



2022

Public Participation Plan

Approved On:
September 21, 2022



LAREDO & WEBB COUNTY

AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Table of Contents

- Introduction 1**
- What is a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)? 1
- Who is LWCAMPO 1
 - LWCAMPO TMA* 1
- LWCAMPO's Major Planning Committees 2
 - The MPO Policy Committee (Policy Committee) 2
 - The MPO Technical Review Committee (Technical Committee) 2
 - LWCAMPO Policy Committee* 3
 - LWCAMPO Technical Committee* 4
- MPO Planning Documents 5
 - Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 5
 - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 5
 - Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) 5
- Other Planning Documents 6
 - Congestion Management Plan (CMP) 6
 - Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) 6
- PPP Developmental Process 7**
- Background 7
- Principles of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) 7
 - Purpose of the Public Participation Plan 7
 - Goal & Objective of the Public Participation Plan 7
- Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) 8
 - Qualitative & Quantitative Evaluation 8
- Federal Requirements & Guidelines 9
 - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) 9

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)	10
The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)	10
Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)	10
Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)	10
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	10
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	11
Executive Order 12898: Environmental Justice	11
Executive Order 13166: Limited English Proficiency	11

Revisions to Planning & Program Documents 12

Scheduled Updates of Planning Documents 12

Scheduled Updates & Revisions to the Bylaws 13

 Updates 13

 Revisions to the Bylaws 13

Scheduled Updates & Revisions to the PPP 13

 Updates 13

 Revisions to the PPP 13

Scheduled Updates & Revisions to the MTP & TIP 14

 Updates 14

 Revisions to the MTP & TIP 14

Scheduled Updates & Revisions to the UPWP 15

 Updates 15

 Revisions to the UPWP 15

Updates & Revisions to the CMP 16

 Updates 16

 Revisions to the CMP 16

Table 1.0: Revision Process - Public Review & Comment Period Schedule 17

Communication Process & Public Involvement 18

Communication Process 18

 Notification Database 18

 23 CFR 450.316(a) 19

 23 CFR 450.316(b) 20

 Media Outlets 21

 Public Notice 22

 Request for Information & Record Retention 24

Public Meeting Notice 24

Public Involvement 25

Examples of Public Outreach Activities 26

 Public Meetings 27

 Public Meeting & Public Appearance Regulations 27

 Public Review & Comment 28

Additional Opportunity for Public Review & Comment Period for MTP or TIP 30

Summary 31

Goal & Objectives of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) 32

Glossary of Acronyms I

Appendix A: Social Media Policy I

Appendix B: Maps Relevant to Public Participation IX

Percentage of Population Poverty Status Determined XI

Percentage of Population 65 Years & Over With a Disability XII

Percentage of Adults 18 Years & Older Who Have Limited English Ability XIII

Percentage of Households With No Vehicles Available XIV

Percentage of Households With No Internet Access XV

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)?

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) serve a critical and federally mandated role in the planning and decision-making process of the transportation system. In 1962, Congress passed the Federal Highway Act, which requires that all urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 or more establish MPOs to ensure that federally funded transportation projects and programs are based on a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process (3-C planning process).

The establishment of MPOs provides the regional view that enables transportation projects to be planned and delivered at a scale that is specifically tailored to the region. The regional view enables agencies to form connections across jurisdictional boundaries that facilitate cooperation in priority-setting as well as in the decision-making process for all modes of transportation. Transportation planning requires developing strategies for operating, managing, maintaining and financing the transportation system whilst furthering long-range goals. The MPO's role is to plan and program transportation improvements based on the local priorities and needs, as defined by the region's city and county governments. These local priorities and needs are then integrated into a state's Department of Transportation improvement program and directly impact how the state will build and manage the Interstate Highway System and state roads. That is, how well the transportation system performs, i.e. meets regional goals, affects current and long-range public policy concerns at the local, regional, state, and federal levels.

WHO IS LWCAMPO

The Laredo & Webb County Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (LWCAMPO) is the federally designated MPO to develop and implement the 3-C planning process for the Laredo Urban area. It shall be hereinafter referred to as the "MPO". The Laredo Urban Area, as determined by the 2010 Census, has surpassed 200,000 in population and was designated a Transportation Management Area (TMA) effective July 18, 2012. The TMA is currently designated as an attainment area for the purpose of compliance with the Clean Air Act. The current TMA extends to the city limits of the City of Laredo, the City of Rio Bravo as well as portions of the County of Webb.



The transportation planning process reflects the vision goals and objectives that have been established as desirable “futures for the community”. The MPO’s mission statement is: “to set transportation related policy, identify existing and future local transportation needs in cooperation with TxDOT, and propose and recommend projects for all modes of transportation including mass transit and active transportation, with special attention to freight.”

In order to align said goals and objectives with federal and state policies and guidelines the MPO’s planning committees exercise the following measures:

- ◆ Make comprehensive consideration of various alternative strategies
- ◆ Ensure that the evaluation process encompasses a diverse set of concerns
- ◆ Promote collaborative participation of numerous transportation-related agencies and organizations
- ◆ Foster an open, timely, and meaningful involvement of the public

In addition, the MPO provides a forum for said local government and transportation agencies as well as the general public to ensure the region’s transportation needs are cooperatively met.

LWCAMPO’s MAJOR PLANNING COMMITTEES

LWCAMPO functions under a committee structure that is composed of a policy committee, technical committee, and planning staff to support transportation planning activities. A set of by-laws establishes the structure and representation of the MPO.

THE MPO POLICY COMMITTEE (POLICY COMMITTEE)

The MPO Policy Committee was established pursuant to 23 USC 134 and is designated to implement the metropolitan planning process. The Policy Committee is comprised of those governmental agencies identified in the original designation agreement and those agencies or organizations subsequently added to the membership of the board. As the governing body of the MPO, the Policy Committee shall have decision-making authority over issues such as:

- ◆ The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- ◆ The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- ◆ The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- ◆ The Congestion Management Plan (CMP)

Voting members of the Policy Committee must include representation of local elected officials, officials of agencies that administer or operate major modes or systems of transportation, and appropriate state officials, as per 23 CFR 450.310.

THE MPO TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (TECHNICAL COMMITTEE)

The Technical Committee is the body of the MPO responsible for professional and technical review of work programs, policy recommendations, and transportation planning activities. The Technical Committee shall review issues for accuracy and advise the Policy Committee on recommended actions. The Technical Committee is composed of representatives of the City of Laredo, the County of Webb, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and private sector representatives.

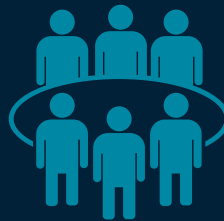


City of Laredo:



- ◆ Mayor (Chairperson)
- ◆ 2 City Councilmembers (Mayoral appointees)

Laredo Mass Transit Board:



- ◆ 1 Laredo Mass Transit Board Member (Appointed by Board's Presiding Officer/Mayor)

County of Webb:



- ◆ County Judge
- ◆ 2 County Commissioners (Webb County Judge Appointees)

State of Texas:



- ◆ TxDOT District Engineer

Member at Large:



- ◆ Member Appointed by the Policy Committee

***EX-Officio*
State of Texas:**



- ◆ State Senator(s)
- ◆ State Representative(s)



City Representatives



- ◆ LWCAMPO Director (Chairperson)
- ◆ Laredo City Planner
- ◆ The Gen. Manager of the City Transit System
- ◆ Laredo Director of Traffic Safety
- ◆ Laredo Airport Manager
- ◆ Laredo City Engineer
- ◆ Laredo Bridge Director

County & Regional Representatives



- ◆ Webb County Planning Director
- ◆ South Texas Development Council
- ◆ Regional Planning Director
- ◆ The Gen. Manager of the Rural Transit System
- ◆ Webb County Engineer

State Representatives



- ◆ TxDOT Planning Rep. (Vice-Chairperson)
- ◆ TxDOT Planning Rep.
- ◆ TxDOT Area Engineer
- ◆ TxDOT TPP Field Rep.

Federal Representative



- ◆ FHWA Planning Rep. (Austin)

Private Sector Representative



- ◆ A Rep. of Kansas City Southern Railroad Co. (KCS)
- ◆ A Rep. of Union Pacific Railroad Co.
- ◆ A Rep. of the Laredo Transportation Assoc.
- ◆ A Transportation Provider (Shall Serve on the Laredo Transportation)

School System Representative



- ◆ A Rep. of the Laredo Independent School District (LISD)
- ◆ A Rep. of the United Independent School District (UISD)
- ◆ A Rep. of Texas A&M International University (TAMIU)
- ◆ A Rep. of Laredo College (LC)

MPO PLANNING DOCUMENTS

In accordance with federal and state mandates, the MPO develops as well as collaborates in the production of planning related documents such as, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Congestion Management Process (CMP), and the Unified Transportation Plan (UTP).

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)

The MTP is an official, comprehensive, intermodal transportation plan developed and adopted for the Laredo-Webb County Metropolitan Area through the transportation planning process. Additionally, the MTP is the long-range, financially constrained transportation plan for the region covering a planning horizon of 25 years.

The MTP identifies the existing and future transportation needs and develops coordinated strategies to provide the necessary transportation facilities essential for the continued mobility and economic vitality of the Laredo-Webb County area. These coordinated transportation strategies include roadway development and operations, truck and rail freight movement, transit operations, bikeways and pedestrian facilities. The development of the MTP is required under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation, Equity Act: A legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) to assure the continuation of federal transportation funds.

As per 40 CFR 81.344, the Laredo & Webb County TMA area is designated as an attainment area and, as such, is subjected to a 5-year benchmark for conducting periodic updates to MTP. Said update period may require the MPO to make revisions to the MTP. These may occur due to changes in project priorities, funding availability, or state and/or federal guidance.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The TIP is a federally required short-range program of transportation projects based on the long-range MTP and covers a period of 4 years. Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) requires that MPOs, in cooperation with the state and affected transit operators, develop a TIP for their respective Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) in conformance with 23 CFR 450.326 and 23 CFR 450.316. These Transportation Programs then become part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The TIP is financially constrained and the transportation projects identified in the TIP must be consistent with the MTP. All projects included in this document are eligible for federal funding provided through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is an annual statement of work identifying planning priorities and activities to be carried out within LWCAMPO's MPA, i.e. Laredo, TX and portions of Webb County. Additionally, the UPWP includes a description of the planning work and coordinated efforts to carry out the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the aforementioned MPA. An MPO is required to perform all planning tasks set forth in federal laws and regulations, i.e. 23 CFR 450.308(c), many of which are conducted annually.

