LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE LRGVDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Notice is hereby provided that the LRGVDC Board of Directors will hold a Regular IN-PERSON Meeting on **WEDNESDAY, December 11, 2024, at 12:00 P.M** at 301 W. Railroad St. Weslaco, Texas and provide the public with the ability to view the meeting via internet live-streaming at: LRGVDC COG - YouTube

Presiding: Mayor Norma Sepulveda, President

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Item #1: Call to Order

A. Roll Call
B. Invocation
C. Pledge of Allegiance

Item #2: Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Meeting Minutes for (October 30, 2024) ..... President

Item #3: Public Comment

Item #4: Administration .....Manuel Cruz
Executive Director

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve social media Policy and Generative Artificial Intelligence.

2. Consideration and ACTION to approve Covered Application and Prohibited Technology Policy.

3. Consideration and ACTION to approve Interlocal Cooperation Contract Between the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley & the Lower Rio Grande Vally Development Council, relating to the use of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Regional Security Operations Center (RSOC) Services.

4. Consideration and ACTION on Date and Time for Annual Report, Budget Committee, & State of the COG.

B. Executive Director Report

1. Introduction of New Staff Members

2. Updates on Regional News, Funding Opportunities, Training, and Legislation

Item #5: Department Reports

A. **Community & Economic Development**..... Melisa Gonzalez
Assistant Director

1. Consideration and ACTION to Approve RGV Economic Development Advisory Committee (RGV EDAC) Membership.

2. Consideration and ACTION to Approve Reappointment for odd Number Year Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Members.

Program Status Reports

- Economic Development Administration
- Regional Small Cities Coalition
- Community & Economic Development Assistance Fund
- Solid Waste Management Program
- Water Quality Program
- Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee
- Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (Region M)
- Reservoir Levels

B. **Health & Human Services**..... Margarita Lopez
Director

Program Status Reports

- Direct Consumer Services
- Care Coordination Services
- Senior Subrecipient & Senior Center Operations
- Home Delivered and Congregate Meal Program
- Special Services
- Care Transition Program
- Ombudsman Program
- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Housing Navigator
- Special Initiatives Report
- Information Referral & Assistance

C. Public Safety.....Manuel Cruz
Executive Director

Criminal Justice & Homeland Security.....Cesar Merla
Assistant Director

1. Consideration and ACTION to Approve Resolution for FY 2025-26 Non-Profit Security Grant Funding.

2. Consideration and ACTION to Approve resolutions for FY 2025-26 Homeland Security Grant Funding.

3. Consideration and ACTION to Approve Resolutions for FY 2025-26 Coordinator for the Regional Fire Academy.

4. Consideration and ACTION to Approve Appointment of Replacement Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) Member Michael Silva.

Criminal Justice & Homeland Security Status Reports.

Police Academy Program..... Javier Solis
Assistant Director

Regional Police Academy Program Action Item

1. Consideration and ACTION to Approve an Interlocal Agreement for Cooperative Extension Services and LRGV Academy Site between the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy and the Rio Grande City Police Department and with Authority for the LRGVDC Executive director, Manuel Cruz to sign and finalize the agreement.

Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District .....Dennis Moreno
Assistant Director

Status Reports

- GIS Division
- 9-1-1 Information Technology
- Community Engagement Division

D. **Transportation Valley Metro..... ....**Tom Logan
Director

1. Consideration and ACTION to Approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Departments Americans with Disabilities Act "ADA" Policy and Procedures.

2. Consideration and ACTION to Approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Departments Operations Policy and Procedure.

3. Consideration and ACTION to Approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Department Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)

Valley Metro Status Reports

- Ridership Report

Rio Grande Valley MPO Status Report.....Michael Medina
Executive Director

Item #7 New or Unfinished Business

Item #8 Adjourn

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, January 29, 2025,

12:00 pm Noon

Agenda items may be considered, deliberated, and/or acted upon in a different order than those numbered above. The Board of Directors of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council reserves the right to adjourn into an Executive (Closed) session at any time during this meeting to discuss any of the items listed on this agenda as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapters 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, and 551.075, Texas Government Code. No final action will be taken in the Executive Session.

PUBLIC INPUT POLICY:

"At the beginning of each LRGVDC meeting, the LRGVDC will allow for an open public forum/comment period. This comment period shall not exceed one-half (1/2) hour, and each speaker will be allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes to speak. All individuals desiring to address the LRGVDC must sign up to do so before the open comment period. The purpose of this comment period is to provide the public with an opportunity to address issues or topics under the jurisdiction of the LRGVDC. For issues or topics that are not otherwise part of the posted agenda for the meeting, LRGVDC members may direct staff to investigate the issue or topic further. No action or discussion shall be taken on issues or topics which are not part of the posted agenda for the meeting. Members of the public may be recognized on posted agenda items deemed appropriate by the Chair as these items are considered, and the same 3minutc time limitation applies."

ITEM #2.

MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

12:00PM WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024

HELD IN-PERSON AND VIA THE GLOBAL GOTOMEETING VIDEO CONFERENCE
PLATFORM INITIATED AND CHAIRED FROM
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TEXAS
BUILDING B, KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: Mayor Norma Sepulveda

Mayor Norma Sepulveda called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Roll Call was taken, and as of 12:07 pm quorum was attained.

Present: Mayor Norma Sepulveda

Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza, City of Mission
Judge Aurelio Guerra, Willacy County
Mayor John Cowen, City of Brownsville
Mayor Ramiro Garza, City of Edinburg
Commissioner David Garza, Cameron County
Commissioner Ellie Torres, Hidalgo County
Mayor Alma Salinas, Sullivan City
Mayor George Guadiana, City San Perlita
Mayor Alejandro Flores, City of Los Fresnos
Commissioner Omar Quintanilla, City of McAllen
Commissioner Edward Gonzales, City of Raymondville
Mayor Rick Guerra, City of San Benito
Veronica Gonzalez, UTRGV Edinburg
Paul Hernandez, South Texas College
Mr. Troy Allen, Delta Lake
Mr. Ronald Mills, Willacy County Nav. District
Mr. Jim Darling, Member at Large
Mr. Tony Chavez, Member at Large
Ms. Ann Williams Cass, Member at Large
Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez, Grassroots

Absent :

Mayor Adrian Gonzalez City of Weslaco
Mayor JR Garza, City of Alamo
Mayor David Moreno, City of Donna
Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez City of Pharr
Commissioner Marco Villegas, City of San Juan
Mr. Luke Lucio, TSTC

Without any questions from the board, Mayor Norma Sepulveda moved on to Item #2

Item #2: Consideration and ACTION to approve Meeting Minutes for September 25,2024. ***Mayor John Cowen made a motion to approve Meeting Minutes for September 25, 2024. Lupita Sanchez seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Item #3: Public Comment- No Public Comment

With no further comments and questions, Mayor Sepulveda moved on to Item #4.

Item #4: Administration

4A. Presentation from Texas Census Institute with Angela Broyles Executive Director for Texas Census Institute.

