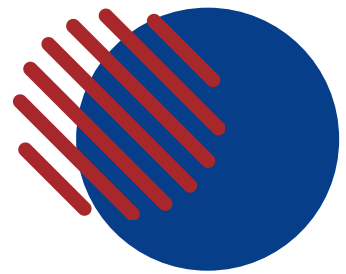


# LRGVDC 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



2025 - 2030

**PREPARED BY:**

**LRGVDC STAFF**

**PRESENTED TO:**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

956-682-3481

301 W. Railroad St. Weslaco, TX 78596

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## INTRODUCTION

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC), established in 1967, serves as the regional council of governments for Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties. The LRGVDC was formed through the merger of the Texas Southmost Economic Development District and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Council of Governments. As one of the 24 State Planning Regions codified under Chapter 391 of the Texas Local Government Code, the LRGVDC is a voluntary association of local governments dedicated to fostering regional collaboration, improving health and safety, and preparing for sustainable growth and economic development across the region's 3,643 square miles.

Although the LRGVDC ranks 22nd among Texas' councils of governments in land size, it is the 5th most populous, reflecting the area's significant urbanization and development. According to projections from the Texas Demographic Center, the region's population is expected to grow by 15.67% by 2060, adding approximately 206,500 residents to the current population. This anticipated growth highlights the critical need for strategic planning and regional collaboration to address future demands while maintaining the region's quality of life.

As the federally designated Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, the LRGVDC plays a pivotal role in fostering economic resilience and promoting shared prosperity. The 2025–2030 Regional Strategic Plan focuses on five interconnected domains that address the core priorities of the region:

- Economic Development
- Health & Human Services
- Public Safety
- Community Development & Environmental Services
- Transportation

Each domain is essential and interdependent, ensuring that the region operates as a cohesive unit to meet current needs while preparing for future challenges. Through effective planning, collaboration, and service delivery, the LRGVDC strives to enhance the quality of life for its residents and visitors and to maintain the region's standing as a vital and thriving area in Texas.

The LRGVDC is governed by a board of directors consisting of local elected officials and leaders, who provide oversight and ensure that the council fulfills its mission of promoting regional cooperation and addressing issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. Advisory committees composed of subject matter experts, business representatives, and community members further strengthen the planning process by ensuring broad input and local buy-in for programs and initiatives.

As the region continues to grow and evolve, the LRGVDC remains steadfast in its mission to assist member governments in planning for common needs, fostering mutual cooperation, and recognizing opportunities to improve the region's overall quality of life.

## ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

As the regional planning commission for Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) remains committed to advancing initiatives that will strengthen our region and enhance the quality of life for all residents. While these initiatives are not the sole focus of our efforts, they represent a foundation for our strategic direction over the next five years. They will guide our planning and implementation while allowing flexibility for updates or recommendations from our Board of Directors.