The UPWP is a one-year transportation planning work program which describes in detail transportation planning programs, and activities to be performed in LWCAMPO for FY2022. However, some tasks require more than one year to complete and are carried forward from one UPWP to the next. To effectively identify all work tasks, the Laredo MPO prepares the UPWP with input from federal, state and local jurisdictions, and transportation providers in the region.

OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP)

A Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a systematic and regionally accepted approach for managing congestion. It provides accurate, up-to-date information on transportation system performance and assesses alternative strategies for congestion management that meet state and local needs. As per 23 CFR 450.322, MPOs are required to develop and implement a CMP within their designated TMA.

The CMP is intended to move congestion management strategies into the funding and implementation stages of project development. Congestion management is the application of congestion management and reduction strategies to improve transportation system performance and reliability by reducing the adverse impacts of congestion on the movement of people and goods.

Development of the CMP is a flexible process that allows MPO's to develop and design their own approaches and processes to fit their individual needs. The CMP is an on-going process, continuously progressing and adjusting overtime as goals and objectives change, new information sources become available, and new strategies are identified and evaluated.

UNIFIED TRANSPORTATION PLAN (UTP)

The development of transportation work across the State of Texas is guided by the Unified Transportation Plan (UTP). The UTP is a 10-year plan that selects and funds the state's highest priority transportation projects with the intent to develop or begin construction over the next 10 years. Additionally, the UTP provides information on the available funding projections associated with said projects but does not guarantee that projects will or can be built. The project selection process is a collaborative effort between TxDOT, elected officials, MPOs, and public input. However, the UTP's public participation process is conducted by the state.

Any changes to the UTP may trigger the need for changes to the associated MPO planning documents. MPO's will conduct public participation efforts as prescribed by the planning document in question.

PPP DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

BACKGROUND

The MPO developed the current Public Participation Plan (PPP) in conformance with the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316. On May 15, 2017 the PPP was adopted by the Policy Committee after a required 45-day public review and comment period. The PPP replaced the previous iteration of public engagement, i.e. the Public Involvement Process (PIP), as per the requirements of the FAST Act. This Document serves as an update to the previously adopted version of the PPP.

PRINCIPLES OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)

PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

LWCAMPO believes that when the public is engaged in the planning process, the needs of the community are better addressed and met. The PPP serves as a tool to provide MPO staff with the framework to facilitate communication and consultation between agencies making decisions and the communities affected by them. The result of effective and inclusive public engagement in the transportation planning process offers opportunities for the cooperative development of transportation projects and plans that reflect the needs of the community.

GOAL & OBJECTIVE OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Public involvement is a key component to the transportation and planning process and requires MPO staff to proactively provide community stakeholders with access to information and with timely public notices. It also provides MPO staff the opportunity to explain the potential tradeoffs between desired outcomes and the possible alternatives available within fiscal constraint. Likewise, the MPO is committed to providing community members with fair and accessible opportunities for meaningful public involvement.

Public participation activities in the Laredo-Webb County Area involve stakeholders such as:

- ◆ Elected Officials
- ◆ City, County, & State Departments
- ◆ Environmental & Natural Disaster Planning Organizations
- ◆ Emergency Response Planning Organizations
- ◆ Regional Mobility Authority (RMA)
- ◆ Public & Private Sector Transportation Organizations
- ◆ Freight, Logistics, & Manufacturing Interests
- ◆ Economic Development & Tourism Interests
- ◆ Federal Partners
- ◆ Members of The General Public
- ◆ Business Community
- ◆ International Partners

In order to fulfill the intended goal of the PPP, MPO staff will provide every opportunity for meaningful involvement of citizens in the transportation planning process. This includes implementing measures of effective public involvement to evaluate their degree of effectiveness, as per the aforementioned federal legislation. They include:

- ◆ Providing early & continuing public involvement opportunities throughout the transportation planning & programming process

- ◆ Seeking out & considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income & minority households, as prescribed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- ◆ Providing for the employment of visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIP's.

MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS (MOE)

LWCAMPO is committed to provide effective public outreach strategies that fosters fair and accessible opportunities for meaningful public involvement. The Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) review process will measure the effectiveness of public outreach strategies and update public outreach activities based on a qualitative and quantitative evaluation. This ensures that the public outreach process will effectively meet its public participation goals as well as reflect the most current and effective public outreach methods during the transportation planning process.

QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION

The qualitative evaluation process will allow MPO staff to improve the quality of public engagement activities and, in turn, improve the communication process between MPO staff, members of the community, stakeholders, and all other involved parties in the transportation planning process. This provides MPO staff the opportunity to explain the potential tradeoffs between desired outcomes and the possible alternatives available within fiscal constraint. Likewise, the MPO is committed to providing community members with fair and accessible opportunities for meaningful public involvement.

As part of the MOE process, MPO staff may conduct surveys and polls that focus on evaluating the methodology of the public outreach process. These surveys and polls will obtain qualitative feedback from members of the community, as well as from those in the notification database, at the conclusion of a public involvement activity. Said feedback is a key component in the improvement of future events as well as to aid MPO in evaluating and modifying the meeting process as deemed necessary.

Examples of qualitative measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Soliciting feedback through surveys or polls (online or in person) to measure the perceived level of satisfaction with a particular public input event
- ◆ Satisfaction with the outcome of the process of public involvement activities
- ◆ Satisfaction with sense of fair treatment
- ◆ Gauge participants' level of interest / reason for attending: "Why did you decide to attend?"
- ◆ Method of Notification: "How did you hear about this event?"

The quantitative evaluation process will assist MPO staff in obtaining a holistic measure of the overall impact of public involvement activities via the collection of quantitative information. Any public involvement activity data, such as sign-in/registration form data, that is collected and compiled by MPO staff may be used to measure and evaluate the overall outreach impact of public involvement activities on a case by case basis. This process allows MPO staff to modify and implement changes to the public outreach process or its components, e.g. scheduling process of public involvement activities, as deemed necessary.

Examples of quantitative information includes, but are not limited to, the following:

Public involvement activities

- ◆ Event name, topic, & location (in-person/virtual)
- ◆ Number of attendees

- ◆ Demographic data of attendees (where applicable)
- ◆ Contact data (where applicable)
- ◆ Engagement strategy (ex. presentation, workshop, survey, poll, etc.)
- ◆ Number of public comments received (where applicable)
- ◆ Number of surveys or polls completed
- ◆ Data from media advertisement types utilized
 - ◆ Data from social media engagements (where applicable)
- ◆ Number of public involvement activities
 - ◆ Ex: Meetings, workshops, presentations, etc.

MPO Website interaction database

- ◆ Number of “Contact Us” solicitations
 - ◆ Subject
 - ◆ Contact information
 - ◆ Comment
- ◆ Number of “Add Me” to the Notification Database requests
 - ◆ Subject
 - ◆ Contact information
 - ◆ Comment

Public comments, Polls, & Survey data

- ◆ Topic
- ◆ Contact information (where applicable)
- ◆ Number of responses or comment submissions
- ◆ Comment subjects
 - ◆ Responses to public comments (where applicable)

Participant responses to Polls/Surveys

- ◆ Participant response measures & analysis
 - ◆ Closed-ended question responses (e.g. Nominal, Ordinal, Ratio)
 - ◆ Rank-Order, contingency, & feeling thermometer responses

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

LWCAMPO’s Public Participation Plan (PPP) adheres to federal requirements, guidelines and expectations of public involvement during the development of the transportation planning process. This plan outlines the procedures, tools, techniques, and expectations for public outreach and education on transportation issues as outlined by federal legislation.

INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT (ISTEA)

The 1991 ISTEA emphasized the efficiency of the intermodal transportation system. Its purpose was to develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, provide the foundation for the Nation to compete in the global economy and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (TEA-21)

TEA-21 was signed by the President in 1998 to build on the initiatives established in ISTEA with a particular focus on equity through access, opportunity and fairness.

THE SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS (SAFETEA-LU)

SAFETEA-LU was enacted in 2005 and authorized the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period of 2005-2009.

MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY ACT (MAP-21)

MAP-21 was enacted in 2012 and created a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program. It builds on many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies that were established in 1991.

FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT (FAST ACT)

The FAST Act of 2015 continues the legacy of greater public involvement that began with the passage of ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21, which all emphasized the need for public participation throughout the metropolitan and statewide transportation planning process.

Additionally, the FAST Act requires MPO's to develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for improving involvement in the metropolitan transportation planning process for the following entities:

- ◆ Individuals
- ◆ Affected Public Agencies
- ◆ Representatives of Public Transportation Employees
- ◆ Public Ports
- ◆ Providers of Freight Transportation Services
- ◆ Private Providers of Transportation (Including Intercity Bus Operators)
- ◆ Representatives of Users of Public Transportation
- ◆ Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways & Bicycle Transportation Facilities
- ◆ Representatives of The Disabled
- ◆ Employer-based Commuting Programs (Such as Carpool Program, Vanpool Program, Parking Cash-out Program, Shuttle Program, or Telework Program)
- ◆ Freight Shippers

Likewise, under federal regulation 81 FR 93473, the Fast Act also includes other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process within the scope of aforementioned public participation process.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The 1990 American with disability Act (ADA) requires that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity.” All participation activities and information pertaining to such activities must be accessible to persons with disabilities. For more information visit https://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

States that “no person shall on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal funds. The entire institution, whether educational, private or governmental must comply with Title VI and related Federal civil rights laws, not just the program or activity receiving federal funds.

The MPO will also adhere to the executive orders regarding environmental justice and providing outreach to persons with limited English proficiency, as regulated under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 12898: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Federal Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Executive Order 12898) of 1994- requires MPO to appropriately identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. This includes ensuring that underserved groups, such as low-income and minority populations, are identified and given increased opportunities for effective participation in the MPO’s decision-making process.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (Executive Order 13166) of 2000- requires MPOs to provide persons with limited English proficiency accessibility to the same programs and activities as those normally provided in English.

Examples of the tools and techniques utilized by the MPO, to meet the aforementioned expectations as outlined by federal legislation, can be found in **Appendix B**.

REVISIONS TO PLANNING & PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

As previously described, all primary planning documents are designated as “living” documents and, as such, are required to be updated periodically as well as undergo revisions as deemed necessary. Revisions are implemented via a program adoption, amendments or administrative modifications as per 23 CFR 450.104 and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) - Title 43 Part 1 Chapter 16. Additionally, LWCAMPO’s Bylaws are also subject to revisions that require a public comment period prior to approval by the Policy Committee.

Revisions are defined as a change that occurs between the periodic update schedules of the MTP, TIP, UPWP, CMP, or PPP.

