period has closed, should either attend the MPO Policy Committee meeting to offer verbal comments and/or (at their option) attend the meeting and furnish sufficient copies of written comments to the Policy Committee members for their review. **There is no guarantee that written comments will be reviewed by MPO Policy Committee members, when such written statements are submitted after the 20 day comment period has ended.** The ability of interested persons to offer verbal comments on pending MTP/TIP issues to the Policy Committee members at the relevant MPO meeting(s); and the MPO's consideration of such verbal comments results in a verbal comment period of 30 days (or more) which may be concurrent with the MPO's Public Review period.

## PERIODIC CONSULTATION

As concerns adoption of the TIP, MTP and revisions or amendments thereof, the Brownsville MPO staff routinely consult with state, county and other local officials responsible for a variety of planning activities, including but not limited to the following:

- airport operations
- intercity bus operators
- conservation of natural resources
- resiliency and reliability of transportation systems
- economic development
- environmental protection
- freight issues



- historic preservation
- land use management and regulations
- visitation and tourism
- recreational planning
- representatives of bicyclists and pedestrians
- representatives of the disabled
- mitigation of storm-water impacts
- public transportation providers
- representatives of public transportation employees, (should such persons or a person exist from time to time)
- safety and security agencies
- providers of non-emergency transportation
- other groups or individuals interested in transportation planning issues

**“Stakeholders” who wish to be routinely consulted by MPO staff should contact the MPO staff to indicate their desire to be informed about such matters.**

The Brownsville also consults with the Port of Brownsville (Brownsville Navigation District), which is a voting member on the MPO Policy Committee.

Port of Brownsville  
1000 Foust Road  
Brownsville, TX 78521

The Port of Brownsville is a deep-water seaport in Brownsville, at the southernmost tip of Texas.

The purpose of such consultation shall be to find areas of agreement and minimize conflict points, if possible. Further, MPO staff will consult and compare plans with interested parties and/or interested persons, when feasible and practical. Comments to the MPO will always be accepted on this basis. Whenever possible, MPO staff will grant extended staff time for detailed consultations.

Also, it should be noted that the MPO staff and members of the MPO Committees typically accept and consider comments on MTP and TIP issues anytime of the year. Although amendments of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) typically occur once per quarter, the MPO staff and Committee members listen to comments on this topic, as well as MTP issues all months of the year. Past MTP Amendments have taken place due to comments and suggestions put forth to the MPO by interested parties.

## **PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

The MPO will, to the extent possible, comply with requests from civic or professional groups, local organizations or communities to present or discuss information related to the work of the MPO, Transportation Improvement Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plan or MPO studies and programs. The organization should contact the MPO staff about upcoming meetings, and allow ample time for the MPO staff to make arrangements to attend.

The MPO staff will make serious efforts to respond to requests for presentations from affected community organizations in Brownsville, Los Fresnos and Rancho Viejo, so as to brief them and involve them in the planning process. MPO staff encourage such participation to help shape policies on Transportation Planning issues.

## **ANNUAL LISTING OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

The Brownsville MPO, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Brownsville Metro shall publish, (and make available for distribution to interested persons), an annual listing of projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. These listed improvement projects shall be consistent with the categories identified in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In addition, this annual listing shall be posted on the MPO's website to make this information available to interested persons.

- Social Media

The Brownsville MPO Facebook pages serves as a forum for people to share ideas and comments on topics associated with the TIP and MTP. The Brownsville Facebook page will be used to keep citizens informed on the progress of the TIP formation and MTP Update, and other planning issues.

- Public Events, Exhibits and Displays

The Brownsville MPO staff may visit community events during the update of MPO plans. This may include using table top displays to present information about the TIP development and the draft MTP to the community. This activity may continue on an on-going basis, when advisable.

- Outreach Materials

The Brownsville MPO will use flyers, brochures and press releases to inform the public about on-going activities (i.e. public meetings, etc.) during the TIP and MTP

development process. The MPO will continue to use these types of outreach materials to distribute information about the TIP and MTP as well as for other planning activities.

- Contact Data List

The Brownsville has developed a list of key contacts of public agencies, elected officials, appointed officials, business organizations, civic groups, transportation providers, media groups, consultants and interested citizens who asked to be put on the contact list. MTP, TIP and other information will be mailed to the contact list.

