

Good ideas often occur through an open exchange of information and view points.



June 2007

Public Participation Plan of the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization (HCMPO)



Public Participation Plan

of the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Public Participation Plan Policy Statement

Background

Governmental Requirements

Public Participation Process

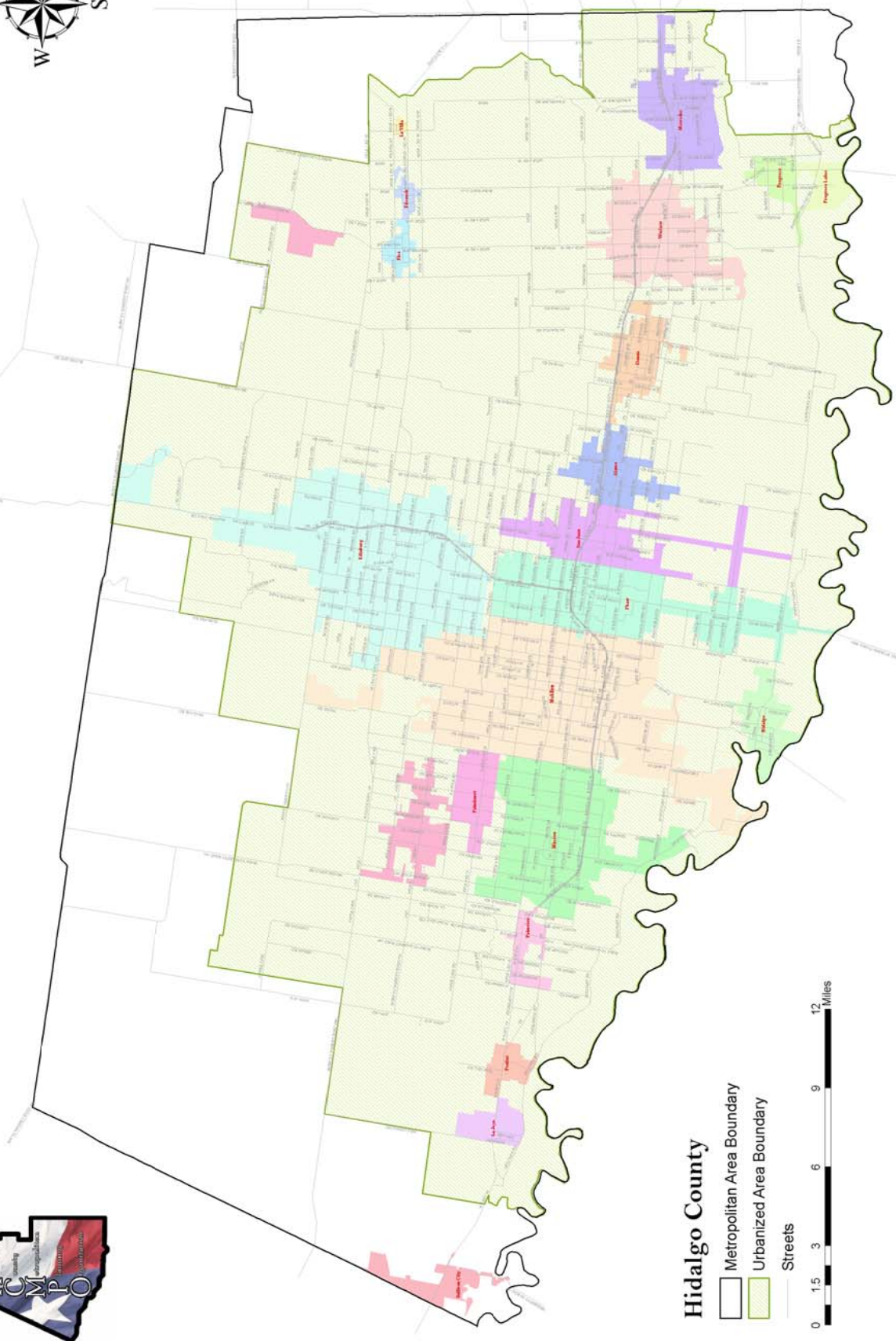
Commonly Used Transportation Terms & Acronyms