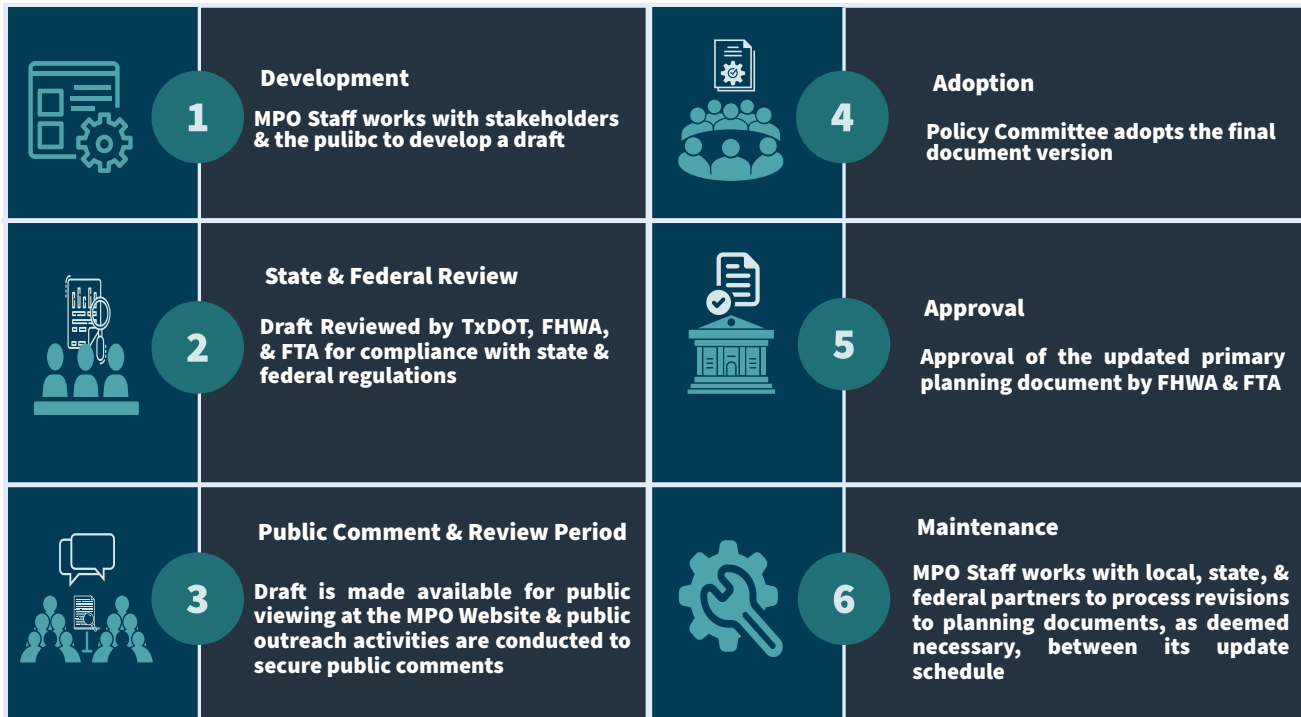
- ◆ **Amendments** are defined as *substantive*, i.e. *major, revisions* that require a public comment period prior to approval by the Policy Committee
- ◆ Amending process varies between planning documents, e.g. MTP, TIP, UPWP, & CMP
- ◆ Changes to projects included for illustrative purposes do not require amendments, e.g. wishlist projects
- ◆ **Administrative modifications** are defined as *non-substantive*, i.e. *minor, revisions* that do not require a public comment period nor require approval by the Policy Committee
- ◆ MPO staff will brief the Policy & Technical Committees at their respective meetings
- ◆ Minor revisions do not require an agenda action item at public meetings

The Update and Revision process is summarized below:

Scheduled Updates of Planning Documents

Primary Planning documents are required to be updated as well as undergo revisions, as deemed necessary, between update periods

Update Process:



SCHEDULED UPDATES & REVISIONS TO THE BYLAWS

UPDATES

MPO Bylaws may be updated as deemed necessary as per state & federal guidelines.

REVISIONS TO THE BYLAWS

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the LWCAMPO Bylaws are performed as deemed necessary and require a 10-day public comment period prior to approval from the Policy Committee.

Substantive, i.e. major changes, to the Bylaws include:

- ◆ Modifications to the format, language, grammar, or other changes that would alter the context, procedures, or intent of the approved version of the Bylaws

ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS

Minor changes to the LWCAMPO Bylaws are performed as deemed necessary and do not require a formal public comment period nor approval from the Policy Committee.

Administrative modifications to the MPO Bylaws include:

- ◆ Minor corrections to the format, language, grammar, or other changes that would not alter the context, procedures, or intent of the approved version of the Bylaws

SCHEDULED UPDATES & REVISIONS TO THE PPP

UPDATES

All planning documents, including the PPP, are designed to be “living” documents in order to adapt primary planning document policies to the changes in federal and state laws and guidelines. The PPP shall be updated and re-approved every 5 years. Additionally, MPO staff may conduct an annual MOE on the methodology of the public outreach process. This includes conducting a public survey as well as conducting a notification database member survey that will focus on obtaining input on public outreach methodology and activities conducted throughout the year and make amendments as deemed necessary.

The MOE review process will measure the effectiveness of public outreach strategies and update public outreach activities based on a qualitative and quantitative evaluation. This ensures that the PPP will effectively meet its public participation goals as well as reflect the most current and effective public outreach methods during its lifecycle.

Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable. A scheduled update of the PPP requires a 45-day public review period prior to its adoption by the Policy Committee, as per federal guidelines.

REVISIONS TO THE PPP

AMENDMENTS

The PPP may be amended as deemed necessary between the scheduled update time period. Major changes to the PPP require a formal public review and comment period of no less than 45 days prior to approval by the Policy Committee. Substantive changes include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Removal of a public involvement activity that would significantly reduce the opportunity for public review & comment

ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS

Minor changes to the PPP are performed as necessary between the scheduled update time period and do not require a public review and comment period nor approval by the Policy Committee. MPO staff may brief the Policy and Technical Committees on administrative modifications to the PPP at their respective meetings. Administrative modifications include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Minor corrections to the format, language, grammar, or other changes that would not alter the context, procedures, or intent of the approved version of the PPP.
- ◆ Refine outreach activities or strategies as determined by MOE review

SCHEDULED UPDATES & REVISIONS TO THE MTP & TIP

UPDATES

As per 40 CFR 81.344, the Laredo & Webb County TMA area is designated as an attainment area and, as such, is required to conduct periodic updates to the MTP every 5 years. In addition, MPO staff will develop a call for projects procedure in conjunction with the MTP's update process.

The TIP is designed and developed to conform to the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316(a) as well as the planning factors identified in the FAST Act. The TIP is updated every 2 years and covers a 4-year period.

The adoption process for both documents requires a public review and comment period prior to final action by the Policy Committee. The MTP and TIP shall both undergo a public review and comment period of no less than 20 days during their respective scheduled update. In addition, both the MTP and TIP shall respectively include at least one map designating the conceptual limits of project locations.

Presentations on the proposed MTP draft shall be made to the Technical and Policy Committee prior to its adoption. The MPO will explore best practice measures to disseminate the MTP draft to members of the notification database. In an effort to provide additional opportunities for input, the MPO may arrange presentations of the MTP draft to local governing bodies, such as the City of Laredo and Webb County.

REVISIONS TO THE MTP & TIP

AMENDMENTS

The MTP and TIP may be amended as deemed necessary between their respective scheduled update time period. A major change will require a formal public review and comment period prior to final approval by the Policy Committee. The MTP and TIP shall both undergo a public review and comment period of no less than 10 days during their respective amendment process.

Substantive, i.e. major, changes to the TIP or MTP refer to amendments applied to reflect changes to federal & state laws as well as modifications to a project's scope that would require re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, where applicable. This excludes changes to projects listed for illustrative purposes, i.e. wish list projects.

As per federal and state regulations, 23 CFR 450.324, 23 CFR 450.326 and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 16 Part 1 Subchapter B § 16.51, 16.52, and 16.53 and Subchapter C § 16.101(k)(1) & (C)(ii), modifications to project details, listed under the TIP or MTP, that will trigger an amendment process include:

- ◆ Addition, deletion, or substitution of projects
- ◆ Major change in project cost, overall project/project phase initiation dates
- ◆ Major change of project's design concept or design scope
 - ◆ Amendment required if change is greater than 50% of approved cost estimate and revised cost estimate is greater than \$1,500,000

- ◆ Changing project termini
- ◆ Change in the number of through traffic lanes
- ◆ Change in the number of stations of fixed guideway transit projects

ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS

Minor changes to either the MTP or TIP are performed as necessary between their respective scheduled update time periods. Non-substantive, i.e. minor, changes do not require a public review and comment period nor approval by the Policy Committee. MPO staff may brief the Policy and Technical Committees on administrative modifications, applied to either the MTP or TIP, at their respective meetings.

As per federal and state regulations, 23 CFR 450.324, 23 CFR 450.326 and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 16 Part 1 Subchapter B § 16.51, 16.52, and 16.53 and Subchapter C § 16.101(k)(1) & (C)(ii), administrative modifications include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Minor corrections to the format, language, grammar, or other changes that would not alter the context, procedures, or intent of the approved version of the MTP or TIP
- ◆ Minor changes to overall project/project phase costs
 - ◆ MTP & TIP: Change in the estimated cost is not greater than 50% of approved cost and revised cost is less than \$1,500,000 &;
 - ◆ Change in the cost estimate is not caused by a change in project work scope or limits
 - ◆ Minor changes to funding sources or previously included projects
 - ◆ Minor changes to overall project/project phase initiation dates

SCHEDULED UPDATES & REVISIONS TO THE UPWP

UPDATES

Scheduled updates to the UPWP occur on an annual basis and require a public review comment period prior to final approval by the Policy Committee. The time frame of the public review and comment period for an update shall be no less than 20 days.

REVISIONS TO THE UPWP

AMENDMENTS

The UPWP may be amended as deemed necessary between its scheduled update time period. A major change will not require a formal public review and comment period but will require approval by the Policy Committee.

As per 23 CFR Part 420 and Chapter 16 Subchapter B § 16.52 (b)(6) & (7), modifications to tasks or overall budget that will trigger an amendment process include:

- ◆ Adding new work tasks or changing the scope of existing work tasks
- ◆ Deleting a work task
- ◆ If the costs incurred by the MPO, on individual work tasks, exceed 25% of that task's budget
 - ◆ Costs incurred by the MPO shall not exceed the total budgeted amount of the UPWP without approval of the MPO Policy Committee & TxDOT

ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS

Non-substantive, i.e. minor changes to the UPWP are performed as necessary. Additionally, minor changes do not require a public review and comment period nor approval by the Policy Committee. MPO staff may brief the Policy and Technical Committees on administrative modifications, applied to the UPWP, at their respective meetings.