Key points: We are a nonprofit organization established in the fall of 2021 to support census participation in the state of Texas. Our mission is to address and overcome both operational and motivational barriers to ensure greater participation in the census across the state. I'll briefly go over some of this at the start since I don't have much time. I just want to give you an overview of our organization. Right now, we're focusing a lot of our work in the Rio Grande Valley. As many of you probably know, the census impacts funding, representation, planning, research, and advocacy. The data collected is used daily for these purposes to help us better serve our communities. The 2020 Census conducted by the Census Bureau had an undercount, and after the census was completed, they conducted a Post-Enumeration Survey to check their work. The survey estimated that the state of Texas was undercounted by half a million people. Our research team did further analysis, focusing on the undercount of young children, and found that 153,000 children were missing in the census. We also collaborated with academic partners to assess the economic impact, and we estimate that Texas will lose $25 billion in federal funding over the next 10 years due to this undercount. There are over 350 programs that rely on census data for funding distribution in Texas, so the undercount has significant implications for the state's resources and services.

We have conducted further analysis to assess the economic impact of the undercount on specific demographics and regions. Using data from the Post-Enumeration Survey, we identified the statewide undercount and then worked with the Texas Demographic Center to break it down by county. We also examined how this undercount affects programs at both the county and regional levels. For example, in the four counties of the Rio Grande Valley, the undercount of young children alone is expected to result in a loss of approximately $160 million over the next 10 years. This loss will impact programs such as childcare development block grants, nutrition programs, education, and healthcare. These are some of the potential financial shortfalls the region could face due to the census undercount. My work, along with the work of the Institute, began after the 2020 Census. Before that, I served as a consultant for a statewide campaign focused on engaging and motivating people to participate in the census. This experience highlighted several challenges that Texas faced, which led to the creation of the Texas Census Institute. One key challenge I want to highlight today is low participation in LUCA, the Local Update of Census Addresses program.

While most people focus on census participation, LUCA addresses a critical operational element: updating the master address list used by the Census Bureau. LUCA is a voluntary, once-a-decade

opportunity for tribal, state, and local governments to review and update their address lists with the Census Bureau. Governments can add, correct, or delete addresses to ensure the accuracy of the census count.

In Texas, many areas, including Hidalgo County and the Rio Grande Valley, had strong participation in LUCA. However, overall participation remains a barrier, and one of our goals is to advocate for full statewide participation in LUCA to improve the accuracy of future census data. This slide shows national participation in LUCA. The blue areas represent counties that participated, and the yellow areas indicate when the state participated on behalf of those counties. If you look at the next slide, you'll see a breakdown of Texas. The gray areas indicate regions that did not participate in LUCA. These are primarily rural areas, as well as some urban and metropolitan regions that missed out on participating in LUCA. Moving to the next slide, we can see the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). Except for Willacy, all the RGV counties participated in LUCA. This region is considered an exemplary by the Census Bureau and serves as a model for the rest of the state. Ms. Broyles shared that this next slide shows the results of Hidalgo County's participation in LUCA. They successfully added 14,000 addresses to the Census Bureau's list, corrected 15,000 addresses, and removed 5,000 inaccuracies, leading to substantial improvements in the Bureau's address database. So, why should you participate in LUCA? We view it as a critical operational step. If the Census Bureau lacks an address, they won't send a questionnaire to that household. Additionally, there's no way to indicate that someone lives there, which increases the likelihood that the household will be overlooked and not counted in the census.

We've also analyzed the potential return on investment (ROI) of participating in LUCA. By ensuring the address file is accurate and households are properly enumerated, we can significantly improve census data and secure more accurate funding and resources for communities. We estimate the return on investment at about $113 per household. For Hidalgo County, by participating in LUCA and updating their address list, they potentially secured an additional $1 billion in federal funding from 2020 to 2030. One important development to note is that due to the exemplary work done by Hidalgo County and the other RGV counties, the Census Bureau is interested in piloting an initiative in the Rio Grande Valley. The goal is to partner with Hidalgo County to focus on improving LUCA participation, particularly in colonies and non-traditional communities with unconventional addresses. The pilot is expected to run from this fall into next summer.

The Census Bureau aims to use this pilot to refine the LUCA process and scale those improvements nationwide, with Hidalgo County serving as a model. We hope that by participating in this initiative, we can collaborate with the county to develop a statewide strategy for full participation in LUCA. The key partners in this initiative will include the Hidalgo County Planning Department, the GIS Department, the Texas Demographic Center, and ideally, additional city and county representatives from across the Rio Grande Valley to support these efforts. We would appreciate the support of the Planning Department and other members of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council in our efforts. Specifically, we're looking for partners to help promote the research of the Texas Census Institute, advocate for participation in the LUCA pilot with the Census Bureau and Hidalgo County and contribute to the development of a statewide plan for LUCA participation.

Ms. Ann Cass then mentioned to Ms. Broyles that have you been in contact with anyone at Hidalgo County? About six months ago, I spoke with the Planning Department Director, Brandon, and his assistant, Rosemary. However, the person who handled LUCA for the county in 2020 is no longer there. I was just curious if she has spoken to them recently and how interested they are in bringing

LUCA back. Ms. Broyles then states that Yes, we have been in contact with them. We've been providing advice, and they seem interested, but they are looking for more information and direction from leadership on how to proceed with LUCA.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Norma Sepulveda then moved on to Item 4B.

4B. Presentation on Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan. With Ylda Capriccioso with Halff Associates. Mr. Cruz wanted to clarify that before Ms. Capriccioso began her presentation, he wanted to inform everyone that this plan is funded by Hidalgo County for all 22 cities within the county, and that they weren't leaving Cameron County behind. Mr. Cruz also mentioned that Hidalgo County is working to connect the dots with this plan, focusing on multimodal transportation resources, including identifying current and future hike and bike trails, as well as other related infrastructure. This plan will also serve as a tool for securing future funding for projects, such as the construction or expansion of hike and bike trails, parks, or other developments within each jurisdiction. Ms. Ylda Capriccioso started working with the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) and our funding partner, the RGVMPO, about a year ago to develop an active transportation and active tourism plan. This plan aims to unite regional trail efforts across a large area. Our project team includes Half Associates, and we have partnered with local engineering firms B2Z and Tool Design for the active tourism component.

The goal of the project is to identify opportunities for developing a regional network of bike and pedestrian infrastructure that would also serve to boost tourism within the communities of Hidalgo County. This is the primary purpose and objective of the plan. The project consists of six phases, and we have nearly completed all of them. We are currently in phases five and six, which involve integrating transportation and active tourism recommendations into an implementation agenda for Hidalgo County. The key outcomes of the project align with the original goals, including advocating for regional priorities that will enhance access to state and federal funding. This united effort also fosters collaboration, which is critical for promoting inclusive growth and prosperity in the region. Finally, the project aims to align resources efficiently and avoid duplication of efforts in the development of regional trail projects.

The region boasts over 100 destinations, including parks and open spaces. Notable sites include two state parks and a US Fish and Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge. Hidalgo County's population is growing, though, as previously mentioned, there may be undercounts in the census data. As such, the actual population could be higher than the figures currently reported. The area is home to over 300 butterfly species, a key attraction for nature enthusiasts, particularly those visiting the Rio Grande Valley to experience its butterflies, birds, and other natural resources. Trails **and Biking Facilities**, the region has nearly 200 miles of on- and off-street trails or biking facilities. The public engagement process included a series of outreach efforts, one of which was a steering committee that met four times. There will be one more meeting with the steering committee. Commissioner Torres was mentioned as a participant in the steering committee. The presenter noted that there are several slides related to public engagement, but only the first slide will be discussed in detail during this session. The following are some of the key themes that emerged from the sessions and interviews conducted during the outreach and engagement process. **Safety Concerns**: A primary concern expressed by participants was the need for safe crossings across roadways, ensuring both pedestrians and cyclists can travel safely. **Lack of Connectivity**: While there are excellent trails within the region and across several communities, there is a recognized gap in connectivity, particularly between the eastern and western areas. **Collaboration**: There was strong emphasis on continuing the successful collaborative approach. Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with current teamwork and agreed that it should be further developed and maintained.