- Public Hearings, Workshops and Open House (Forums)

Public hearings will be held as needed by the Brownsville MPO Committees to allow citizens the chance to voice opinions and concerns over the development of the TIP and MTP and on other issues. Also, MPO Workshops and MPO Open House Events will be held as needed by the Brownsville MPO staff. These aforementioned events may be more informal in nature. The objectives for such events are similar to holding public hearings to solicit public input on the transportation planning process, including TIP and MTP formation, TIP revisions and MTP amendments, as well as other topics.

## **THE MPO'S USE OF VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES**

At a minimum, the MPO shall produce and make available for public inspection, maps which depict the location of proposed Metropolitan Transportation Plan improvement projects, TIP projects and activities and/or major revisions to MTP and TIP documents. Other visual techniques will be employed by the MPO staff at different times, depending on their effectiveness, such as the production of maps with graphic representation of varying congestion levels on area roadways under different improvement and/or development scenarios.

Also, the MPO staff periodically assemble map products to illustrate environmental justice (Title VI) issues, such as the location of low-income neighborhoods, major traffic generators and attractions, bus routes and the location of past and/or current (proposed) roadway improvements. These products will be made available to interested persons upon request.

### **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN (LEP)**

The Brownsville MPO formulated and formally adopted the LEP over five years ago. To increase the profile or "visibility" of this MPO planning document, the LEP is being readopted (combined) as part of the MPO's Public Participation & Involvement Policies (PPIP).

The Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization Limited English Proficient (LEP) Plan was prepared using the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration guidelines as published in: "Implementing the Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons: A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers" as prepared by the Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights, dated April 13, 2007."

The Brownsville MPO LEP Plan addresses the provision of services to "individuals, who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English." As shorthand, we refer to such persons as Limited English Proficient or "LEP". Based on the U.S. Census 2005 to 2009 American Community Survey, more than 24 million people reported that they do not speak English well. In the Brownsville region, Spanish is the language most frequently spoken at home. While 11% of residents in Brownsville speak English at home, about 88% of local residents speak Spanish at home. While 63% of Brownsville residents speak English very well, some 37% speak English less than very well.

For large cities in the United States, Brownsville ranks in fourth place for its percentage of Hispanic or Latino population (93.2%) as a share of the total population. In Texas, only Laredo (ranked second) has a higher percentage. In that community, Hispanics account for 95.6% of the total population.

Executive Order 13166 and its implementing regulations provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance. Executive Order 13166 "Improving Access to Services for persons with Limited English Proficiency" reprinted at 65FR50121 (August 16, 2000), directs each federal agency that is subject to the requirements of Title VI to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying that obligation. Executive Order 13166 further directs that all such guidance documents be consistent with the compliance standards and framework detailed in the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Policy Guidance entitled "Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - National Original Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency". (See 65 FR 50123, August 16, 2000 DOJ's General LEP Guidance)

The Brownsville MPO has developed this Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) to help identify reasonable steps to provide language assistance for LEP persons. This is to enable all persons to be able to access MPO services and to make queries regarding transportation issues, as required by Executive Order 13166. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

This plan details procedures on how to identify a person who may need language assistance and the ways in which assistance may be provided. Also, this plan outlines steps for training of MPO staff on such issues and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available.

Finally, this document provides information concerning future plan updates.

### **The Relevant Services that the MPO Provides to LEP Persons**

LEP persons inquire about use and are affected by the MPO's transportation planning services. Inquiries take place on a daily basis. The MPO conducts regular monthly meetings. Decisions by the MPO Policy Committee members determine where transportation improvements and investments will occur. The MPO Policy Committee, which is the decision-making body of the MPO, encourages public participation at these meetings. LEP persons are welcome to ask questions and offer comments at the public comment periods listed on the agenda for these MPO meetings. Comments and/or questions at these meetings are also encouraged under the listing of "New Business", which allows for queries from citizens. Given that the decisions of the MPO Policy Committee members affect and help determine significant public and private investments in or near transportation corridors in our community, the Policy Committee members recognize the importance of listening to local citizens about their views on such issues. At special meetings, the MPO Policy Committee members solicit public comments as to Special Studies (eg. corridor studies and/or transportation studies on other technical issues) or regarding the listing of proposed improvements within the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

### **Preparation of the MPO's Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP)**

Federal guidance on LEP Services includes four factors to be considered when examining reasonable steps to be taken to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons. The objective of the four-factor analysis is to suggest a reasonable balance that supports access by LEP persons to services while not imposing undue burdens on small units of government.

#### **Factor One**

Determine the extent of the MPO's obligation to provide LEP services.

#### **Factor Two**

Determine the frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the MPO's programs or services.

#### **Factor Three**

Determine the nature and importance of the programs and services provided by the MPO to LEP persons.