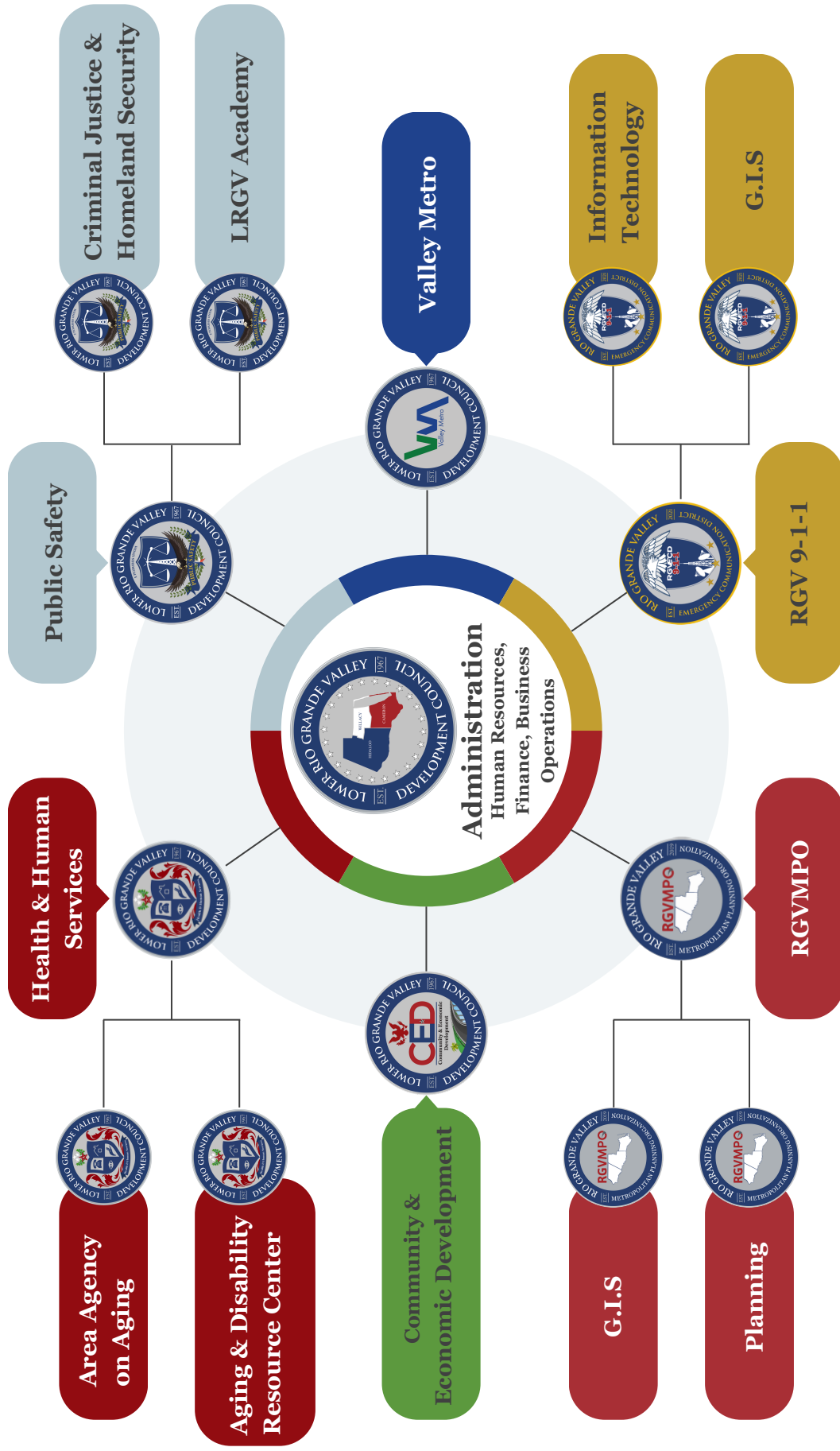
### Key Initiatives for the Next Five Years

- Preparing for the 2030 Census
  - The LRGVDC recognizes the significant impact of an accurate census count on funding and representation. Following the challenges of an undercount in the 2020 Census, we are committed to assisting regional stakeholders in achieving a more accurate count in 2030. This effort will include:
  - Collaborating with U.S. Census Bureau officials and the Texas Census Institute.
  - Partnering with local governments, community organizations, and other stakeholders.
  - Implementing outreach strategies and education campaigns to ensure full participation across the region.
- Advocating for the Merger of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)
  - A merged MSA designation has the potential to bring transformative benefits to the region. The LRGVDC is advocating for this change to better align funding formulas with our region's needs. Key benefits include:
  - Public Safety: A larger MSA designation could secure an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) designation, significantly increasing funding for the LRGVDC's public safety programs.
  - Regional Transportation: The Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) would benefit from enhanced formula funding and greater flexibility in the use of Category 7 funds, improving infrastructure and local road networks.
- Researching and Establishing a Regional Transit Authority
  - The LRGVDC is actively pursuing funding to study the establishment of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA), as authorized by House Bill 71, signed into law in 2019. This initiative will:
  - Address the region's historically low per capita public transportation investment.
  - Enhance public transportation options and create a framework for future expansion, including the potential development of passenger rail services.
  - Strengthen regional mobility and economic growth by improving access to jobs, education, and healthcare.

- Establishing an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
  - The LRGVDC envisions developing an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for the Rio Grande Valley, modeled after Houston TranStar's successful approach. This system would be a collaborative effort between cities, TxDOT, counties, and regional transit agencies, and would aim to:
  - Utilize sensors, cameras, and dynamic message signs to collect and share real-time traffic data.
  - Enable traffic engineers and emergency operators to detect and respond to incidents efficiently.
  - Provide the public with real-time travel information, including travel times and alternative routes, through a dedicated website and dynamic message signs.
  - Improve traffic management, safety, and mobility across the region.