Integration of Public Health: Participants expressed interest in exploring how public health initiatives could be integrated into the project, particularly to improve access to trails, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure. **Financial Constraints**: There was recognition of financial limitations at both the local and regional (county) levels, which may influence the scope and timeline of the proposed projects. **Ongoing Community Engagement**: It was highlighted that continued community engagement is essential to ensure broad support for the initiative and that the region remains informed of the project's progress.

Access for Low-Income Populations: Ensuring equitable access to trails and transportation options for low-income communities was emphasized as a key consideration. **Trail Development and Maintenance**: Considerations regarding the development, maintenance, and necessary upgrades of trail sections being constructed or proposed in the plan were discussed. The active plan consists of six chapters, each covering different aspects of the project: **Chapters 1 & 2**: These chapters focus on outreach efforts and the guiding principles of the plan. **Chapters 3 & 4**: These sections examine the active transportation network and framework. **Active Tourism Chapter**: A dedicated chapter that focuses on active tourism within the plan. **Final Chapter**: This chapter outlines the delivery of the implementation plan, including the short-term work program, administrative guidance, program funding, and the overall work plan. The plan is built around six guiding principles, which serve as the foundational framework that helps direct the strategies, recommendations, and implementation efforts. The vision for the active plan was developed through collaboration with the steering committee and public input. It is to create a signature countywide trail network in Hidalgo County that: Connects communities and provides a safe and comfortable environment for walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation. Links users to key destinations across the county. Promotes a culture of active living and improves transportation access throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The following slides provide demographic data that was gathered to align with areas identified as needing improved transportation options, access, and connectivity.

In addition to active transportation, tourism was identified as a significant factor influencing how people spend their leisure time in Hidalgo County. Tourism plays a key role in how visitors enjoy and recreate in the area, and this impact is something the community is likely already familiar with.

As part of the active transportation network and framework, the existing transportation system was evaluated. Currently, the county has:

- Approximately **123 miles** of on-street bike facilities.
- **73 miles** of off-street bike facilities.
- Over **1,700 miles** of sidewalks.

The following slides provide a snapshot of some of the municipal trail systems that are part of the existing network. In addition to the transportation network, we gathered input from the steering committee and staff regarding key destinations across the county. These destinations fall into various categories, including Civic, Cultural, and educational sites, Event spaces, medical facilities, Parks and nature areas, Retail locations. We categorized these destinations and mapped them out to align with the regional trail network, allowing us to cross-reference this information to identify connections and opportunities for integration. Next, I will cover the trail segments and provide more detail on four specific subsegments identified in the plan.

To identify these trail segments, we used criteria based on regional goals and priorities established by the steering committee. The plan proposes **nine trail segments**, which together cover over **170 miles** of on- and off-street proposed trails. This number has since increased to just over **200 miles**.

While the map may be difficult to read on screen, the **teal or light blue solid line with dotted segments** represents the proposed regional trail network. The map does not specifically identify all nine segments, but they are broken out in the plan with details on key destinations, potential opportunities, and challenges associated with each. These segments are numbered starting from one through nine.

We have assigned preliminary names to the nine trail segments to help us explore and identify their locations within the community and the region. These nine segments are the building blocks of the **200-mile regional trail network**.

As part of the assessment process, we considered factors such as population density and low-income statistics to determine where each trail segment would have the most impact. The segments were ranked based on:

- The number of people who would benefit from improved access.
- The communities that each segment would serve.
- The tourism opportunities are connected to each segment.

The next section focuses on the **active tourism approach** and the related recommendations.

As part of this effort, we worked with our sub-consultant to review existing destinations within the county. Additionally, we coordinated with local chambers of commerce and other stakeholders to better understand the tourism landscape in Hidalgo County.

Several opportunities were identified, including:

- **Trail tourism**, which is a growing trend both nationwide and statewide in Texas.
- **Bicycle tourism**, which complements the trail network.
- **Water trails**, including the Texas Paddling Trails and other water trails across the nation.

Some of these opportunities already exist within the county and its communities.

In addition to trail, bicycle, and water tourism, **wildlife and birdwatching** are already strong tourism markets in Hidalgo County and the Rio Grande Valley. The plan aims to build on these existing strengths.

The plan also emphasizes the importance of identifying **cultural and educational trail components**, ensuring that key cultural and heritage sites are highlighted along the trail network.

Two additional tourism opportunities were mentioned:

- **Los Mirasoles Wind Farm**: This proposed initiative could create a new type of tourism in the region. Like other areas with wind farms, the idea is to develop a short segment (1-2

miles) where visitors can tour the wind farm, learning about the energy production process. This would be classified as an **energy tourism attraction**.

- **Hub Towns Approach**: This concept focuses on developing regional hubs for tourism and other activities, though further details on this approach were not specified in this section.

The **Los Mirasoles Wind Farm** concept is gaining traction on the West Coast of the United States, and with several wind farms in the region, including the one in Hidalgo County, there may be an opportunity to incorporate this into the local tourism offerings in the future.

Another concept explored in the active tourism component is the **Hub Towns** approach. This focuses on identifying communities with multiple attractions that could serve as key starting or ending points for trail destinations, whether for walking or biking. These towns would act as central hubs to encourage tourism and engagement with the trail network.

Moving on to the **Implementation and Short-Term Work Program**, the primary goal was to develop an active transportation network that aligns with local, state, and MPO plans and policies. The plan was designed to be consistent with:

- **Active tourism recommendations**.
- **Stakeholder and community feedback**.
- **Economic health and transportation principles**, including safety, access, and connectivity.

The key goals for **active transportation** and **active tourism** include:

- **Building a regional trail network**.
- **Increasing branding and awareness** of the trail system.
- **Supporting comfort and usability** for all users.
- **Aligning with healthy and active lifestyles**.
- **Ensuring connectivity and transportation choices**.
- **Promoting natural and cultural links**.
- **Supporting local economic vitality**.

Next Steps: We've identified **nine trail segments**, and based on these, we recommend starting with **four initial segments** for further development or study.

The first of these is **Trail Segment 7**, which would connect the existing trail network being constructed through the precinct trails down to the state park. This segment builds on the existing infrastructure and cultural links, ensuring a seamless connection between key destinations. The following **trail segments** were identified as priorities for future development:

1. **Central Hidalgo County (Segment 8)**: This segment focuses on better connecting **Mission** and **McAllen** through projects that address gaps in east-west trail connections. Both cities have strong north-south trail systems, but there are significant gaps in east-west connectivity. This segment aims to ensure safe and seamless transportation across these communities.

2. **Edinburg Area (Segment 9)**: Building on existing trail and bike lane work in **Edinburg**, this segment would strengthen the east-west connection, extending onto future proposed trail segments. The goal is to support safe bike and pedestrian transportation, particularly for students, visitors, and faculty at the local university, ensuring better mobility throughout the community.

3. **Elsa Area and Caracara Trail Connection**: This segment aims to connect existing trail work in the **Elsa** area to bike lanes in nearby communities, integrating with the **Caracara Trail** system developed in **Cameron County**. The focus is on creating a link that enhances active transportation options and connects with regional trail networks.