Administrative modifications to tasks or overall budget that will not trigger an amendment process include:

- ◆ Minor corrections to the format, language, grammar, or other changes that would not alter the context, procedures, or intent of the approved version
- ◆ Refining the scope of a task

UPDATES & REVISIONS TO THE CMP

UPDATES

The CMP is an on-going process, continuously progressing and adjusting overtime as goals and objectives change, new information sources become available, and new strategies are identified and evaluated. MPO staff shall continuously evaluate and perform periodic updates to ensure that proper and effective analysis tools are being utilized to evaluate the anticipated performance and expected benefits of future strategies.

As per 40 CFR 81.344, the Laredo & Webb County TMA area is designated as an attainment area and, as such, is subjected to a 5 year benchmark for conducting periodic updates to the CMP as a part of the MTP update process. The public comment period shall be no less than 20 days.

REVISIONS TO THE CMP

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the CMP are applied to reflect changes to the network or CMP strategies. Substantive, i.e. major changes, require a 10 day formal public review and comment and period prior to approval by the Policy Committee.

Major changes to the CMP that will trigger the amendment process are as follows:

- ◆ Deleting a CMP activity
- ◆ Changing the scope of existing CMP strategies

ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS

Non-substantive, i.e. minor, changes to the CMP are performed as necessary. Additionally, minor changes do not require a public review and comment period nor approval by the Policy Committee. MPO staff may brief the Policy and Technical Committees on administrative modifications, applied to the CMP, at their respective meetings.

Minor changes to the CMP include:

- ◆ Minor corrections to the format, language, grammar, or other changes that would not alter the context, procedures, or intent of the approved version
- ◆ Refining the scope of a CMP activity
 - ◆ E.g.: Minor corrections to the format, language, grammar, or other changes that would not alter the context or intent of the original scope
 - ◆ Providing additional details for clarity without altering the context or intent of the original scope

Table 1.0 Summarizes the Revision Process - Public Review & Comment Period Schedule:

TABLE 1.0: REVISION PROCESS - PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT PERIOD SCHEDULE

	Type of Revision	Frequency	Comment Period
Bylaws	Amendment	As Necessary	10 days
	Update	Every 5 years ¹	45 days
PPP	Amendment	As Necessary	45 days
	Update	Every 5 years	20 days
MTP	Amendment	As Necessary	10 days
	Update	Every 2 years	20 days
TIP	Amendment	As Necessary	10 days
	Update	Annually	20 days
UPWP	Amendment	As Necessary	N/A
	Update	Continuous ²	20 days
CMP	Amendment	As Necessary	10 days

¹ Note: The Current version of the PPP is has an update schedule of 3-5 years whereas the 2022 PPP will be updated every 5 years but will be evaluated & updated regularly between update periods

² Note: CMP data (e.g. vehicular crash data) is updated continuously & compiled annually to evaluate the anticipated performance & expected benefits of future strategies that will help build upon the current/upcoming TIP & MTP

COMMUNICATION PROCESS & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The effectiveness of public involvement and outreach strategies requires the implementation of an efficient communication process between MPO staff, members of the community, stakeholders, and all other involved parties in the transportation planning process. Maintaining a consistent degree of effectiveness in the dynamics of public involvement and communication processes requires MPO staff to maximize public involvement by increasing public awareness.

This consists of disseminating information through several means, such as:

- ◆ Notification Database
- ◆ Media Outlets
- ◆ Request For Information & Record Retention

Likewise, public review and comment periods as well as the feedback obtained from other public outreach activities, e.g. surveys and polls, are essential to aligning transportation planning to meet the community's needs. LWCAMPO may provide public participation opportunities that include, but not limited to, the following formats:

- ◆ Public Meetings
- ◆ Public Appearances
- ◆ Public Workshops
- ◆ Public Review & Comment Period(s)
- ◆ Project Solicitation
- ◆ LWCAMPO Website
- ◆ Social Media Platforms

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

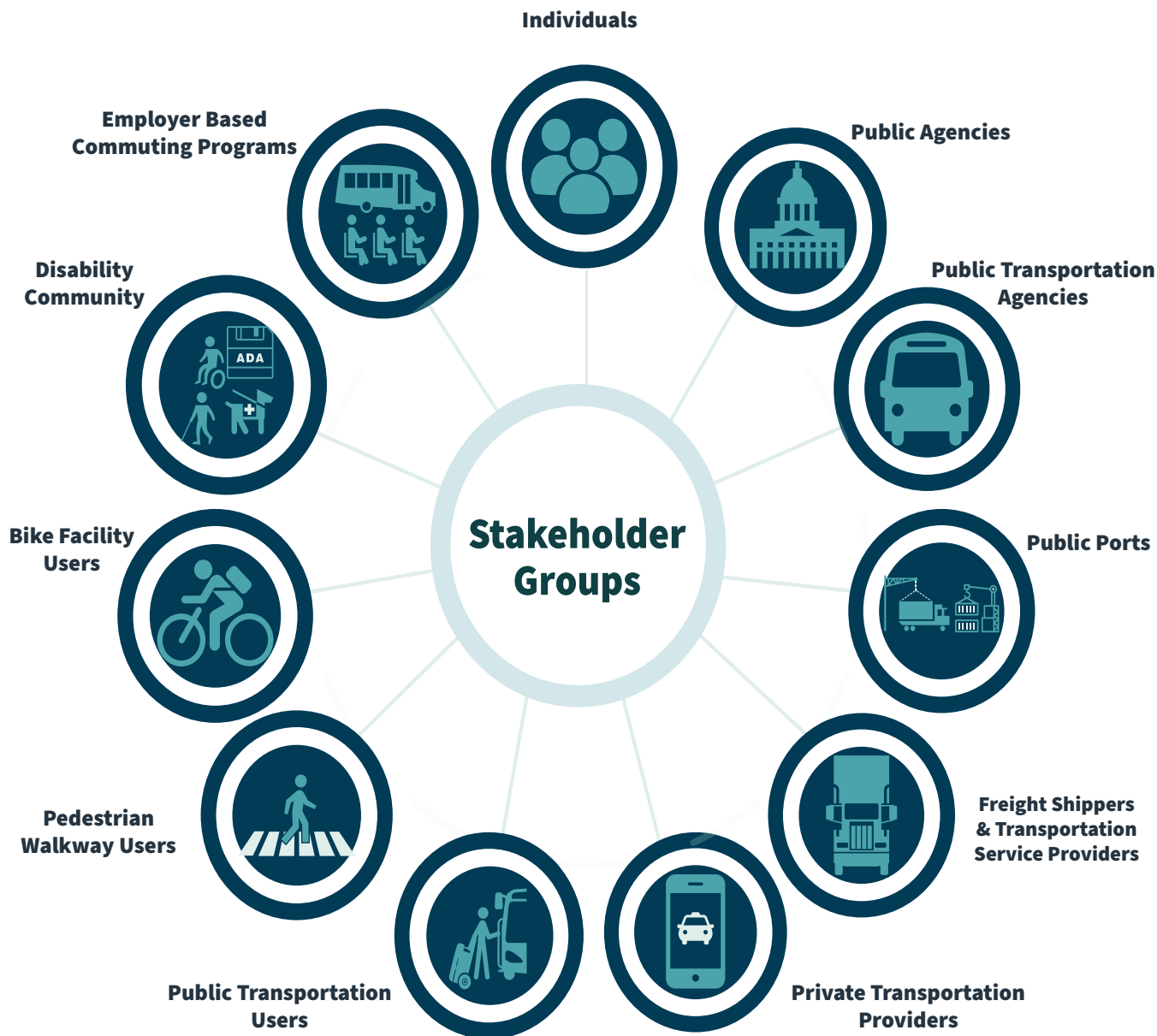
NOTIFICATION DATABASE

All members of the notification database will be advised on periodic updates to planning documents, policies, and programs, public meetings, public appearances, announcement of public review and comment periods, and other information as deemed necessary. The LWCAMPO website will provide the contact information for interested parties to request to join, request for removal or request for updating of member information.

The MPO shall maintain a database of those interested in receiving notifications of public meetings and/or public appearances as per 23 CFR 450.316(a) and 23 CFR 450.316(b).

23 CFR 450.316(a) includes:

- ◆ Individuals
- ◆ Affected Public Agencies
- ◆ Representatives of Public Transportation Employees
- ◆ Public Ports
- ◆ Providers of Freight Transportation Services
- ◆ Private Providers of Transportation (Including Intercity Bus Operators)
- ◆ Representatives of Users Of Public Transportation
- ◆ Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways & Bicycle Transportation Facilities
- ◆ Representatives of The Disabled
- ◆ Employer-based Commuting Programs (Such as Carpool Program, Vanpool Program, Parking Cash-out Program, Shuttle Program, or Telework Program)
- ◆ Freight Shippers