Public Participation Plan Evaluation Guidebook




Approved by the Transportation Policy Committee (date)

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Hidalgo County

-  Metropolitan Area Boundary
-  Urbanized Area Boundary
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Metropolitan Area Boundary & Urbanized Area Boundary
Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization



“PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN” - POLICY STATEMENT

Transportation affects us all as individuals; making up the public within a community, bringing communities together as cities, all cities creating a region; but most importantly as citizens of Hidalgo County. Therefore, as public citizens, everyone should have the opportunity to get involved in the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (HCMPO) 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 Hidalgo County Metropolitan area, the HCMPO highly encourages public participation and involvement. Good ideas often occur through an open exchange of information and view points; we encourage the public to voice their opinions, we’re here to listen.

The organization responsible for transportation planning for the Hidalgo County Metropolitan area is the HCMPO. 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 HCMPO’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 indi-

viduals of “traditionally underserved” communities.

These communities include minorities, transit dependant 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 dependant 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 HCMPO is committed to a public involvement program that will involve all citizens within the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB). Public participation throughout the planning process is imperative. It allows individuals and organizations to voice their transportation needs, provides suggestions for solutions and be an important part of planning an efficient transportation system for everyone’s use.

The following document constitutes the HCMPO public participation plan as prescribed by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). 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 HCMPO Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). 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, the MPO shall (1) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times; (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 newspaper, El Mañana newspaper and The Coastal Current Weekly) and regional television media (Time Warner Cable) 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.



BACKGROUND

The 1973 Federal Highway Act required the Governor’s office to designate a Metropolitan Planning Organization in each urbanized area with a central city over 50,000 in population. The census count placed the city of McAllen as the first contiguous city in Hidalgo County to exceed a population of 50,000. As a result of meeting this population threshold, the Hidalgo County MPO’s Transportation Planning

Committee and the State of Texas Office of Budget and Planning entered in a transportation planning agreement on June 12, 1981. After this agreement was made, the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation and the TPC created the HCMPO.

After the 1990 U.S. Census defined an urbanized population of over 200,000 for the McAllen-Pharr-Edinburg area, the title Transportation Management Area (TMA) was subsequently given to the region and allocated more resources to the MPO. This designation allowed for the provision of staff, the establishment of formal procedures and a set of bylaws, which were first adopted on December 7, 1992. At this time, the MPO Transportation Planning Committee became the MPO Policy Committee and it was decided that the HCMPO was obligated to perform the duties stated in the established bylaws, although lacking both a fiscal agent and staff for the HCMPO. The TPC then designated the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) to act as the agent to perform the fiscal, administrative and technical functions for the HCMPO. Staff was later hired in the fall of 1993.

Since 1993, the HCMPO has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the transportation needs of the Hidalgo County Metropolitan area. The HCMPO is currently one of eight TMA's in the state and is the 6th largest metropolitan area in the state of Texas.

The HCMPO is responsible for the regional planning process for all modes of transportation. The HCMPO provides technical assistance to the local governments of Hidalgo County in planning, coordinating and implementing transportation decision for the area. The HCMPO administers all federal funds for urban transportation improvement in Hidalgo County, 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. Federal funds for conducting the transportation planning process are limited to the Hidalgo County metropolitan area, which covers 992.76 square miles and includes the existing urbanized area and the contiguous area expected to be urbanized within the next 20 years. This urbanized area currently includes its planning partners, which are 22 cities and the unincorporated area of Hidalgo County. After the 2000 Census was conducted, the urbanized area was updated to include 716.62 square miles and a population of almost 570,000.