The key element of the implementation plan focuses on maintaining momentum for the active transportation network and program. The plan outlines the following steps for ongoing administration and coordination:

- **Steering Committee Continuation**: The plan recommends continuing the work of the **steering committee** to sustain the progress of the active transportation plan.
- **Municipal Support**: Each participating municipality is encouraged to adopt a **supportive resolution** in support of the active plan.
- **Interlocal Agreement (ILA)**: The **LRGVDC**, **RGVMPO**, and **Hidalgo County** are advised to enter an **interlocal agreement** to formalize roles, responsibilities, and resource sharing for the continued development of the plan.

The plan also highlights the need for:

- **Program funding opportunities** and **high-level planning costs** associated with the proposed trail segments.

Short-term work programs that define specific objectives and strategies to guide the partners, including those involved in the interlocal agreement (ILA), trail management agreements, and partnering cities, to continue advancing the plan. The plan includes key **performance measures** to guide the success of the project. These measures operationalize the **trail management framework** and outline the cooperation needed between **Hidalgo County**, the **LRGVDC**, the **MPO**, and the participating cities. The goal is for these partners to collaborate in creating a **policy committee** or a continued **steering committee** that will work together to identify and implement trail projects.

The plan includes a **short-term work program**, which provides a matrix detailing:

- **Goals, objectives, and strategies**.
- The **timeframe** for accomplishing these objectives.
- The **lead or partnering agencies** responsible for each task.

Next steps include:

- **Final Steering Committee Meeting**: A final meeting will be held to review the draft report.
- **Updates and Feedback**: Comments from staff at the **LRGVDC** will be incorporated into the final report.
- **Final Report Distribution**: The completed report will be distributed to stakeholders for review in **December**.

The goal is for the participating cities to adopt **city resolutions** in support of the active plan between now and **January**. After that, we will return to request **final approval** of the active plan from the **LRGVDC Board**.

Ms. Ann Cass then had a comment, So I know the presentation was on tourism, but I don't want us to forget that there's thousands of people who need transportation, who live in Hidalgo County.

With no further comments or questions from the board, President Norma Sepulveda moved on to 4C.

4C. Consideration and ACTION to Adopt Annual Investment Policy and Accept Quarterly Investment Report. ***Jim Darling made a motion to Approve to Adopt Annual Investment Policy and Quarterly Investment Report. Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

4D. Consideration and ACTION to Appoint Board Designee and Alternate to Texas Association of Regional Councils. (TARC). Mr. Cruz began by addressing the current members of the Council. As you may know, **Commissioner Garza** is stepping down from the Council of Governments due to his ongoing commitments in **Cameron County**. Commissioner Garza has been the primary representative for the region at the **Texas Association of Regional Councils** in Austin.

Mayor Darling is currently the alternate. We have discussed this with Mayor Darling, and he is willing to step up to the primary position. However, we do require the board's approval to either appoint him as the primary or confirm his role as the alternate. Mayor Norma Sepulveda was appointed the alternate. Mr. Cruz emphasized that it is always beneficial to have our **elected officials** attend meetings in **Austin**, noting that while the rule requires travel, it is **reimbursable**. Additionally, he highlighted that the **COG's** meet as a **Board of Directors** in Austin, offering an opportunity for networking, interaction, and learning from what other COG's are doing. Mayor Norma Sepulveda mentioned that she would be happy to do it if they had no volunteers. Commissioner David Garza then stated the only comment I would like to make is that sometimes these meetings are not held in **Austin**. They can take place in other locations such as **Sherman** or **Palestine**, and occasionally they are held in more remote areas of the state. While Austin is typically convenient for travel, these alternate locations can present more logistical challenges. Commissioner Garza then stated that he would like to appoint Mayor Sepulveda as the Alternate. Seconded by Commissioner Ellie Torres, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously. Mr. Cruz clarified that the meetings held in various locations across the state are intended to give different communities the opportunity to showcase their unique features and offerings. He expressed hope that, in the future, the meetings could be held in **South Texas**, allowing everyone to travel to the region.

Is there a motion to appoint **Mayor Darling** as the primary representative? ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve Jim Darling for the Designee and Mayor Norma Sepulveda for Alternate to Texas Association of Regional Councils. Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

No further comments or questions Mayor Norma Sepulveda then moved on to Item 4E. Executive Report.

As you may have noticed, the large **orange bus** is parked in the front lot. This is a reminder that **early voting** is currently underway, and the **election** will take place on the **5th**. Thanks to **Mayor Sepulveda's** recommendations and initiatives, we are offering **free rides** to the community, provided they show proof of voting, such as a **registration card**, **driver's license**, or any valid form of ID.

This morning, we had the opportunity to capture a brief video, which we will be posting on our **social media** platforms, including **Facebook**. It was also a rare opportunity for me to give some of you a ride, and I encourage you to share and promote the post.

This initiative is available across the **five-county areas**, making it easy for everyone to access polling locations, with the opportunity to go vote.

Moving on to the next item on the agenda: **Introduction of new staff**.

Regarding the other items on the agenda, I will keep this brief as I provided the details in advance. I would like to reiterate the update on the **GLO Disaster Recovery Relocation Program**. The **call for projects** is currently open, having started on **October 21st** and will close on **November 21st at 5:00 p.m.** I strongly encourage everyone to apply. I have shared the **PowerPoint presentation** previously, which contains valuable information and important deadlines. Again, I highly recommend submitting your applications.

Please note, this is just the first stage of the call for projects, and the process involves multiple steps. I encourage you to watch the **video** and review the **slides** or share them with your **grants department** or **planning department** for further review. Additionally, our region qualifies under **Dolly** and the **2018 floods**, meaning there is still a significant amount of funding available from those projects for applicants.

Lastly, I have a list of our objectives for the **89th Legislative Session**, developed at the **Texas Association of Regional Councils** in collaboration with all the **COGs** across Texas. The list covers a wide range of initiatives, including **community economic development**, **environmental quality**, **emergency communications**, **health and human services**, **public safety**, and **transportation**. Each of these areas contains specific goals and objectives, and I believe we have addressed nearly all the key priorities that benefit our local communities.

No further comments or questions, Mr. Cruz then turned it over to Javier Dominguez for a quick recap on upcoming events. I will keep this brief, and I apologize for not being there in person today. However, I am representing LRGVDC in Phoenix, Arizona, attending a one-on-one training with the **National Renewable Energy Lab** and the **Department of Energy**. You will soon hear an exciting announcement from **Mrs. Gonzalez-Rosas** regarding an important opportunity for our region.

I would like to take this point to highlight two **upcoming inaugural events** that the **LRGVDC** will be hosting at the end of this year and the beginning of next year. The first event is the **Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony**, which will take place on **Monday, December 2nd**, from **10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** It will be held in the **lobby outside the Ken Jones Boardroom**, where all of you are currently located. We would like to extend an invitation to all board members to join us for this festive occasion. This is also an opportunity for us to express our gratitude to those who have generously provided sponsorship. We will be serving **coffee** and **light snacks**, and there will be a **Christmas Sweater Competition**. We have already been coordinating several city secretaries to add this to your calendars, but we will be sending out formal invitations soon. We look forward to seeing you there and introducing you to the extended family here at the LRGVDC.