## LOOKING AHEAD

These initiatives reflect our commitment to proactive planning and regional collaboration. As we pursue these priorities, we will remain adaptive to the evolving needs of the region and responsive to the guidance of our Board of Directors. Together, these efforts will position the Rio Grande Valley for sustainable growth, enhanced opportunities, and a stronger regional identity.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### VISION STATEMENT

As a highly desirable place to live, work, and visit, the Lower Rio Grande Valley will ensure regional prosperity and a premier quality of life by sustaining a balanced and resilient international economy, developing an educated, qualified workforce and providing enhanced opportunities for commercial, industrial and entrepreneurial growth.

### GOALS

- A. Support essential public and higher education, as well as workforce development programs to successfully prepare a well-educated, highly-skilled professional and technical workforce to meet the demands of regional industry growth.
- B. Expand urban and rural economic and workforce development projects through strategic regional collaboration, expansion of resources, and funding of private, public and industry-targeted partnership initiatives.
- C. Enhance regional perception through marketing and communication strategies, highlighting the region's geographic, environmental, and established assets to strengthen quality-of-life dynamics for current and potential residents and visitors.
- D. Preserve the abilities of municipalities and jurisdictions to cultivate vibrant, competitive and livable communities by supporting flexible and local decision-making with regards to factors such as tax-base development, revenue limits, unfunded mandates, and infrastructure expansion.
- E. Enrich international competitiveness by endorsing foreign trade and direct investment policies and opportunities.

F. Strengthen economic resilience through the advancement of emerging high-tech and high value industries (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, skills-trade, etc.), reinvestment of agricultural/aquaculture, and programs for effective disaster recovery.

G. Improve regional economic disproportionality through diversified strategies to cultivate rural and small business incubation, entrepreneurial innovation, information technology infrastructure, and access to capital.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

### VISION STATEMENT

Through effective services, education and preservation efforts, we shall strive for the healthiest environment where urban and rural community growth ensures residents safe and sustainable community development, housing opportunities, appropriate infrastructure development and proactive planning for the conservation of the Region's vital agricultural and natural resources.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A. Expand the availability of suitable and affordable housing options for all valley families and residents.

B. Ensure appropriate housing and resources are available to under-served populations which may include economically disadvantaged, elderly, displaced women and children, veterans, and individuals with chronic mental and physical health conditions and disabilities.

C. Support homelessness prevention by ensuring adequate and accessible emergency shelter and transitional housing resources and programs.

D. Promote and protect Fair Housing rights for all residents of the Rio Grande Valley.

E. Expand fair-cost broadband access to rural and high-poverty areas of the region to allow residents more equitable access to internet and online-based resources and services.

F. Preserve the abilities of municipalities and jurisdictions to implement locally-beneficial policies and infrastructure development with regards to factors such as building codes, green preservation, housing policy, annexation, and zoning regulation.



## ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES GOALS

- A. Encourage innovative and sustainable projects and programs which promote environmentally sustainable development.
- B. Promote recycling and waste reduction through development of effective disposal systems for sewage, solid waste, tires, brush and hazardous materials.
- C. Support bi-national water conservation measures and improve awareness and understanding of water quality and water quantity issues, and how these issues collectively relate to flood management, drainage infrastructure, water quality standards, and economic development.
- D. Address flood management and drainage infrastructure strategies as a region by emphasizing collaboration and partnerships, especially when creating new and future projects.
- E. Protect, conserve and restore regional ecosystem and fragile native habitats.



## AREA AGENCY ON AGING & AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

### VISION STATEMENT

To promote the independence, dignity, and well-being of older adults, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities by building an inclusive, accessible, and resilient system of services and support that meet diverse needs across the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

### STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. Strengthen Access to Comprehensive Services
- B. Promote Preventative Health and Wellness
- C. Foster Equity and Inclusion
- D. Enable Aging in Place and Community-Based Living
- E. Support Caregivers and Families

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Year 1 (2025): Focus on foundational activities, including capacity building, expanding collaborations, and initiating new programs.