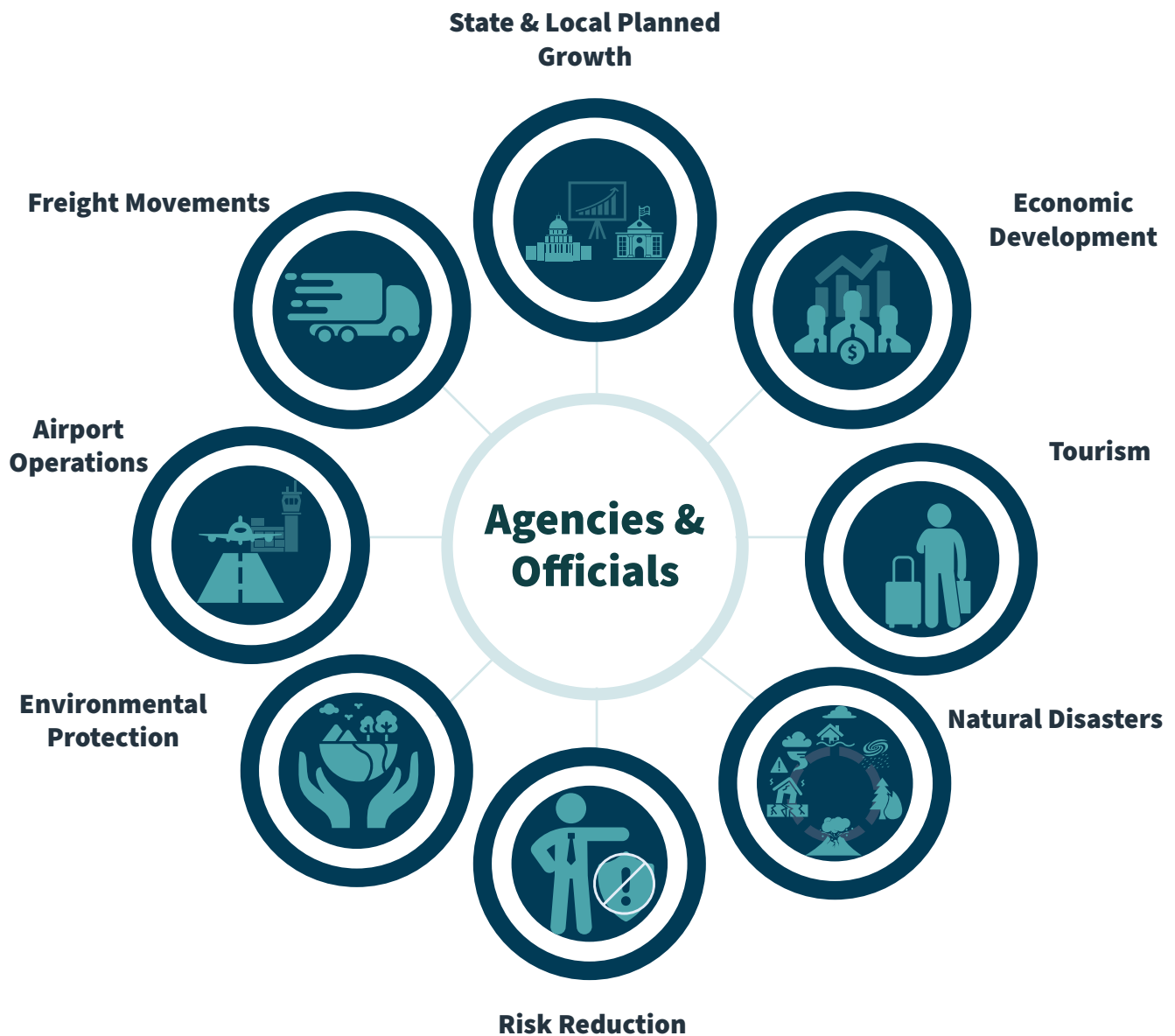
23 CFR 450.316(a)

Note: Other interested parties will also be provided with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

23 CFR 450.316(b) refers to agencies and officials that the MPO shall consult during the development of MTPs and TIPs. Including those are affected by transportation in the following capacities:

- ◆ State & Local Planned Growth
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Tourism
- ◆ Natural Disasters
- ◆ Risk Reduction
- ◆ Environmental Protection
- ◆ Airport Operations
- ◆ Freight Movements

In addition, the aforementioned agencies and officials include those involved in coordinating the planning process of transportation (to the maximum extent practicable) with the previously mentioned planning activities.



23 CFR 450.316(b)

MEDIA OUTLETS

MPO staff may disseminate public notices via media outlets that include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Print Media
- ◆ Internet
- ◆ Social Media
- ◆ Email
- ◆ Print Media

PRINT MEDIA

Note: Print media may include, but is not limited to, printed materials for public distribution, e.g. flyers & handouts, as well as the publication of a public notice to the newspaper with the highest general circulation in the Laredo and Webb County area.

INTERNET

The Internet refers to the MPO website and other web-based technologies such as various forms of social media platforms. Together with traditional media outlets, the Internet facilitates the interaction between government agencies, stakeholders, and the general public. LWCAMPO's communication process will incorporate and rely on the aforementioned web-based technologies in an effort to capitalize on the expanded participation and interactive opportunities made available by mobile digital devices.

The LWCAMPO website (<http://www.laredompo.org>) shall be routinely maintained by MPO staff. The MPO website will serve as an archive for all information related to public participation as well as the reference point for members of the public to learn more about the transportation planning process.

The MPO website content consists of, but not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Calendar of events
- ◆ MOU's & Updated Performance Targets
- ◆ Current & archived meeting information
 - ◆ Agendas, Minutes, & Packets
- ◆ Public involvement & outreach outlets
 - ◆ Informational/Interactive Maps
 - ◆ MPO general contact information
 - ◆ Public notices
 - ◆ Public comment form
 - ◆ Public polls & surveys
 - ◆ Request for public notification
 - ◆ Provide contact information for removal or updating of member's information
 - ◆ Hyperlinks to the host website at which the Policy Committee Meeting Live Stream options are located
 - ◆ Hyperlinks to the host website at which the previous public meetings are located
- ◆ Title VI
 - ◆ Title VI Documents & Forms
 - ◆ Provided in English & Spanish
 - ◆ Complaint Process
 - ◆ Resources

- ◆ Environmental Justice Resources
 - ◆ Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP)
- ◆ Current & past versions of major planning documents & studies
 - ◆ Current & past agendas & other related documents

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media accounts will be frequently maintained by MPO staff in order to disseminate information to the public. LWCAMPO's social media presence is intended to provide online updates to the general public and direct them to our website for more information on transportation planning or to download planning and other related documents. Social media will also be used as a public outreach and engagement tool.

Information received by social media users in the form of comments, i.e. direct messages, or any other methods, will not constitute official public comments. The MPO shall adhere to the guidelines and provisions stipulated in the City of Laredo Social Media Policy. A copy of the policy can be found in Appendix A.1

EMAIL

Communication via Email is a vital component of the MPO's communication process. MPO staff may utilize Email to expand outreach capabilities beyond the limit of the more traditional methods of communication, e.g. telephone, physical mail, & telefax, in the following manner:

- ◆ Facilitate the flow of information between members of the notification database
- ◆ Facilitates ability to conduct best practice measures for expansion & maintenance of the notification database such as:
 - ◆ Processing of Public Notification Request Forms
 - ◆ Processing requests for removal from notification database
 - ◆ Processing of requests for updating contact information of members of the notification database.
 - ◆ Removal process of Email addresses that are no longer in service

PUBLIC NOTICE

The communication process for public involvement and outreach varies per planning document. MPO staff will oversee the implementation of the notice requirements in the form and manner prescribed by the Texas Open Meetings Act §551.041 as well as in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, e.g. Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEPP).

The purpose for providing public notice is to facilitate timely and reasonable access to documents relevant to transportation planning and to provide adequate time for public review and comment during key decision points, such as scheduled updates or amendments to planning documents. Public notices shall be continuously posted to the MPO website to include the latest renditions of meeting agendas and minutes, as well information related to new and ongoing planning activities or other public involvement activities, as deemed necessary.

Information relayed via public notices includes, but is not limited to:

- ◆ Notice of availability of planning related documents for public viewing
- ◆ Notice of upcoming public meetings, i.e. may consist of meeting agenda
- ◆ Notice of upcoming public review & comment period(s), in reference to:
 - ◆ Proposed changes to MPO policies, procedures, plans, or programs;
 - ◆ All other related/supporting documents as deemed necessary

TIMEFRAME FOR PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

As per the Texas Open Meeting Act, the public notice dissemination time frame is 72 hours in advance of a public meeting.

The 72-hour in advance public notice timeframe refers to, but is not limited to, the following:

Posting of Public Meeting Agenda:

- ◆ The Policy Committee Meeting agenda constitutes as the public notice & shall be posted at a location that is accessible to the public
- ◆ MPO staff will oversee that the Policy Committee Meeting agenda is physically posted at the Laredo City Hall, within the aforementioned time frame, as per Texas Open Meetings Act §551.043(a)
- ◆ Meetings held by MPO staff for the purpose of securing public comment shall have a public notice posted in the aforementioned manner
- ◆ Webb County, TxDOT, & El Metro are provided with the Policy Committee meeting agenda so that it can be posted & disseminated, at their convenience & within the aforementioned timeframe

Newspaper Publication of Public Notices:

- ◆ Public Meeting Notices shall be published in local newspapers of general circulation in Laredo, Texas & the Webb County area in advance of a scheduled public meeting in which Policy Committee action is required
- ◆ The public notice consists of providing the meeting agenda action item(s), for consideration by the Policy Committee, in summary in both English & Spanish
- ◆ The notice will reference the MPO website as the location of technical information, planning documents, and other related materials that are available for public viewing

Public Notices Communicated via the Internet:

- ◆ Notification of public meetings shall be continuously posted to the MPO website as required by the Texas Open Meetings Act §551.043(b)
- ◆ This public notice consists of providing the action item(s), for consideration by the Policy Committee, in summary in both English & Spanish
- ◆ Other web-based technologies, such as various forms of social media platforms, may be utilized to mirror public notices posted at the MPO website
- ◆ All notices will provide a hyperlink to the MPO website

Public Notices Communicated via Email:

- ◆ An Email notice is sent to members of the notification database in advance of a scheduled public meeting
- ◆ The notice may also include information such as the point of contact or hyperlinks to the MPO website location at which technical information, planning documents, & other related materials that are available for public viewing

The following summarizes the public notice process for public meetings:

Public Meeting Notice

Public Meeting Notice

Notice Requirement: 72 Hours in Advance



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION & RECORD RETENTION

Requests for public records or information shall be conducted as prescribed by the Open Records Act of Texas, as amended. The MPO shall retain public records in accordance with the Texas Open Meeting Act, the Public Information Act, and the Texas State Library & Archives Commission (TSLAC).

All official meeting materials shall be retained by the MPO for a minimum of 3 years or longer if required by TSLAC. Official meeting materials include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ◆ Meeting Notices
- ◆ Newspaper Publications
- ◆ Meeting Minutes
- ◆ Sign-in Sheets
- ◆ Audio/Video Recordings
- ◆ Documents Proposed for Adoption or Revision
- ◆ Public Comments

Note: The City of Laredo is the fiscal agent of the MPO, and as such, is the custodian of any request for public records. Members of the public may complete their request for public records at the City Attorney's Office- Laredo Open Records Center webpage at one of the following links:

For instructions on completing a request online:

[Laredo Open Records Center](#)

For instructions on completing a requests in writing:

[Laredo Open Records Center-FAQs](#)

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement process includes the methods, strategies, and techniques implemented via public outreach activities. Public involvement is an on-going and continuously progressing process that is adjusted based on the requirements of individual transportation planning programs as well as by the type of event. MPO staff is committed to developing the necessary tools to inform, engage, and foster an effective communication process via public outreach activities. Examples of public outreach activities are as follows:

- ◆ Public Meetings
- ◆ Public Appearances
 - ◆ Presentations, workshops, or other public involvement activities conducted by MPO staff, transportation stakeholders, or special interest groups
- ◆ Public input
 - ◆ Surveys
 - ◆ Polls
 - ◆ Securing public comments in regard to final drafts of planning documents and/ or studies developed by the MPO
- ◆ Virtual Public Involvement Tools (VPI) / Visualization Techniques
 - ◆ Mobile Apps (e.g. El Metro App)
 - ◆ Online Mapping Tools
 - ◆ Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps
 - ◆ Crowdsourcing (i.e. via interactive GIS maps)
 - ◆ Project Visualizations
 - ◆ Use of software programs to produce infographics for MPO website and/or exhibits (e.g. GIS StoryMaps)
 - ◆ Online Public Meetings
 - ◆ Sharing hyperlinks to live or recorded MPO public meetings or other public appearance events on MPO website
 - ◆ All-In-One Platforms (e.g. project specific landing pages on MPO website)
 - ◆ Digital Tools to Enhance In-Person Events (e.g. using screen sharing software at public meetings)

VPI tools will enable LWCAMPO to expand its reach as it will allow people to interact with information, related to the transportation planning process, at a time and/or place of their choice. For instance, in the event, and under certain circumstances, that in-person public meetings or public appearances are not able to be conducted, the MPO will hold virtual meetings as authorized by state & federal regulations, such as the virtual meetings held in response to the Pandemic.