The second event is the **inaugural 2025 LRGVDC State of the COG**. This meeting will typically feature our **annual report** and **budget presentation**, but we aim to elevate the experience this year. This event usually takes place on the **second Wednesday of January**, and in December, we will ask the board to confirm the final date selection for the meeting. We are seeking your recommendations regarding the **date** for our **2025 LRGVDC State of the COG** event, tentatively scheduled for either the **second** or **third Thursday of January**. The event will take place from **11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.** During this meeting, we will present our **annual report** and **budget**. However, we also want to take the opportunity to highlight the hard work and dedication of all the agencies and departments associated with the **COG**.

Additionally, in our efforts to promote the **LRGVDC** and its regional impact, we would like to recognize **staff members** from the cities and counties within the region. This will be the first time we have hosted an event of this nature, and we aim to honor about **six staff members**. To this end, we kindly request that the board members present today recommend staff members from their respective cities or counties to receive this recognition. We will be sending out **nomination criteria** in a separate email, and your prompt recommendations will be greatly appreciated. We are still finalizing the event location and may hold it at the **Ken Jones Boardroom**, with catering arrangements in place. We are also seeking sponsorship for the event, ensuring that **program funds** are not utilized for this initiative.

Mr. Dominguez emphasized just to be mindful of the upcoming events and we are planning accordingly. Mr. Cruz then mentioned that January 9th appears to be the date we typically hold this meeting during the second week of the month. During this time, we invite the general membership and the Board of Directors to review and approve the budget, which will then be recommended to the Board of Directors by the end of January. The sooner we can meet, the better, as it will give us ample time to compile the necessary information. As mentioned, this will be the first-ever State of the COG address, and we hope to establish a strong foundation for this event to continue annually.

No questions or Comments, Mayor Sepulveda then moved on to Item 5 Department Reports.

5A. Community & Economic Development.

5A1. Ms. Gonzalez started off with Department Action item. Consideration and ACTION to approve RGV Economic Development Advisory Committee (RGV EDAC) Membership. At the September 26, 2024, EDAC meeting, the committee approved the following nominations:

Membership Category	Entity
Texas Workforce Development	Workforce Solutions – Hidalgo County
Texas Workforce Development	Workforce Solutions – Cameron County
Member-at-Large	COSTEP

Troy Allen made a motion to Approve RGV Economic Development Advisory Committee membership, Ron Mills seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.

Department Status Reports.

First, our Region M meeting is scheduled for next week, November 6th, at 9:30 AM. The meeting will be held virtually, and you can find more information on our website.

Next, I would like to extend our gratitude to the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) for organizing a floodway tour for some of our staff. We had the opportunity to visit Retamal Dam and the Amistad Dam, which was an incredible experience. If you've never been out there, it's truly an amazing site. In particular, the Amistad Dam is quite fascinating, as it sits right on the border between Texas and Mexico. I'd like to thank Frank and Juan from IBWC for coordinating the tour.

Lastly, as Javier mentioned earlier, I'd like to share some exciting news. Over the past seven months, Javier and I have been working closely on an application for the Clean Cities Coalition here in South Texas, in collaboration with Sam Spofforth from the Department of Energy (DOE). We are thrilled to announce that our application has been successful, and DOE has officially recognized the South Texas Clean Cities and Communities Coalition (STC4) as an apprentice coalition in the Clean Cities and Communities Partnerships. Our kickoff meeting is scheduled for Monday, and we are proud to be the fourth coalition in the state of Texas. There are currently three other coalitions in the state, and when we approached DOE about starting one, they encouraged us to include the Coastal Bend counties, as well as the areas from Corpus Christi to Laredo. As of now, we have nine members across this region, and we plan to add more members as we continue to grow. This is truly exciting news for our community.

Jim darling then stated that for Region M, we are nearing the completion of the five-year plan. If your municipality does not have a water strategy in place, such as purchasing additional water resources, it is essential to include it in the plan now. Failing to do so will make you ineligible for Texas funding. Additionally, if you want to amend the plan later, the process can be lengthy and costly. I recommend reviewing the plan with your city and ensuring that all relevant strategies are included. It's a simple step now that will help avoid complications in the future.

No further questions or comments, Mayor Sepulveda moved on to Item B

B. Health and Human Services.

Ms. Lopez started off with I would like to remind everyone that it is Medicare open enrollment season, which began on October 15 and ends on December 7. This is a critical time for our older adult community, and our benefit counselors are available to assist with any necessary changes. This year, there are significant changes in the network of doctors, particularly for those enrolled in Advantage plans. Many of these plans do not require co-pay, but only if the doctor is within the network. If individuals' current doctors are no longer in-network, they may face co-pays, which could disrupt their healthcare.

It's crucial that we review their current plans to ensure they can continue receiving uninterrupted services. Changing doctors can be especially challenging for individuals over 60, who often have a long history with multiple healthcare providers. The transition to a new doctor could delay treatments and prescriptions, which can lead to further complications.

This is a sensitive issue, and we need your help in spreading the word. Our benefit counselors are available to assist in person or at home for those who are unable to visit our office. We just need to know who and where they are so we can provide the necessary support. Flyers in both English and Spanish are available at the sign-up table—please feel free to take them and share the information. Thank you for your support in ensuring older adults have access to the healthcare they need. I have one important announcement to share. We are excited to announce our third annual Veterans Festival, and I would like to give a special shout-out to Mayor Garza and his team for their outstanding support. They've been fantastic in ensuring that we have everything we need for this event.

This year, the festival will be held at La Palma Adult Daycare, located at 1215 South Expressway 281 in Edinburg, Texas. The event is sponsored by Eliazar Rodriguez, the Municipal Court Judge in Elsa. We are aiming to engage as many of the 3,113 veterans currently registered in Edinburg, though there are over 18,000 veterans in Hidalgo County and counting. We encourage veterans from Cameron County, Willacy County, and beyond to join us as well.

The festival will take place on November 20th, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing as many veterans and community members as possible for this special event. We will be hosting a barbecue pit raffle at the event, and participants must be present to win. These raffles are exclusively for veterans. Additionally, there will be various health screenings available. One notable service we will be offering is the Eye box, which is a device used to assess concussions. This screening is available for individuals aged 5 to 67, regardless of whether they are veterans.

If a child or adult has participated in any games and has experienced any falls or head impacts, the Icebox offers a quick, non-invasive assessment. The test involves simply placing the face near the device, which measures eye pressure to detect any signs of concussion. This service will be provided at no cost and is a great opportunity for individuals to ensure their safety after a potential head injury.

In addition, we will kick off the Veterans Festival with the Heroes in Action LRGVDC Veteran First Responders Marksmanship Competition, hosted by the Police Academy at El Indio Law Enforcement Gun Range on November 19th. This event will precede the main festival and promises to be an exciting start to the celebrations. The event will be held in Donna, but as you know, we serve the entire region, so we encourage everyone to join us for the festivities. We have many exciting activities planned to honor our veterans.

Additionally, I have provided my quarterly report, which covers the fourth quarter from July to September 24th.

No further questions or comments, Mayor Sepulveda moved on to Item C.

5C. Criminal Justice & Homeland Security

Mr. Merla started off with department status reports. There are no action items on the agenda today, so this will be a quick update. The status report is provided for your review. The months of September and October have been quite busy, with a strong focus on delivering training throughout the region.

As you can see, staff have been actively engaged in various training initiatives, including preparedness planning, hosting 25 individuals for training, conducting dam evaluations with economic development teams, and providing first responder training. Our goal is to bring these resources to the RGV, not only for first responders but also for individuals across the region who can benefit from this training.