#### **Factor Four**

Determine the resources available to the MPO and likely costs associated possible changes in the MPO's service delivery.

#### **Language Assistance Plan - Identifying LEP individuals Who Need Language Assistance**

In past surveys conducted by the City of Brownsville Transit staff (then Brownsville Urban System, now Brownsville Metro), it appeared that almost all (99.5 %) of LEP persons in Brownsville speak Spanish. The second largest group of LEP persons speak an Asian or Pacific Island language, typically Tagalog. Interviews with MPO staff reveal that no contacts have taken place with non-Spanish speaking LEP persons during the past 10 years.

The MPO staff have provided verbal communications in Spanish as a daily business practice and this aspect of work has been fully integrated into the MPO's daily operations. As to written communications, please see the section (below) which explains the MPO practices concerning provision of vital (written) information.

#### **Providing Notice and Other Services to LEP Persons**

LEP Spanish speakers quickly become aware that language assistance is available (via the telephone or during a visit to the MPO office) in their interaction with MPO staff. When LEP Spanish speakers ask a question (in Spanish) at regularly-scheduled MPO Policy Committee meetings, the practice has been for the MPO Chairman to address or respond to the citizen's expressed concerns, in kind (in Spanish). In many cases, the MPO Chairman provides a summary of the query and the response (translated to English) for the benefit of non-Spanish speakers at the meeting.

In the last eighteen years, all of the MPO Chairs have been bilingual. It has been our experience for two decades that whoever has chaired the MPO Policy Committee meetings, that person has had the ability (bilingual capacity) to conduct the meeting via either language. So, the ability of the MPO to provide information to the public in both English and Spanish has been a constant. In any case, these MPO practices of responding in this manner have been accepted or well received by LEP persons.

#### **MPO Practices Regarding Language Services**

In considering the use of MPO resources to translate from English to Spanish the MPO's written documents, the question of whether or not a document (or a part of the document) provides "vital" information is an important factor. Typically, large documents include both vital and non-vital information. For example, the listing of a transportation project (hypothetical "X") within the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) means that funding is available to implement the project.

An LEP customer may or may not be interested in that particular project. However, the significance of the MPO's TIP document derives from the fact it lists funded improvement projects. So, if an LEP customer wants to know which MPO transportation improvements have funding and when do those projects get started, the MPO's TIP document provides these answers. These aspects of the TIP constitute vital information.

Accordingly, the MPO will begin a new practice. We shall provide notices in Spanish within our written documents, to outline some of the "vital" information within. Further, this Spanish text will advise LEP persons of how to contact the MPO on these issues. Thus, the person can telephone the MPO staff to obtain an interpretation or translation of those aspects of the document that the person wishes to learn more about. It would impose a burden to translate all of these lengthy documents into Spanish, but translation of the vital information is feasible.

Four out of five persons on the MPO staff speak fluent Spanish, in addition to English. Thus, almost all of the MPO staff are bilingual. The fourth staffer, the MPO Director, has a basic working knowledge of Spanish and can communicate with others at a rudimentary level. Accordingly, when LEP persons call on the telephone or visit the MPO offices, the resulting conversations with MPO staff typically occur in Spanish. These conversations help these Spanish-speaking persons to access MPO information and/or services.

The MPO has been able to provide such language services for more than two decades. As a safeguard, the MPO Director usually asks another MPO staff person to translate, in order to make sure that he does not miss anything when assisting an LEP person. The MPO's provision of bilingual services via the telephone or during in-person visits does not impose a burden.

When it comes to advanced, technical discussions with other transportation professionals (eg. Mexican Nationals, consultants from Mexico), the MPO Planner, Alfonso Vallejo, provides such language (Spanish) services. Mr. Vallejo, a native of Puebla, Republic of Mexico, is familiar with Spanish highway terms used in Mexico. In addition, he has a vast knowledge of the various public agencies and governmental units that exist in Mexico, due to his years of tenure at TxDOT's International Relations Office (IRO). Almost each and every week of the year, MPO staff respond (in Spanish) to simple and complex queries that are directed to MPO staff.

The MPO staff produce and distribute an MPO Newsletter three or four times each year. This public involvement activity takes place to help inform local citizens about upcoming meetings and on-going planning activities. This MPO Newsletter invariably has been produced as an English-only document. Given that written translation (from English to Spanish) of this document would be quite time-consuming, the production of a Spanish version of the MPO Newsletter has been

viewed as too large a burden for the Brownsville MPO to undertake this type of effort at this time.