Year 2-3 (2026-2027): Scale successful initiatives, increase service delivery, and address gaps identified in needs assessments.

Year 4-5 (2028-2030): Evaluate program outcomes, refine strategies, and ensure sustainability of initiatives.

### CONCLUSION

The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan outlines a clear and actionable framework to address the needs of older adults, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities across the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Through collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to equity, the LRGVDC AAA will continue to foster independence, dignity, and quality of life for the region's aging population.

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## CRIMINAL JUSTICE / HOMELAND SECURITY & LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACADEMY VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Public Safety Division, as a whole, is as follows: ensure optimal, efficient and relevant public safety for the service region. The Public Safety Division is comprised of two departments, which include the Criminal Justice and Homeland Security Regional Planning Department and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Public Safety Division mission is to increase professionalism, training, collaboration and functionality of individuals serving in public safety professions to include: emergency management, law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire service, criminal justice, homeland security, cyber security, and non-government organizations.

## GOALS

- A. Establishing the creation of a Headquarters facility that will house the departments of the LRGVDC Public Safety Division. This Headquarters facility will include: office spaces, class rooms, conference rooms, physical fitness equipment, electronic incident response simulators and an Office of the Governor's Public Safety Division sanctioned testing center for state licensing examinations.
- B. Ensuring regional public safety agencies and personnel maintain optimal access to critical equipment, resources, legislatively mandated training and technological advancements that are relevant to the service region.
- C. Enhancing and providing sufficient resources to improve the capacity and capability of local governments, community-based and non-governmental organizations, surrounding communities and individuals to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency, cyber threats and weather-related events and incidents.

D. Enriching and supporting the coordination and capacity of border communities to promote, respond, and prevent issues in school safety planning, public health, mental health, public works, juvenile justice, emergency response, cyber security threats, narcotic trafficking, human trafficking, and family violence.

E. Ensuring the development of highly-qualified public safety professionals by providing quality and relevant education, training, continuing professional developmental, and instructional resources.

F. Establishing a network of public safety personnel by uniting interagency assets through the development of interlocal agreements and memorandums of understanding for the implementation of resources, information, and asset collaboration throughout the service region.



## RIO GRANDE VALLEY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION DISTRICT 9-1-1

### Vision Statement

To ensure optimal public safety and protect all persons throughout the region public safety personnel such as emergency managers, first responders, criminal justice, homeland security, 9-1-1 telecommunicators, and law enforcement will work collaboratively, with optimal training and resources to prevent, protect, respond and recover from threats.

### Goals

- A. Ensure regional public safety agencies and personnel maintain optimal access to critical equipment, resources, and technological advancements.
- B. Enhance and provide sufficient resources to improve the capability of local governments, communities and individuals to prepare for, respond and recover from emergency and weather-related events and incidents.
- C. Ensure the development of highly qualified public safety professionals by providing quality education, training, continuing professional developmental, and instructional resources.
- D. Provide a reliable, resilient and sustainable regional emergency communication and 9-1-1 network to include interoperable radio communications, advancements in technology, mobile contingency strategies, and Next- Gen 9-1-1 advancements.

E. Enrich the bi-national coordination and capacity of border communities to promote, prevent, and respond to public health issues such as opioid addiction, maternal health, and infectious and/or degenerative diseases.

F. Support programs and resources to address public safety concerns such as school-safety action-planning, juvenile-related delinquency, gang-related criminal activity, violent crime prevention, and human and drug trafficking.

G. Encourage the establishment of additional facilities, support groups and programs to address drug/alcohol abuse, chronic mental health, suicide prevention, victims of violent crime, senior neglect, and child abuse.



## VALLEY METRO

### VISION STATEMENT

To connect the Rio Grande Valley through a seamless network of services that is safe, dependable, and convenient.

### GOALS

- A. Establish a seamless transportation system to increase connectivity and accessibility for people and freight, emphasizing regional planning efforts to meet the growing population demands of the region and ensure strategic development of urban and rural areas.
- B. Further adopt and implement multi-modal transportation infrastructure, policies and resources such as sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, pedestrian paths, rideshare systems, and transit corridors to develop healthier, safer, livable communities.
- C. Preserve and improve existing transportation infrastructure and systems to ensure the safety and security for motorized and non-motorized users.
- D. Support flexible and sustainable transportation resources such as a Regional Transit Authority (RTA), freight and light rail infrastructure, and adaptable right-of-way and traffic regulation policies to support the region's growing population.
- E. Ensure environmental sustainability, energy conservation and preservation of natural resources through coordinated state and local planning and economic development.
- F. Expand infrastructure and resources for international land, sea, and ports-of-entry to enhance economic development opportunities and ensure safe, secure and efficient transportation of people and freight.