Looking ahead, our upcoming training session will focus on de-escalation for law enforcement, but we've confirmed that this session is open to all professionals. If you know anyone in law enforcement, including fire marshals, counselors, or other city employees, please encourage them to attend.

Additionally, this Friday, in collaboration with Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas, we will host a Naloxone (Narcan) training session. This all-day event will take place from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM, with one-hour training slots. Participants can register using the QR code provided. Upon completion, each participant will receive a Narcan kit and a certificate confirming their training.

The urgency of this training cannot be overstated, as fentanyl has caused significant harm alongside other substances like cocaine and methamphetamine. Narcan can extend a person's life by up to 10 minutes or more, depending on the dosage administered. If you know anyone who could benefit from this training, please direct them to attend. The first session had 35 participants, and we are expecting nearly 50 individuals this time around.

Mayor Sepulveda made a comment, I know that we did the "Save a Life" training in Harlingen, it was a crucial initiative that drew significant participation, especially at a time when the issue was prominently covered in the news. However, it's important to emphasize that we should not wait for a crisis to occur before taking proactive steps in addressing these measures.

No further questions or comments, Mayor Sepulveda then moves on to Police Academy.

I have two action items to present, and I will keep them brief as I know everyone's time is valuable.

First, as you may recall, I previously discussed Senate Bill 1852, which mandates that every Texas peace officer receive 16 hours of ALERRT (Active Shooter) training every two years. This is now a state requirement. We have successfully trained over 300 officers to date; however, one of the ongoing challenges we face is the logistics of securing the necessary equipment for this training.

5C1. Consideration and ACTION to utilize LRGV Academy generated program income funds for the purchase of an ALERRT Level 1 Active Shooter Training Kit in the amount of $46,375.13. ***Ron Mills made a motion to approve to utilize LRGV Academy generated program income funds for the purchase of ALERRT Level 1 Active Shooter Training kit, in the amount of $46,375.13. Commissioner Ernie Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

5C2. Consideration and ACTION to Approve Amendments to the Interlocal Agreement for Cooperation Extension Services and the LRGV Academy Site between the Lower Rio Grande Development Council and the City of Mission Texas. ***Ron Mills made a motion to Approve the Amendments to the Interlocal Agreement for Cooperation Extension Services and the LRGV Academy Site between the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and the City of Mission. Lupita Sanchez seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

The Mission Police Department is exploring alternative recruitment strategies. As part of the revised interlocal agreement, the number of tuition-free slots allocated to the department for hosting has been increased. They are now entitled to five tuition-free slots, in addition to five slots offered at half tuition. Furthermore, the overall capacity of the academy has expanded, with the maximum number of students increasing from 24 to 30.

LRGV Academy Status Reports

I am pleased to highlight a significant achievement in my recent reports: on October 11, 2024, our 224th Basic Peace Officer Academy from Weslaco held its graduation ceremony. A total of 15 cadets graduated, and I am proud to report that, for the second consecutive academy, we have achieved a 100% pass rate on the state licensing exam. Every cadet from the past two academies has successfully completed the exam and is now serving in various police departments. The Mercedes Police Department was the largest recipient, hiring six of our graduates. Additionally, other agencies benefiting from this academy include the Sullivan City Police Department and the Cameron County Fire Marshals. In total, 15 new officers have been deployed to the region this past month, and we are proud to continue contributing to the region's law enforcement needs. A total of 15 courses were conducted, and we successfully trained over 300 officers. Year-to-date information has been included in the report.

Currently, the LRGV Academy is in a strong position in terms of training capacity. I would like to express my gratitude to all our partners who have contributed to the establishment and continued success of this program for the region.

With no questions or comments, the meeting proceeded to the Action Items for Valley Metro. It was noted that the Status Report for the Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District is included in the packet distributed to all attendees.

Item D Transportation Valley Metro.

D1. Consideration and ACTION to Approve Acquisition of Vehicles under a State approved Grant for LRGVDC Valley Metro. ***Commissioner Ellie Torres made a motion to approve the Acquisition of Vehicles under State Approved Grant for LRGVDC Valley Metro. Ron Mills seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

We have been awarded two grants: one from TechStat and the other from the FTA. These grants will be used to purchase of two replacement buses.

D2. Consideration and ACTION to approve Hardware Acquisition for LRGVDC Valley Metro. ***Commissioner Ellie Torres made a motion to approve Hardware Acquisition for LRGVDC Valley Metro. Mayor John Cowen seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.*** We acquire IT equipment to upgrade our computer systems, as well as our telecommunications hardware and software.

Mr. Logan then mentioned that our reports are included in the provided packet.

No further Questions or comments, Mayor Sepulveda then moved to Rio Grande Valley MPO.

Eva Garcia started off with I am pleased to introduce Mr. Medina, our new Executive Director. While I am excited to say that we have nine million dollars available, my primary focus today is to provide an opportunity for our new Executive Director to meet all of you. Good afternoon, my name is Michael Medina, and you can refer to me as the "new guy." I am truly humbled and excited to be here, and I look forward to serving the Valley. As Mr. Medina mentioned, I bring over 20 years of experience in transportation planning and policy development, with extensive collaboration with our Mexican counterparts and beyond. One of my key priorities moving forward is to strengthen these partnerships.

You will hear me frequently refer to the term "regional significance." This concept is central to our efforts, as we want to ensure that the plans being developed throughout the Valley are recognized by the MPO and supported in their implementation. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to reach out. I will make sure my contact informationis readily available, and I am always happy to take a call. Eva with RGVMPO started off with, for those who may not be familiar with federal funding processes, we receive both apportionments and allocations. The MPO is responsible for programming the funds allocated to our region. One of the key funding programs we manage is the Transportation Alternatives Program (TA), also known as the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA). Local governments in our region receive this funding, and they are required to obligate and then reimburse it.

We are one of the few MPOs that has a dedicated allocation for TASA funding. While other areas can still apply through a statewide call for projects, which will have about $20 million available for programming, we conduct separate calls for projects. These projects must focus on bicycles, pedestrians, or micro-mobility infrastructure, primarily for transportation purposes rather than recreational use. Additionally, these projects must have a direct connection to the surface transportation system, provide a public benefit, and be publicly accessible.

Examples of eligible projects include shared-use paths, side paths, separated bicycle lanes, and other bike lane types. We are preparing to open a new call for projects with $9 million available for funding. For more information, visit our website at RGVMPO.org under the "Funding Opportunities" section. The federal funding amount available for programming is outlined, and we have a program guide, scoring criteria, and the application itself available on our website. We will be opening a long call for projects starting November 1st. If your community requires technical assistance, we are available to help with mapping or application guidance. The application deadline is January 31st.

While I intended to review the scoring criteria in detail, I will skip that due to time constraints. However, some key factors in the scoring process include project readiness, resiliency, safety, equity, and connectivity. Additionally, the application includes questions regarding whether your project is part of an approved plan. For communities within Hidalgo County, the Hidalgo County Active Plan will be a valuable resource. In Cameron County, the Caracara Trails plan is available, and for those in Willacy or Starr County, please feel free to reach out to me for assistance in identifying relevant state plans that may include your projects.

If your project is selected for funding, the RGVMPO will help monitor key development milestones. This includes ensuring that the state DOT processes advanced funding agreements efficiently. You will have approximately one year from the time of the award to work with the state on these agreements. We also track the progress of your project, and we encourage timely action—projects that obligate funds to receive positive recognition. However, if a project fails to oblige its funding, those funds will lapse, which can negatively impact the region. One of the primary reasons we closely monitor project obligations is through the Federal Project Authorization Agreement. Once you receive authorization to proceed, you can begin submitting billing to the state and federal government for reimbursement, as this is a reimbursement-based program.