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

Planning activities also include the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which is a program that identifies federally funded and regionally significant pro-

jects funded by non-federal sources that will be implemented each year. The TIP is adopted by the TPC every three 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 be in compliance with the HCMPO'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.

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 HCMPO staff is outlined in each task as it relates to the eight planning factors identified under SAFETEA-LU. Subtasks are specific projects, plans, or programs in which HCMPO and local jurisdiction staffs participate. Funding for the year is also identified within the UPWP.

SAFETEA-LU PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted August 10, 2005, as Public Law 109-59 and authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009. The SAFETEA-LU Act requires the MPOs to provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will serve to advance eight (8) transportation planning factors identified under SAFETEA-LU as follows [per Section 6001(h)]:

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

Under SAFETEA-LU, the HCMPO 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 6001 (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, SAFETEA-LU 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 6001(i)(2)(B)(ii) of SAFETEA-LU.



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 6001(i)(4)(B) of SAFETEA-LU.

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. [6001(i)(5)(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 opportunities to comment on the contents of the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP updates and major revisions. [6001(i)(5)(B)]

The Public Participation Plan is a living document and will be periodically reviewed for possible revisions. Revisions to previous plans are summarized in [Appendix A](#).

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. In its public participation process, the HCMPO will:



1. Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdiction concerns).
2. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plans, the TIP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered.
3. Give adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of the Metropolitan Transportation Plans, the TIP 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.
4. 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.
5. 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. SAFETEA-LU requires that the MPO shall provide reasonable opportunities for 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 transportation planning process via Section 6001(i)(5)(A).

6. 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 in a newspaper of general circulation and various other publications prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period. Notice will also be mailed to the entire HCMPO mailing list prior to the start of the 45-day comment period.
7. Provide a public comment period of not less than 30 calendar days prior to adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the TIP, the UPWP, Transit Development Plans, any formal amendments or updates, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects.
8. 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 Hidalgo County MPO 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. When feasible, the Hidalgo County MPO shall electronically mail meeting announcements to the MPO contact list or to targeted groups for upcoming activities. The Hidalgo County MPO shall maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including at a minimum the following persons to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>A. Elected Officials</i> | <i>K. Private Freight Shippers</i> |
| <i>B. Local Government Staff</i> | <i>L. Representatives of Public Transportation Employees</i> |
| <i>C. Transportation Agencies
(Airports, Transit, etc.)</i> | <i>M. Providers of Freight Transportation Services</i> |
| <i>D. Local Media (TV, Radio, Print, etc.)</i> | <i>N. Private Providers of Transportation</i> |
| <i>E. Homeowners Associations</i> | <i>O. Representatives of Users of Public Transportation</i> |
| <i>F. Civic Groups</i> | <i>P. Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways</i> |
| <i>G. Special Interested Groups</i> | <i>Q. Representatives of Users of Bicycle Transportation Facilities</i> |
| <i>H. Libraries (For Public Display)</i> | <i>R. Representatives of the Disabled</i> |
| <i>I. Consultation with Federal, State
and local agencies responsible for
land use management, natural
resources, environmental protection,
Conservation and historic preservation,
and other environmental issues.</i> | |
| <i>J. Consultation with parties that would have
an interest in the planning and
development of the transportation
network including affected public
agencies in the metropolitan
planning area.</i> | |

The Hidalgo County MPO shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continues 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 HCMPO 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 HCMPO shall produce a quarterly newsletter for distribution by mail and via email to the HCMPO contact list, available at public libraries and city halls, and available at the HCMPO website www.lrgvdc.org. The newsletter includes, at a minimum, updates on current or recently completed projects, announcements of upcoming meetings, and contact information.