Other factors are taken into account as pertains to production of the MPO's written documents. The MPO's "repeat customers" are predominantly English-speaking persons, i.e., those who speak English very well. Other agency staff, realtors, consultant firm staff, neighborhood activists and certain local business owners contact the MPO several times each year seeking information and status reports on different projects. Few of these "repeat" customers are LEP customers. If we had more LEP "repeat" customers, that might change how we assess these matters. If more MPO staff are hired in the upcoming years, the provision of a Spanish version of the MPO Newsletter might be undertaken. While this part of the MPO's public involvement policies is important, it should be noted that the scale or reach of this undertaking is not large. For example, the MPO Newsletter is mailed to about 200-220 persons. Of course, a few other English-speaking persons may read the newsletter via the MPO's website. If another 100 copies of the MPO Newsletter are produced with Spanish text, the MPO could indeed expand its level of language assistance. But the benefits in terms of service delivery will be modest. Identifying the initial Spanish readership for the MPO Newsletter will likely take place slowly.

There are a number of factors to consider. Many of the LEP persons who contact the MPO staff do so for a singular cause. They want information about a specific project or geographical area. After they obtain the particular MPO response to their request for information, it appears that most of these persons are fully satisfied. After they leave the MPO office, decades might pass before another contact takes place.

The MPO seeks to share information and deliver services for all persons. Perhaps, the MPO staff can encourage more LEP persons to become "repeat" customers, by encouraging their attendance at upcoming meetings and/or MPO-sponsored listening sessions scheduled by the MPO. Notices in both English and Spanish on such events have been developed and distributed. One means of fulfilling the MPO's LEP objectives has been the use of an insert or notice (in Spanish) used in the MPO's legal notices. This section of the legal advertisement outlines (in Spanish) where the MPO will consider the meeting date. Also, the notice provides the telephone number of the MPO office so that a person may inquire (in Spanish) for further information.

Brownsville, Texas  
Quick Facts from the U.S. Census Bureau

---

	Brownsville	Texas
Population 2010	175,023	25,145,561



Population, % change from 2000 to 2010	25.3%	20.6%
Population 2000	139,722	20,851,820
White persons, % 2010	88.0%	70.4%
Black persons, % 2010	0.4%	11.8%
American Indian & Alaska Native persons, % 2010	0.4%	0.7%
Asian persons, % 2010	0.7%	3.8%
Native Hawaiian & other Pacific Islander, % 2010	N/A	0.1%
Persons reporting two or more races, % 2010	1.5%	2.7%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, % 2010	93.2%	37.8%
White persons (not Hispanic), % 2010	5.7%	45.3%
Per capita income (2010 dollars) 2006-2010	\$12,130	\$24,870
Median household income 2006-2010	\$30,134	\$49,646
Persons below poverty level 2006-2010	35.8%	16.8%

### **Monitoring the MPO's LEP Plan**

Various community organizations serve LEP persons, including:

- The City of Brownsville
- Brownsville Independent School District
- Cameron County
- Workforce Solutions
- Ozanam Center Inc.

Aside from suggestions and/or queries from local citizens, including LEP persons, about the MPO's LEP Plan, the MPO staff will periodically examine the practices and on-going Spanish language or service provision of the aforementioned organizations. Innovations, new practices and service delivery changes by other

organizations will be assessed for possible use by the Brownsville MPO.

### **Future Updates of the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP)**

The MPO staff will review the effectiveness of this LEP on a periodic basis. If changes might be warranted, such proposed changes will be discussed with the members of the MPO Technical Committee to obtain their feedback and concurrence. Subsequently, formal adoption of any LEP changes will be effected by the MPO Policy Committee members.

## **TITLE VI**

The Brownsville MPO adopted a stand-alone (separate) Title VI/Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy several years ago. Below, Please find a brief explanation (below) about these issues.

### **MPO Title VI/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROGRAM ASSURANCE**

The Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), acting as the transportation planning agency for the Brownsville urbanized area and as the designated recipient of federal transportation funds, will not discriminate against any person with respect to an MPO program, activity or service; nor to disproportionately adversely impact environmental justice populations.

In the event that the Brownsville MPO distributes federal aid funds to another entity, the MPO will include Title VI language in all written agreements.

For more information about these issues, please visit either of the MPO's websites: <http://mpo.cob.us> or <http://brownsvillempo.org>.

## **ADOPTION & AMENDMENT OF THE MPO'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & INVOLVEMENT POLICIES**

A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before this MPO participation plan is initially adopted or revised at a later date. A copy of the approved MPO participation plan shall be posted on the MPO's website.