To assist with the process, we are offering two workshops, both covering the same content. The first will be held on November 1st at 1:30 PM, and the second on November 13th, also at 1:30 PM. These workshops will be recorded and posted online, so even if you're unable to attend, you can access them on our website. However, attending in person allows for real-time questions and helps us identify areas where additional clarification may be needed.

The key timeline of activities for the Transportation Alternatives Program is as follows:

- This Friday, we will open the call for projects and host the two virtual workshops, which will be recorded.
- Responses to any questions received will be posted by November 27th.
- The deadline for requesting technical assistance is December 23rd.
- The application deadline is January 31st, providing about three months to develop and submit a project application.
- In February, our staff at the MPO and the state will review applications before they are sent to evaluators, including bicycle and pedestrian advocates and other community representatives.
- We expect to complete the approval process and announce the awards by May.

We understand that these projects require time to develop, and we are here to support you throughout the entire process. With that, are there any questions regarding the RGVMPO's Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects opening this Friday?

With no further questions or comments Mayor Sepulveda moved on to Item #7

#7 New & Unfinished Business

There being no further business to come before the board, Mayor Sepulveda made a motion to adjourn at 1:18 PM

_____

President Mayor Norma Sepulveda

ATTEST:

_____

Liza Alfaro, Recording Secretary

ITEM # 3

PUBLIC COMMENT

ITEM#4.A

ADMINISTRATION

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #4 Administration.....Manuel Cruz
Executive Director

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve Social Media Policy and Generative Artificial Intelligence.

   As the governing body of the LRGVDC, that LRGVDC Board of Directors is responsible for the general policies and programs for the LRGVDC. The LRGVDC's Personnel Policy Manual includes a comprehensive set of policies established to provide rules, guidelines, and standards to our professional staff and representatives.

   These additional policies are necessary to remain compliant, and ensure staff and representatives are provided with clear guidance. The attached social media Policy and Generative Artificial Intelligence policy will be added to the following section:

   - 10.08 Electronic Communications and Internet Use
   - 10.08.01 Social Media and Artificial Intelligence Guidelines

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR OFFICIAL OR AUTHORIZED COUNCIL ACCOUNTS AND BUSINESS USE

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish general standards and responsibilities for the acceptable use of social media accounts established and maintained by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council to conduct official business. The evolving landscape of the internet and its central role in the modern communications landscape requires the selection and management of social media accounts to be both strategic and well-controlled. Also, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's interest in determining what information is provided to the public and by which means requires a set of clear, well-established procedures for the effective use of social media accounts.

B. DEFINITIONS

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council defines "social media" as web-based platforms or services that allow a person to create a profile and interact with other individuals. Interactions may take the form of chatting, instant messaging, or posting text, multimedia content, or other files. Examples of social media platforms and services include, but are not limited to, LinkedIn, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and other online forums. These social media platforms are hosted by third parties, and the use of those platforms is governed by the social media providers' own policies, such as their respective privacy policies and terms of service, and not by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council.

C. PROHIBITED SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

No Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council employee, contractor, consultant, paid or unpaid interns, or other users of government networks will install or operate any social media accounts for or on behalf of Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council [using any "covered applications" prohibited by Texas Government Code Chapter 620 on Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council -owned or-leased devices, except as permitted by law.

A covered application is:

1. The social media service TikTok or any successor application or service developed or provided by ByteDance Limited, or an entity owned by ByteDance Limited; or
2. A social media application or service specified by proclamation of the Governor under Texas Government Code Section 620.005.

D. PRIVACY

Only public information is permitted to be posted on social media accounts maintained by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. If communication that takes place on Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council social media platforms involves or requires private information, communication will be redirected through other appropriate channels.

Postings from the public on Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council social media platforms become public record, and users shall have no expectation of privacy. As such, users are strongly encouraged to avoid giving out any personal information in such public forums. All content, comments and replies posted are subject to the Texas Public Information Act and may be subject to public information requests.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council is not responsible for content posted by others to any social media platforms maintained by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. Social media platform users that enter their own personal information do so at their own risk; Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council is not responsible for the voluntary public display of such private information. Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council may remove postings to its social media platforms that contain personally identifiable information, but neither Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, nor its licensors or contractors, are responsible for any breach of privacy or damages caused by delays in such removal.

E. RECORDS RETENTION

Information posted or shared on a social media page maintained by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council qualifies as a business record. Retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (digital text, photos, audio, or video, for example). Accordingly, such information will be retained or destroyed in accordance with Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council 's records retention schedule and any applicable laws or rules.

F. SECURITY

All Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council information technology security policies shall apply to all Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council social media accounts.

G. TERMS OF SERVICE

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's social media platforms are third-party platforms with terms of service and policies that are not governed by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. These third-party platforms are not official Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council websites and the third-party's website terms of service and policies apply. Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council does not have ownership or control of any such social media platforms and is therefore not responsible for any user or third-party content or submissions contained on such platforms, nor is Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council responsible for any user data or location information that may be collected by such third parties.

Visitors and users of social media services are bound by the terms of service and user agreements for the platform and are encouraged to familiarize themselves with such terms of use.

H. CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

All published Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council social media content is subject to monitoring. This content may take the form of digital text, photography images, or videos. Any posts, comments, information, other communications, or material of any type or nature that others submit to Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's social media platforms is done solely at their own risk and without any expectation of privacy.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council will not post or share on its social media pages any information that is confidential or prohibited under any law or rule. Due to legal constraints, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council will not address questions or comments relating to matters or issues in pending or anticipated litigation or alternative dispute resolution.

Members of the public should not post or share information that is personal, confidential, sensitive, obscene, threatening, harassing, or discriminatory, or would otherwise compromise public safety or incite violence or illegal activities.

In order to preserve a respectful exchange of information on its social media, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council reserves the right to reject or remove any posts deviating from organization-specific topics, such as those related to the organization's services, and/or those which deviate significantly from a particular conversational thread. While Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council cannot guarantee the privacy and safety of these platforms, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council shall maintain exclusive control of its social media accounts and will regularly monitor its pages.

Accordingly, user-generated posts will be rejected or removed, if possible, when the content of a post:

- is off-subject or out of context;
- contains obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest;
- contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information;
- contains offensive terms that target protected classes;
- is threatening, harassing, or discriminatory;
- incites or promotes violence or illegal activities;
- contains information that reasonably could compromise public safety;
- advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual;
- promotes, endorses, or denigrates political campaigns or candidates; or
- are of a repetitive or "spamming" nature (the same content posted multiple times).

In the above cases, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council will normally reject or remove the content without notifying the poster. Anonymous comments are considered spam and may be removed.

The views expressed in user-posted comments, replies, retweets, likes, followers, favorites, and/or links reflect those of the author(s) and do not imply endorsement or agreement by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, and do not necessarily reflect the official views and/or policies of Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. All content, comments, replies, and/or retweets, posted to any official Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council social media platform are subject to Texas public information laws.

I. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council respects the rights of intellectual property owners and shall not intentionally infringe on those rights. Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council use of protected intellectual property on Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's social media page shall be in compliance with applicable laws and rules.

The terms of service of the respective social media accounts shall govern the posting or sharing of intellectual property on an official social media page by a member of the public.