The HCMPO 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:

- A. *Contact Information (mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail)*
- B. *Current HCMPO committee membership*
- C. *Meeting calendars and agendas*
- D. *Work products and publications (Transportation Improvement Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plans, Unified Planning Work Program, etc.)*
- E. *Comment/Question Form*
- F. *Links to related agencies*
- G. *Current By-Laws and Operating Procedures (including the Public Participation Plan and updates)*

The HCMPO 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 HCMPO shall, when feasible, hold public meetings at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens.

The HCMPO 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 HCMPO shall cooperate with the Texas Department of Transportation and member cities to imple-

ment the MPO Community Assessment Study.

The HCMPO 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 MPO. 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 MPO:

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. Through the website, the citizens are able to listen to the Transportation Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meeting minutes in both English and Spanish. Also, citizens are able to 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.lrgvdc.org. The website is maintained and updated by HCMPO staff and regularly reviewed.

Activities: The website is used to list current and topical information on regular and special meetings, audio meeting minutes for TAC & TPC, planning studies, publications, related public events and work products.

MPO Master Database

Description: HCMPO 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.

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 titled "Movilidad del Valle" that is distributed to citizens, municipalities, media and other agencies. Citizens are added to the distribution list by their own request.

Activities: The Movilidad del Valle 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, in order 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 and to utilize public service notices to create community awareness of planning activities.

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 and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. 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, and other major MPO activities.

E-mail Announcements/Internet Message Boards

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.

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

Description: A logo representing the MPO 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.

Activities: A logo is used on all MPO publications; including those developed by consultants working on MPO sponsored projects to create a community awareness of the MPO deliverables.



Public Hearings

Description: These are public meetings used to solicit public comment on a project or issue being considered for adoption by the MPO. Hearings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to the MPO 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 MPO 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.

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

HCMPO

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & INVOLVEMENT

HIDALGO COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

1. How did you learn of this public meeting?

Newsletter Television

Internet Word of Mouth

2. Do you have any suggestions that may help us improve your communication efforts with the general public?

1901 S. 2nd St., Suite 430
Mollen, Texas 78503
Phone: (956) 618-0803
Fax: (956) 618-6340
E-mail: hcmppo@pdc.org

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. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns.

Activities: Conduct on-line surveys on issues and needs to provide input into the plans, conduct surveys at the transit terminal station, and attached survey to Freedom Flyers ads at mailed out to 31,500 people.

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 programming and contracting for projects that minimizes the necessity for TIP revisions.

Activities: The 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 review. The listing shall be consistent with

the funding categories identified in each TIP.

Activities: The HCMPO posts the projects on the website for public review as the projects are being let. Plus, it includes the status of the project throughout the duration of the project.

D. Summary Public Participation Policy Table

Program Adoption	Public Meetings	Comment Period	Remarks
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	Two meetings prior to TPC approval	30 Days	A summary of all oral or written comments will be provided to the TPC and available for public review.
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Two meetings prior to TPC approval	30 Days	
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	N/A	30 Days	When possible, joint public meetings with TPC and TAC
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	N/A	45 Days	Will be held for updates of the PPP as needed
	Program	Amendments	
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	One meeting if requested prior to TPC approval	30 Days	
Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)	One optional meeting prior if requested to TPC approval	30 Days	
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	N/A	N/A	
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	N/A	45 Days	
	Open	Meetings	
Transportation Policy Committee (TPC)	Regular meetings are held the Fourth Thursday of every month.		

IV. COMMONLY USED TRANSPORTATION TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ADA—Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: the federal law which requires public vehicles and facilities to be accessible to persons with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual.

ADT—Average Daily Traffic: average daily traffic volume represents the total two-way traffic on a roadway for some period less than a year, divided by the total number of days it represents, and includes both weekday and weekend traffic. Usually, ADT is adjusted for day of the week, seasonal variations, and/or vehicle classification.

CMP—Congestion Management Process: (Known as CMS—Congestion Management System) is a systematic process which provides information on transportation system performance and alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and enhancing mobility. Alternative strategies may include: Transportation Control Measures (TCMs), Transportation Systems Management, and Transportation Demand Management.