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## RIO GRANDE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

### VISION STATEMENT

Through effective planning and service delivery, people and goods shall be able to move throughout the region safely and efficiently by using a seamless multi-modal transportation network.

### GOALS

**A. Establish a Setting for Effective Decision-Making.** Create and manage a fair and impartial setting for regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.

**B. Identify and Evaluate Transportation Improvement Options.** Develop transportation improvement options and use data and planning methods to evaluate how well these options support established criteria and performance targets. Planning studies and evaluations are documented in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

**C. Prepare and Maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).** Create and update a long-range transportation plan (LRTP), called the MTP, covering a 20-year planning horizon.

**D. Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).** Prepare a short-term, four-year program of priority transportation improvements derived from the MTP. The TIP outlines immediate actions to achieve regional goals and performance targets and includes funding and management tools.

**E. Establish Performance Targets and Monitor Progress.** Coordinate with the State and public transportation operators to establish performance targets addressing federally required measures and track progress through the MTP and its System Performance Report. Locally significant performance indicators may also be used to guide decision-making.

**F. Engage the Public.** Involve the general public and stakeholders in the decision-making process through meaningful engagement, ensuring transparency and collaboration.

## KEY PRODUCTS OF THE RGVMPPO

A. **Unified Planning Work Program.** The UPWP outlines the transportation studies and tasks to support the metropolitan planning process, including funding sources, schedules, and responsible agencies. It identifies regional Planning Emphasis Areas, such as climate crisis, equity, complete streets, and public involvement.

B. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan.** The MTP establishes long-term investment strategies for transportation, incorporating public and stakeholder input. It includes performance measures, scenario analyses, landuse considerations, and cost estimates for operations and capital investments.

C. **Transportation Improvement Program.** The TIP identifies priority projects for the next four years based on the MTP, adhering to federal requirements for fiscal constraint, performance monitoring, and alignment with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

D. **Public Participation Plan.** The PPP ensures inclusive and effective public engagement in transportation planning. It outlines strategies for fostering transparency, collaboration, and meaningful public involvement.

E. **Congestion Management Process (CMP).** The CMP applies strategies to reduce congestion and improve system reliability, focusing on travel demand reduction and operational efficiency. It provides a systematic approach for evaluating and integrating congestion mitigation strategies into the planning process.

F. **Travel Demand Model (TDM).** The TDM is a tool that forecasts future traffic and travel patterns in a region. RGVMPPO use TDM model to help plan transportation systems and evaluate proposed projects.

## CONCLUSION

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) is dedicated to fostering a vibrant, thriving region that embraces opportunity, innovation, and collaboration. Through strategic planning, meaningful partnerships, and a steadfast commitment to addressing the unique needs of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties, the LRGVDC continues to serve as a vital force in shaping the future of the Rio Grande Valley.

As we look ahead, the initiatives outlined in this document—census preparation, metropolitan statistical area merger advocacy, regional transit authority establishment, and intelligent transportation system development—serve as key pillars for our strategic vision. These efforts are not merely individual projects but interconnected components of a broader mission to enhance the health, safety, mobility, and prosperity of our region.

The success of these initiatives will depend on the collective action of our regional stakeholders, including local governments, private organizations, and the communities we serve. By leveraging our shared resources, knowledge, and expertise, we can overcome challenges and position the Rio Grande Valley as a model of growth and resilience in Texas and beyond.

As the regional planning commission, the LRGVDC remains committed to transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in all its endeavors. We will continue to adapt to changing conditions, respond to emerging opportunities, and work tirelessly to ensure that the voices of our diverse communities are represented and valued.

The path forward is one of progress, unity, and determination. Together, we can build a stronger, more connected region that provides equitable opportunities for all residents and establishes the Rio Grande Valley as a beacon of regional excellence for future generations.

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