The following infographic provides further examples of Public Outreach Activities:

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES



Advertisements

May involve paid newspaper ad space as well as posting to social media & MPO webpage to ensure that information receives adequate geographic coverage



Advisory Committee

The ATC Advisory Committee makes recommendations on improving & promoting active modes of transportation to the Technical & Policy Committees



Contact Database Notifications

Allows members to receive periodic updates on MPO transportation planning related activities



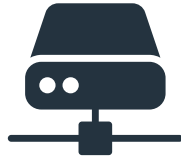
Exhibit Tables

Information tables to showcase transportation projects & related activities as well as promote public participation activities to the community



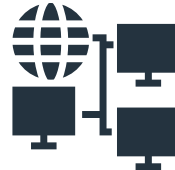
Focus Groups

Small group meetings that address specific transportation planning issues



Information Database

Allows important information, from various sources, to be inputted, sorted, & easily retrieved (e.g. participants, stakeholders, & state & federal agencies)



MPO Website Maintenance

Facilitates immediate electronic access to information such as calendars, agendas, primary planning documents, interactive maps, links, etc.



Newsletter

Periodic e-news letter that provides summaries of MPO plans, studies, public outreach event calendar & other related activities



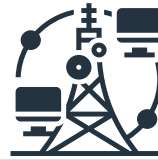
Presentations

Focused on addressing the issues that concern or directly affect those in attendance



Public Appearances

Facilitates discussions, collaboration with other departments / agencies, & securing feedback from the public (e.g. planning nights)



Public Broadcasts & Video Streaming

Extends coverage of public meetings to those unable to attend in person via public access broadcast &/or streaming over the internet



Public Meetings

Provides a forum to ensure the region's transportation needs are cooperatively met (e.g. policy committee meetings)



Public Surveys & Polls

May be conducted in person, mailed, or made available online to secure feedback on public outreach events or other related activities



Public Workshops

Interactive meetings between transportation stakeholders, MPO staff, & the public to increase awareness as well as securing meaningful feedback from the community



Social Media Platforms

Extends public outreach opportunities & refers, those who wish to get involved in the transportation planning process, to the MPO website



Visualization Techniques

Interactive visioning tools used to help the public better understand the relationship between transportation planning, land use, & / or other specific transportation planning activity details

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings provide the MPO with opportunities to collaborate and coordinate with various transportation stakeholders in the development of policies, plans, and programs as well as make significant changes, to the aforementioned categories, as deemed necessary.

In addition, public events allow MPO staff and transportation stakeholders to host workshops to address transportation planning related topics to other transportation stakeholders, such as government agencies, special interest groups, and community members.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As the governing body of the MPO, the Policy Committee holds public meetings to conduct business for LWCAMPO, e.g. make final decisions on MPO policies, plans, and programs. In contrast, the Technical Committee holds meetings to provide technical advice and information to the Policy Committee. Additionally, the Active Transportation Committee is a subcommittee of the MPO that holds meetings to provide ongoing recommendations, information, and feedback on MPO active transportation related activities, e.g. improving and promoting active modes of mobility, to the Policy Committee.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Public Appearances will be held to provide information pertaining transportation planning-related issues as well as to secure public input during the development process of individual transportation programs, plans, or policies. MPO staff may schedule appearances at special interest group meetings, e.g. neighborhood organizations, to gather input from residents. Such meetings provide an additional avenue through which the MPO seeks out and considers the needs of those traditionally underserved segments of the population, including low-income and minority households.

The MPO is committed to make every effort to comply with requests from special interest groups to present or discuss information related to specific issues within the transportation planning process. Special interest groups that wish to present at these events should contact the MPO, with ample time, to coordinate proper arrangements. Presentations made by transportation stakeholders, special interest groups, or MPO staff shall be focused on the interest and concerns of the audience. All significant comments received will be recorded and presented to the Policy Committee.

PUBLIC MEETING & PUBLIC APPEARANCE REGULATIONS

All public meetings and public appearances shall be conducted in compliance with federal and state regulations set by the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the Texas Open Meeting Act. Likewise, LWCAMPO will comply with requests for public records or information as well as the record retention of public records as prescribed by the Open Records of Texas, the Texas Open Meeting Act, the Public Information Act, and the Texas State Library & Archives Commission (TSLAC).

The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) ensures equal opportunity for people with disabilities in areas such as: employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. LWCAMPO shall facilitate participation by people with disabilities via the following guidelines:

- ◆ MPO staff shall make every effort to accommodate requests from persons with disabilities.
- ◆ Groups or people with special needs should notify the MPO in advance of a public meeting or public appearance
- ◆ All public meeting & public appearance notifications will provide the MPO's contact information to facilitate special requests for accommodations

- ◆ MPO staff will arrange reasonable accommodations to meet their needs.

LWCAMPO shall facilitate participation of traditionally underserved groups including low-income, minority, and limited English proficiency as prescribed by Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This includes addressing Title VI issues via individual plans for Environmental Justice and for Limited English Proficiency. The LEP was developed to help the MPO identify reasonable procedures for providing language assistance to populations who are self-described in the Census Category of “Speaks English less than very well”. MPO staff will ensure that every effort will be made to accommodate the aforementioned traditionally underserved groups via the following guidelines:

- ◆ Public meetings & public appearances will be held at accessible locations & within reasonable distance to public transit routes
- ◆ All public meeting & public appearance notifications will provide the MPO’s contact information to facilitate special requests for language interpretation assistance
- ◆ Notices will be made available in both English & Spanish
- ◆ MPO staff will arrange reasonable accommodations to meet their needs

The Texas Open Meeting Act requires all state and local government entities to conduct open meetings and make all information pertaining to government conduct and actions accessible to the public. Additionally, the public will be given the opportunity to participate at every public meeting or public appearance event conducted by the MPO via the following guidelines:

- ◆ MPO staff shall audio & video record public meetings held by the MPO Policy Committee
- ◆ All Policy Committee meetings are scheduled in a manner that makes them accessible to the community as well as made available over public access broadcast & video streamed on the web
- ◆ MPO Policy Committee Meeting Agenda(s) shall be posted at City Hall & continuously posted to the MPO website
- ◆ Minutes of public meetings shall be prepared by MPO staff and will constitute the official record of the proceedings for Policy Committee meetings
- ◆ MPO staff shall prepare a meeting packet that includes the meeting agenda, action items for consideration by the Policy Committee, status reports on specific projects, in relation to transportation planning, & the MPO Director’s Report
 - ◆ Action items may include the minutes of the previous Policy Committee Meeting
 - ◆ Members of the Policy Committee will receive the meeting packet prior to a scheduled meeting of the Policy Committee
- ◆ Persons attending the MPO Policy Committee meeting will be asked to register on a sign in sheet
- ◆ In the event, and under certain circumstances, that in-person MPO Policy Committee meetings are not able to be conducted, the MPO will hold virtual meetings as authorized by state & federal regulations, such as the virtual meetings held in response to the Pandemic.
 - ◆ Virtual meetings will be made available over public broadcast and video streamed on the web

PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT

The adoption, scheduled update, or amendment process of certain documents may require a 10, 20, or 45-day public review and comment period prior to final action by the Policy Committee. Once the public review and comment period is initiated, MPO staff shall inform the public via a public notice as well as continuously post said notice to the MPO website. The public may contact the MPO office with any questions or concerns related to the aforementioned processes during normal business hours or send their questions and/or concerns via the MPO website.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

MPO staff shall present a summary of oral or written public comments received, as well as the responses to said comments, to the Policy Committee prior to final action on the respective plan, program, policy, or procedure, i.e. PPP, MTP, TIP, CMP. In addition, the final version of the MTP and TIP will include a summary of significant comments, and their respective responses, in the document upon which the comments were made.

Significant comments received during the public participation process of the MTP or TIP will be summarized, analyzed, and included within the applicable document, and presented for final approval by the Policy Committee.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSES TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

In the case the final version of the MTP or TIP differs significantly from the one made available for public review and comment, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made available. This process is summarized as follows:

- ◆ If the final version of the MTP or TIP differs from the version made available in previous public review & comment period:
 - ◆ An additional 10-day public review & comment opportunity shall be made available
- ◆ If the additional public review & comment period requires that significant changes be made to the MTP or TIP:
 - ◆ A second additional 10-day public review & comment opportunity shall be made available prior to the adoption of the final version, of the MTP or TIP, by the Policy Committee
- ◆ Significant comments received during any additional public review & comment period(s) will be summarized, analyzed, and included within the applicable document, and presented for final approval by the Policy Committee

This process is summarized in the next page:

Additional Opportunity for Public Review & Comment Period for MTP or TIP:

In the case the final version of the MTP or TIP differs significantly from the one made available for public review & comment, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made available



This process is summarized as follows:



1

If the final version of the MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version made available in previous public comment & review period:

- ◆ An additional 10 day public comment & review period is made available



2

If the additional public review & comment period requires that significant changes be made to the MTP or TIP:

- ◆ A second additional 10 day public review & comment opportunity is made available



3

Significant comments received during any additional public review & comment period(s) will be summarized, analyzed, and included within the applicable document

- ◆ Final version of the MTP or TIP is reviewed by Technical & Policy Committee (prior to document adoption)



4

Final version of MTP or TIP is adopted by the Policy Committee



5

Approval of the updated MTP or TIP document by TxDOT, FHWA, & FTA



6

MPO staff works with local, state, & federal partners to process revisions to MTP or TIP, as deemed necessary, between their respective update schedule

SUMMARY

The Laredo & Webb County Area MPO is committed to provide effective public outreach strategies that foster fair and accessible opportunities for meaningful public involvement. This transportation planning process reflects the vision, goals, and objectives that have been established as desirable futures for the community. The MPO's mission statement is: "to set transportation related policy, identify existing and future local transportation needs in cooperation with TxDOT, and propose and recommend projects for all modes of transportation including mass transit and active transportation, with special attention to freight."