DOT—Department of Transportation: Agency responsible for transportation at the local, state, or federal level. For title 23 U.S.C. federal-aid highway actions, this would mean the Federal Highway Administration and for federal-aid transit actions under title 49 U.S.C, this would mean the Federal Transit Administration.

EJ—Environmental Justice: a process that focuses on the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency, by requiring the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income.

FHWA—Federal Highway Administration: Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for administering federal highway transportation programs under title 23 U.S.C..

Fiscal Constraint: means the MTP and TIP include sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the MTP and TIP can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained.

FTA—Federal Transit Administration: Federal entity responsible for transit planning and programs under title 49 U.S.C.

IMP—Incident Management Program: A systematic process required under SAFETEA-LU to provide information on accidents and identify causes and improvements to the Transportation system to increase safety of all users.

ITS—Intelligent Transportation System: Use of computer and communications technology to facilitate the flow of information between travelers and system operators to improve mobility and transportation productivity, enhance safety, maximize the use of existing transportation facilities, conserve energy resources and reduce adverse environmental effects; includes concepts such as “freeway management systems,” “automated fare collection” and “transit information kiosks.”

LOS—Level of Service: a measure of traffic flow and congestion.

MPO Activities: Are plans, programs and projects related to the MPO process.

MPO—Metropolitan Planning Organization: an association of local agencies established to coordinate transportation planning and development of activities within a metropolitan region.

MTP—Metropolitan Transportation Plan: A 25-year forecast plan required of state planning agencies and MPOs; which must consider a wide range of social, environmental, energy, and economic factors in determining overall regional goals and consider how transportation can best meet these goals.

PMS—Pavement Management System: A systematic process utilized by state agencies and MPOs to analyze and summarize pavement information for use in selecting and implementing cost-effective pavement construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance programs; required for roads in the National Highway System as a part of ISTEA; the extent to which the remaining public roads are included in the process is left to the discretion of state and local officials; criteria found in 23 CFR 500.021-209.

Public Participation: Is an integral part of a planning or major decision-making process. It provides opportunities for the public to be involved with the MPO in an exchange of data and ideas. Citizen participation offers an open process in which the rights of the community, to be informed to provide comments to the Government and to receive a response from the Government, are met through a full opportunity to be involved and to express needs and goals.

ROW—Right-of-Way: Real property that is used for transportation purposes; defines the extent of the corridor that can be used for the road and associated drainage.

SIB—State Infrastructure Bank: a TxDOT program which is a revolving loan account for cities, counties, or political subdivisions to construct, maintain, or finance an eligible transportation project.

SAFETEA-LU—Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users: A legislation enacted August 10, 2005, as Public Law 109-59.

SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

SMP—Statewide Mobility Plan: TxDOT's 10 year plan for adding capacity to the transportation system using the Mobility Category Funds of Federal and State Transportation funding.

SPP—Statewide Preservation Plan: TxDOT's 10 year plan for maintaining the Transportation system using the preservation categories of Federal and State Transportation funding.

STIP—State Transportation Improvement Program: The TxDOT Five Year Work Program as prescribed by federal law.

TAC—Technical Advisory Committee: A standing committee of most metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs); function is to provide advice on plans or actions of the MPO from planners, engineers and other staff members (not general citizens).

TCI—Texas Congestion Index: This is an index to measure the magnitude of congestion in a single performance measure across the state. The index measures the mobility of people and goods in each Texas metropolitan area, with attention to the delay time experienced by drivers.

TMMP—Texas Metropolitan Mobility Plan: This is a state based requirement intended to serve as a framework for identifying unmet transportation needs in the state's larger metropolitan areas. The TMMP is a needs-based plan which quantifies transportation needs beyond the fiscal constraint barrier.