The public involvement and outreach strategies presented in this Public Participation Plan were developed specifically to meet the needs of the residents of the Laredo TMA while adhering to federal & state mandates. All planning documents, including the PPP, are designed to be "living" documents in order to adapt primary planning document policies to the changes in federal and state laws and guidelines. The Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) review process will measure the effectiveness of public outreach strategies and update public outreach activities based on a qualitative and quantitative evaluation. This ensures that the public outreach process will effectively meet its public participation goals as well as reflect the most current and effective public outreach methods during the transportation planning process. This includes making information relevant and easier to understand.

Public participation procedures for the MTP & TIP are specified herein detail. The MPO will make every effort to facilitate the participation of traditionally underserved groups including low-income, minority, and limited English proficiency, as prescribed by Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This includes addressing Title VI issues via individual plans for Environmental Justice and for Limited English Proficiency.

The MPO will employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIP's, as deemed necessary. LWCAMPO is committed to increasing the understanding the general public has of the transportation planning process and to encourage the public to actively participate in the decision-making process.

A summary of the goals & objectives of the PPP can be found in the next page.



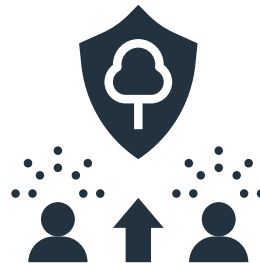
GOAL & OBJECTIVES OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)

Goal The goal of the PPP is to foster fair & accessible opportunities for meaningful public involvement through public outreach strategies that make information relevant & easier to understand. This also includes a process for measuring progress on involving the public in the transportation planning process

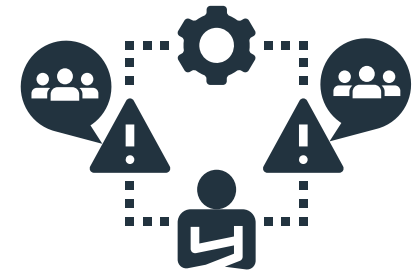
Objectives



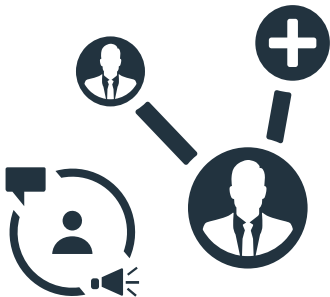
Provide access to relative information to the residents of the Laredo & Webb County region & other stakeholders



Raise awareness & offer opportunities for public input



Stimulate dialogue about the transportation related challenges facing the Laredo & Webb County region



Solicit participation from a broad range of groups & individuals in the Laredo Transportation Management Area (TMA)



Build public support for & understanding of transportation improvements outlined in the MTP, TIP, & other transportation plans/programs



Develop & incorporate realistic solutions into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) & Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that address the diverse mobility needs of the region's residents, businesses, & visitors

Measures of Effectiveness

The Measures of Effectiveness (MOE's) review process will measure the effectiveness of public outreach strategies & update public outreach activities based on qualitative & quantitative evaluation as well as assure the compliance of all federal & state guidelines

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

- ADA** - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- ATC** - Active Transportation Committee
- CFR** - Code of Federal Regulations
- CMP** - Congestions Management Process
- EPA** - Environmental Protection Agency
- FAST Act**- Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act
- FHWA** - Federal Highway Administration
- FTA** - Federal Transit Administration
- GIS** - Geographic Information System
- ISTEA** - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
- LEP** - Limited English Proficiency
- LEPP** - Limited English Proficiency Plan
- LWCAMPO**- Laredo & Webb County Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
- MAP-21** - Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act
- MOE** - Measures of Effectiveness
- MPA** - Metropolitan Planning Area
- MPO** - Metropolitan Planning Organization
- MTP** - Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- PIP** - Public Involvement Process
- PPP** - Public Participation Plan
- RMA** - Regional Mobility Authority
- SAFETEA-LU** - The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation, Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
- STIP** - Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
- TAC** - Texas Administrative Code
- TEA-21** - Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
- TIP** - Transportation Improvement Program
- TxDOT** - Texas Department of Transportation
- TMA** - Transportation Management Area
- TOMA** - Texas Open Meetings Act

TSLAC - Texas State Library & Archives Commission

UPWP - Unified Planning Work Program

USC - United States Code

UTP - Unified Transportation Plan

VPI - Virtual Public Involvement

APPENDIX A: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

LWCAMPO adheres to the guidelines and provisions stipulated in the City of Laredo Social Media Policy. A copy of the policy can be found in the following page or, alternatively, by visiting the link below:

[City of Laredo Social Media Policy](#)



CITY OF LAREDO

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A. PURPOSE.

The City has a legitimate government interest in effective, efficient, and consistent communications with the public. While the City’s website (www.ci.laredo.tx.us) is the City’s primary Internet presence, the City recognizes that, when used appropriately, social media may be useful in reaching a broader audience in furtherance of the City’s goals.

B. OBJECTIVE.

The objective of this Policy is to maintain the integrity of the City’s presence in social media and to ensure that social media is used appropriately and within City guidelines and policies. Given the multitude of concerns (legal, political, and ethical) raised by social networking (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), this Social Media Policy (“Policy”) establishes prudent and acceptable practices regarding the City of Laredo’s official social media sites.

C. SCOPE.

This policy applies to all City employees, including temporary employees and volunteers for the City of Laredo when working with social media tools on behalf of the City. However, that this policy does not apply to social media sites established by any of the City’s elected officials for campaign or personal purposes. Pursuant to Section 2.06 of the City of Laredo Ethics Code, City staff time shall not be used to establish, maintain, or directly promote a city official’s private social media accounts. City officials are further individually responsible by law to ensure compliance with laws pertaining to campaigning, open meetings, open records, and all other applicable laws related to private social media accounts.

D. DEFINITIONS.

City Social Media Sites – Includes the official (primary) and all department (secondary) pages, sections or posting locations in social media websites established or maintained by an employee of the City who is authorized to do so as part of the employee’s job and that are used to communicate with the public on City business.

Social Media –Internet-based technology communications tools with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation, and information sharing. These venues include social networking sites, forums, weblogs (blogs, vlogs, microblogs), online chat sites, and video/photo posting sites or any other such similar output or format. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Social media administrators– City employees expressly designated by the City Manager or their department directors to maintain oversight of a social media site. A social media administrator’s authority is limited to the policies and procedures of the City.

A. ESTABLISHMENT.

Effective as of the date of this Social Media Policy’s initial adoption, any new departmental (secondary) social media site of the City must be approved by the City Manager or his or her designee. No other City social media site is permissible. Requests to establish departmental social media sites must contain an explanation of the business necessity for establishing such a site. Said requests are to be submitted to the Public Information Officer who will review and recommend approval or denial of the request to the City Manager’s Office. Attached as **Exhibit A** is the City’s social media sites in existence as of the date of this Policy.

B. Responsibility

Each department director is responsible for implementing the provisions of this directive and designating a social media administrator. The Public Information Officer, or his or her designee, shall be the social media administrator responsible for oversight of the City’s official (primary) social media sites. All social media administrators of the City shall:

- (1) Ensure the City’s social media sites are regularly maintained and kept current.
- (2) Ensure that all information posted to a City’s social media site is accurate, professionally presented, respectful, relevant, and on topic with the mission. Care must be taken to ensure that grammar and spelling are correct. Mistakes must be corrected quickly.
- (3) Review information posted to the social media sites to ensure the content is appropriate, professional, and consistent with the City’s policies and the purpose for which the site exists. Frequent review of sites that provide opportunity for comment or other interaction is essential.
- (4) Enroll in and maintain archival third party account.

A. LIMITED CONTENT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

The City's social media sites must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of the City rather than creating a "public forum." Each City social media site shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the blog and social network site. **The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.** Information that is proprietary, subject to the attorney-client privilege, or privacy laws, and information not subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, shall not be posted on any City social media site.

Comments from the public are allowed on the City's social media sites and shall be monitored daily to ensure the comments are not in violation of this Policy. Social media sites that allow comments must contain the following text on the site itself or must include a link to the location on the City's website containing the following text:

- (1) "City's Comment Policy. The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in the City of Laredo, Texas. We encourage you to submit comments, but please note that this is not a traditional public forum. Comments posted to this page will be monitored.
- (2) The City reserves the right to delete comments that: contain false information, obscene language or sexual content, threaten or defame any person or organization, support or oppose political candidates, political organizations or ballot propositions, promote illegal activity, commercial services or products, infringe on copyrights or trademarks or are not topically related to the particular posting."

Comments violating the City's Comments Policy shall be removed promptly. When a person's comment is removed, the City should try to post a reason for removing the post (i.e. "A comment to this post was removed because it endorsed a political candidate. This is in violation of the City's comment policy (link to policy)"). Removed comments shall be archived by a third party service provider, at the time of the policy adoption the City has a contract with Archive Social. The City further reserves the right to remove or block repeat individual violators from commenting on any of the City's social media sites.

B. SECURITY.

Applications (such as streaming video, music, photos, subscriptions to RSS feeds) can cause clutter and security risks to a social media website. An application may be removed if not determined to serve a City purpose and/or or does not come from a trusted source.

A. RECORDS RETENTION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION.

- (1) Pursuant to Section 441.158 of the Texas Government Code, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission promulgates records retention schedules for records of local governments. The City has schedules and policies for retention of its records. The retention period for a record depends on the content of that record, regardless of the medium in which it is maintained. The general guidelines for archive, capture, and retention of social media content is attached hereto as **Appendix B**. The Public Information Officer and the Departments maintaining a City social media site shall preserve records on a City server for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible.
- (2) The City of Laredo social media sites are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA), found in Ch. 552 of the Texas Government Code. Content in City social media, including a list of subscribers and posted communications, is public record. Users of City social media sites shall be notified that public information requests must be directed to the City Attorney's Office as the designated City Public Information Coordinator. Content submitted for posting that is deemed not suitable for posting by the City of Laredo because it is not topically related to the particular social media site objective being commented upon, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria in E (2) of this policy, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.

B. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA.

The City of Laredo understands that social networking and Internet services have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among stakeholders and citizens. Employees that choose to participate in social media while a City employee should adhere to the following guidelines.

- (1) City policies, rules, regulations and standards of conduct apply to employees that engage in social networking activities while conducting City business. Use of a City e-mail address and communication by a city employee in his or her official capacity will constitute conducting City business.
- (2) Employees who participate in social media outlets on or off-duty are subject to the same standards for such communications as set forth herein.
- (3) Although minimal personal computer usage is allowed during the work day for employees, participating in non-work-related social media outlets while on duty is assumed to impact productivity and cause performance issues and therefore is prohibited. This notwithstanding, the City may allow employees to participate in existing social networking sites as part of their job duties..

- (1) Confidential or proprietary information or similar information of third parties who have shared such information with the City of Laredo should not be shared on social media outlets
- (2) Employees shall follow all copyright laws, public records laws, retention laws, fair use and financial disclosure laws and any others laws that might apply.
- (3) Employees shall not use their City email account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking site.
- (4) Employees shall not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without their approval.
- (5) City resources, work time, social media tools, or a City employee's official position shall not be used for personal profit, business interests, or to participate in political activity. For example, a building inspector may not use the City's logo (or its likeness), email, or work time to promote a side business as a plumber.
- (6) Personal or business venture social media account names shall not be in any way tied or similar to the City. For example, CityofLaredoCop would not be an appropriate personal account name.



City of Laredo Social Media Policy

APPENDIX A

EXISTING SOCIAL MEDIA SITES



City of Laredo Social Media Policy

APPENDIX B

GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION GUIDELINES

CORRESPONDENCEGR1000-26

- **General – 2 years**

COMPLAINTSGR1000-24

- **Resolution + 2 years**

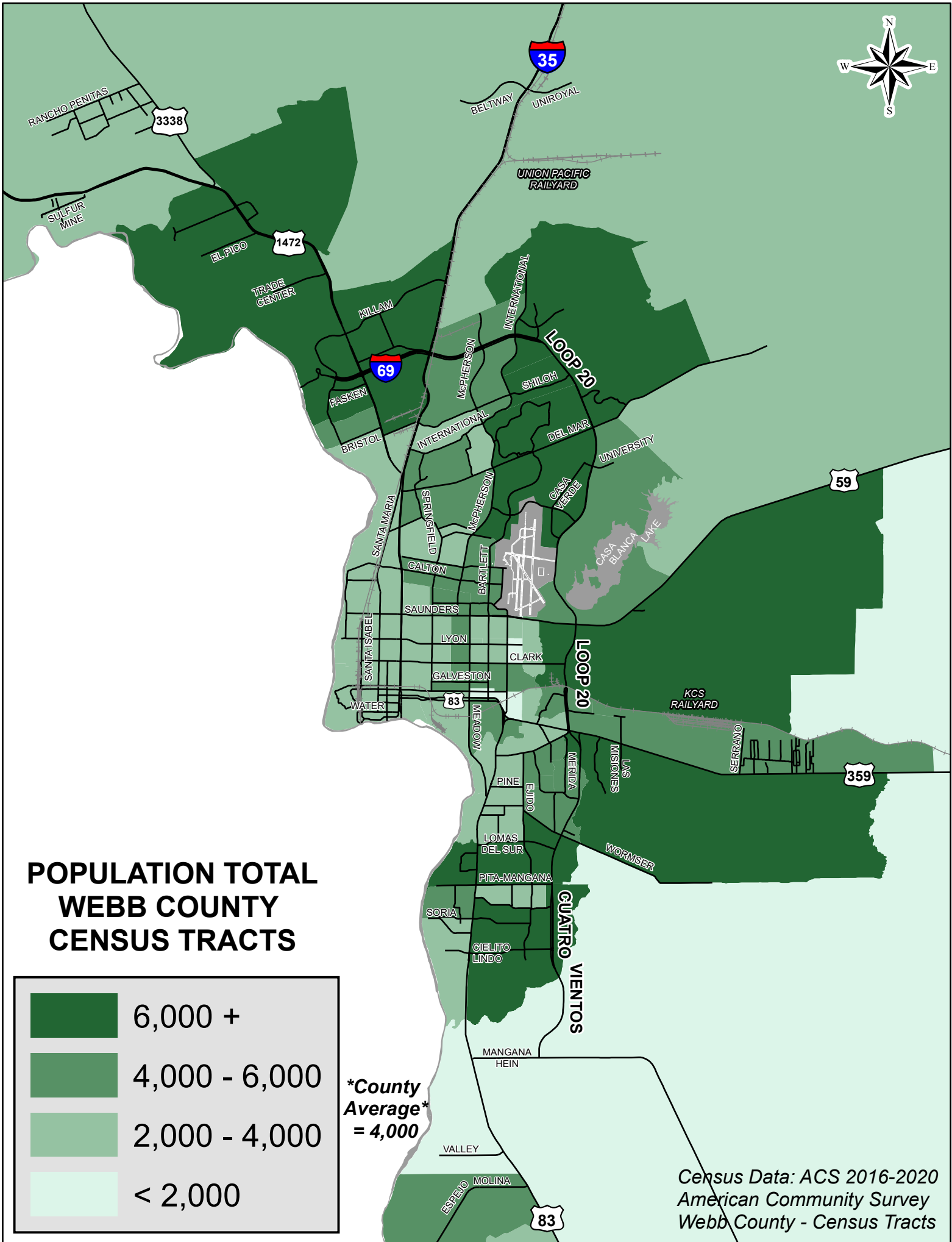
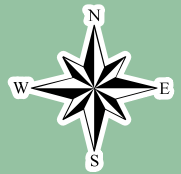
AdvertisementsofUpcomingEvents -3Tex.Admin.Code§6.91(8)(2000)

- **No archival, capture, or retention required.**




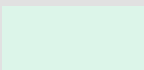
(Information shared that is cursory and minimal with no lasting importance or need beyond its initial purpose of informing do not require capture and retention).

APPENDIX B: MAPS RELEVANT TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following maps provide examples of the tools & techniques the MPO utilizes to fulfill the requirements outlined by federal legislation, identify public outreach strategies, and facilitate public participation activities:

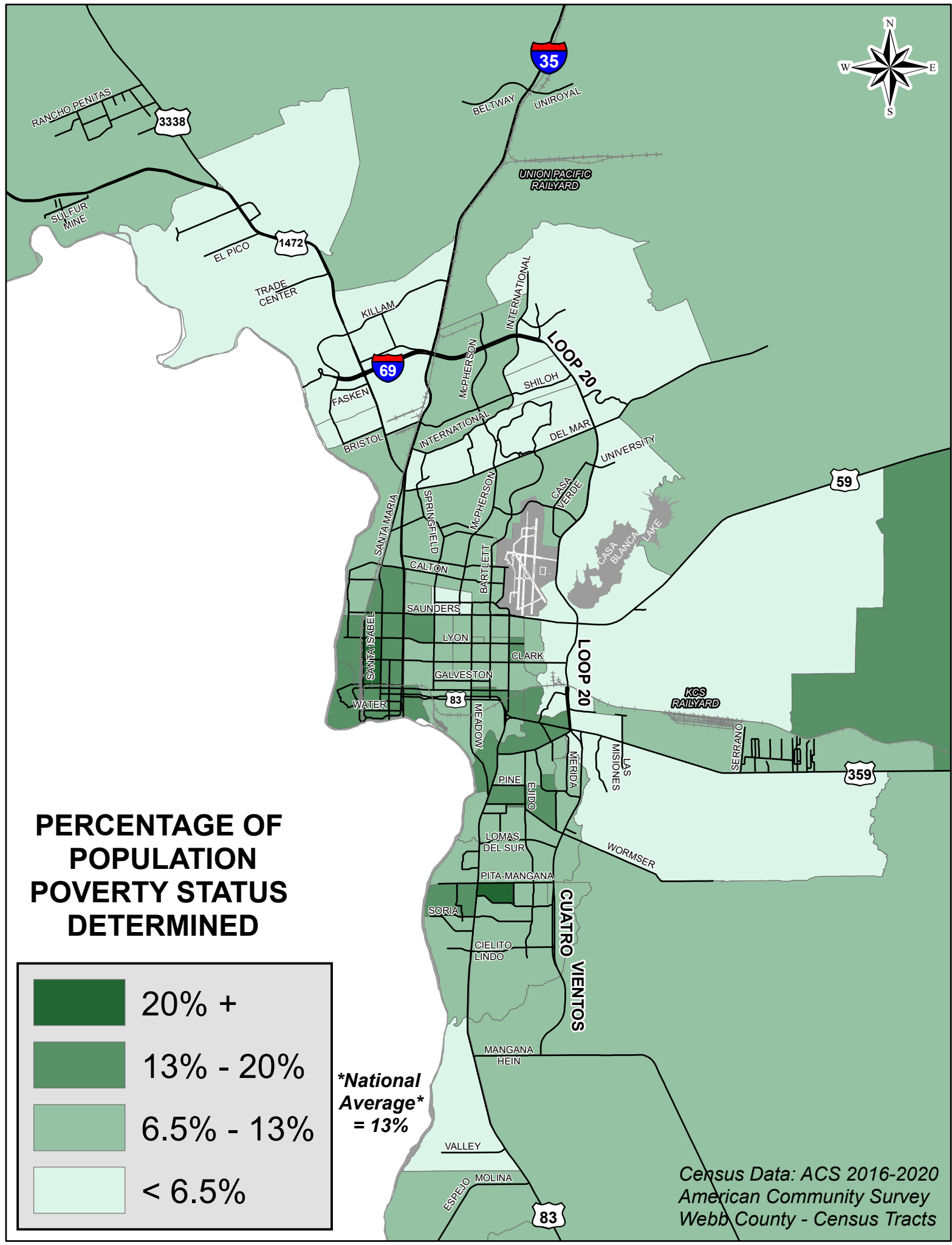


POPULATION TOTAL WEBB COUNTY CENSUS TRACTS


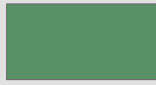
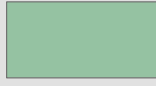
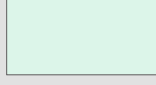
	6,000 +
	4,000 - 6,000
	2,000 - 4,000
	< 2,000

***County
Average*
= 4,000**

Census Data: ACS 2016-2020
American Community Survey
Webb County - Census Tracts



PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION POVERTY STATUS DETERMINED

	20% +
	13% - 20%
	6.5% - 13%
	< 6.5%

National Average
= 13%

Census Data: ACS 2016-2020
American Community Survey
Webb County - Census Tracts