TPC—Transportation Policy Committee: A standing committee created for the purpose of serving as spokespersons for the citizens of the metropolitan area and is the designated MPO to prioritize and direct federal transportation funds to local projects. The TPC is comprised of elected officials from 22 cities and the county in the urbanized area. The TPC is responsible for creating policies regarding transportation planning issues. The TPC meetings are open to the public and where any member of the public can address the MPO on any transportation issue.

The TPC meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m.

Transportation Enhancements: Specific activities which can be funded with Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds; activities include pedestrian/bicycle facilities, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic historic sites, scenic or historic highway programs, scenic beautification, historic preservation, rehabilitation/operation of historic transportation structures, railway corridor preservation, control/removal of outdoor advertising, archeological planning/research and mitigation of highway runoff water pollution.

The Public: Includes citizens, public agencies, advocacy groups and the private sectors that have an interest in or may be affected by MPO activities.

TIP—Transportation Improvement Program: A priority list of transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization that is to be carried out within the four (4) year period following its adoption; must include documentation of federal and state funding sources for each project and be consistent with adopted MPO metropolitan transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans.

TMA—Transportation Management Area: An area designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation given to all urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 (or other area when requested by the Governor and MPO); these areas must comply with special transportation planning requirements regarding congestion management systems, project selection and certification; requirements identified in 23 CFR—450.300-33.6.

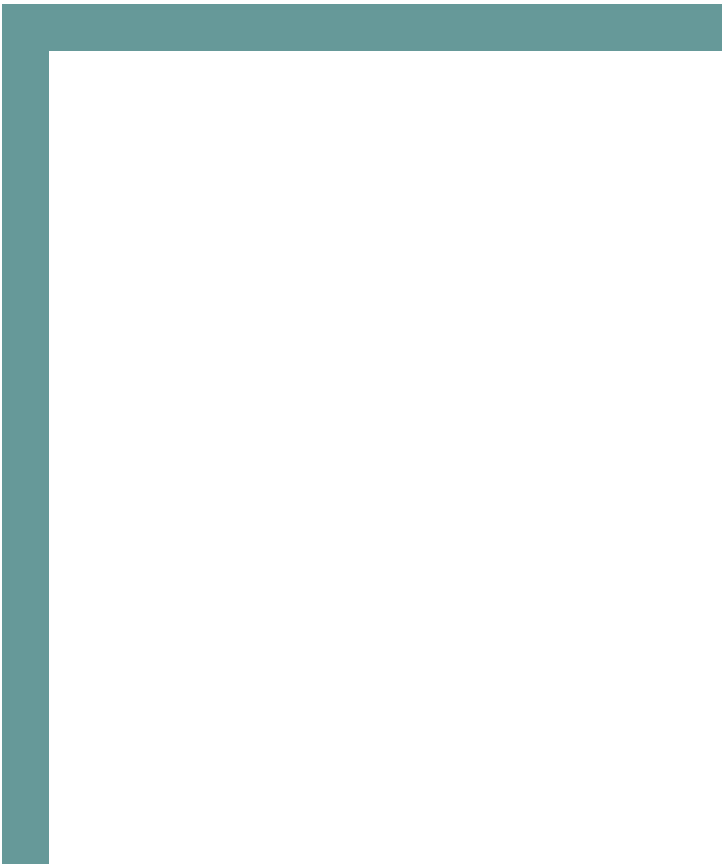
TPC—Transportation Policy Committee: the group responsible for giving a MPO overall transportation policy guidance. The appropriate place for the date and time of the TPC meetings is in the text of the document.

The TPC meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm.

Transportation Enhancements: a program provided to address projects that contribute to the livelihood of communities, the quality of our environment and the aesthetics of our roadways.

TxDOT—Texas Department of Transportation: State agency responsible for transportation issues in Texas.

UPWP—Unified Planning Work Program: a statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within a metropolitan planning area.



Appendix A



Amendments

1. The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) adopted the Public Involvement Policy (PIP) for the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization in January 26, 2006.





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