If an intellectual property owner believes his/her rights have been infringed by the posting or sharing of intellectual property on an official social media page, he/she should contact Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council at:

(956)682-3481

J. LINKS

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council is neither responsible for the content nor endorses any platform that has a link to or from any official Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council social media platform. Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council may make available social media applications and may publish social media content to third-party platforms for informational purposes only. This does not imply Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council 's endorsement, agreement or support of any platform content or sponsor. These platforms are not official government websites and therefore the external platforms' policies apply.

K. ACCESSIBILITY

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council must generally ensure that members of the public with disabilities have access to and the use of Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council electronic and information resources, including social media, in a comparable manner as persons without disabilities.

L. LEGAL LIABILITY

All Authorized Agents and employees must recognize that they may be subject themselves and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council to civil litigation for anything written or posted online. This includes, but is not limited to, commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, confidential, proprietary, harassing, libelous, in violation of copyright laws, or that creates a hostile work environment.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USAGE POLICY

A. PURPOSE

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council remains committed to adopting new technologies to aid our mission, but Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council also understands the risks and limitations that come with emerging technology. The purpose of this policy is to ensure responsible use of generative AI and to protect employees, clients, vendors, customers, and Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council from harm.

While AI can be used to perform a variety of functions, this policy addresses only the use of generative AI, defined as a web-based interface such as ChatGPT, GPT-4, Google Gemini, or other platforms to ask or "prompt" the AI in a conversational manner to find answers to questions or to create or edit written content. **Any use of AI not covered by this policy must receive prior written approval from Human Resources or Executive Director.**

There are risks in using this technology, including uncertainty about ownership of any created documents or content. Security, confidentiality, and privacy concerns arise when inputting proprietary information or sensitive information when interacting with AI. Additionally, AI-generated content can provide inaccurate information, as it may be outdated, misleading, or fabricated through what is called a "hallucination."

This policy applies to all employees and contractors of Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and to all work associated with Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council that those employees and/or contractors perform, whether on or off Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council premises.

B. TRAINING

If AI is to be utilized in work related context; all employees will be trained in the proper use of generative AI in the workplace.

All employees using generative AI for work purposes must attend training on the proper use of these technologies before doing so.

All questions related to this training should be addressed to Human Resources or the Executive Director.

C. PUBLIC INFORMATION

All information and any work product created by the employee and AI included in a Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council document or related work product should be considered to be a public document and may be subject to a Texas Public Information Act request. Documents or communications created using generative AI for official business use which were created or stored on an employee's personal devices or personal accounts may also be subject to a Texas Public Information Act request.

D. MEETINGS

The use of AI as an assistant in internal and external videoconference meetings hosted by and within Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council is prohibited. Only authorized participants will be permitted to attend Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council videoconferences. The summary of a meeting and meeting minutes generated by the designated employee or officer shall be the only official records of any meeting.

E. ETHICAL USE

Employees must use generative AI in accordance with all Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's personnel and operations policies and procedures, including Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council conduct and antidiscrimination policies. These technologies must not be used to create content that is inappropriate, discriminatory, or otherwise harmful to others or Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. Such use will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

F. PRIVACY AND MONITORING

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's relevant monitoring policies apply when using generative AI with Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council equipment.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact Human Resources or the Executive Director.

G. USE OF GENERATIVE AI IS PROHIBITED

Due to the risks described above, all use of generative AI in the course of performing work for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council is prohibited. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council email addresses, credentials, or phone numbers may not be used to create an account with these technologies, and no Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council data of any kind may be submitted (copied, typed, inserted, uploaded, etc.) into these platforms.

Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

All AI-generated content must be reviewed for accuracy before relying on it for work purposes. If a reliable source cannot be found to verify information generated by AI, that information cannot be used for work purposes. **Employees are ultimately responsible for the accuracy and quality of any work product created with the assistance of generative AI.**

Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #4 Administration.....Manuel Cruz
Executive Director

2. Consideration and ACTION to approve Covered Application and Prohibited Technology Policy.

The 88th Texas Legislature (2022) passed Senate Bill 1893, which prohibits the use of certain social media applications and services on state and local government devices. This requires all local governments to ban the video sharing application TikTok and other prohibited technology from all agency owned devices and networks over the Chinese Communist Party's ability to use the application for surveilling Texans. Exceptions may be approved by head of the agency, however, these exceptions to covered application policies may only be granted to the extent necessary for providing law enforcement or for developing or implementing information security measures.

SB 1893 delayed the adoption until such time DIR and DPS developed a model policy for the prohibition of Covered Application.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Covered Applications and Prohibited Technology Policy

Date: December 11, 2024

Version: 1.0

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

On December 7, 2022, Governor Greg Abbott required all state agencies to ban the video-sharing application TikTok from all state-owned and state-issued devices and networks over the Chinese Communist Party's ability to use the application for surveilling Texans. Governor Abbott also directed the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) to develop a plan providing state agencies guidance on managing personal devices used to conduct state business. Following the issuance of the Governor's directive, the 88th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1893, which prohibits the use of covered applications on governmental entity devices.

1.2 Scope and Application

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council covered applications policy is as described by Section 2.0.

2.0 Covered Applications Policy for Governmental Entities

2.1 Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to all Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council full- and part-time employees, contractors, paid or unpaid interns, and other users of government networks. All Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council employees are responsible for complying with this policy.

A covered application is:

- The social media service TikTok or any successor application or service developed or provided by ByteDance Limited, or an entity owned by ByteDance Limited.
- A social media application or service specified by proclamation of the governor under Government Code Section 620.005.

2.2 Covered Applications on Government-Owned or Leased Devices

Except where approved exceptions apply, the use or installation of covered applications is prohibited on all government-owned or -leased devices, including cell phones, tablets, desktop and laptop computers, and other internet-capable devices.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council will identify, track, and manage all government-owned or -leased devices including mobile phones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, or any other internet-capable devices to:

a. Prohibit the installation of a covered application.
b. Prohibit the use of a covered application.
c. Remove a covered application from a government-owned or -leased device that was on the device prior to the passage of S.B. 1893 (88th Leg, R.S.).
d. Remove an application from a government-owned or -leased device if the Governor issues a proclamation identifying it as a covered application.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council will manage all government-owned or leased mobile devices by implementing the security measures listed below:

a. Restrict access to "app stores" or unauthorized software repositories to prevent the installation of unauthorized applications.
b. Maintain the ability to remotely wipe non-compliant or compromised mobile devices.
c. Maintain the ability to remotely uninstall unauthorized software from mobile devices.

2.3 Ongoing and Emerging Technology Threats

To provide protection against ongoing and emerging technological threats to the government's sensitive information and critical infrastructure, DPS and DIR will regularly monitor and evaluate additional social media applications or services that pose a risk to this state.

DIR will annually submit to the Governor a list of social media applications and services identified as posing a risk to Texas. The Governor may proclaim items on this list as covered applications that are subject to this policy.

If the Governor identifies an item on the DIR-posted list described by this section, then Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council will remove and prohibit the covered application.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council may also prohibit social media applications or services in addition to those specified by proclamation of the Governor.

2.4 Personal Device Policy

This policy includes personal devices that are used by employees performing services in connection with or for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. These employees must delete all TikTok applications from their personal devices if the devices are in any way used in the performance of work for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council.

Should evidence of the presence or use of TikTok or ByteDance applications be discovered on a personal device the employee uses for work, the employee will be required to delete the application(s) immediately. Continued violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

Employees who need help deleting TikTok or other applications from a device should contact the IT help desk or Human Resources

2.5 Covered Application Exceptions

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council may permit exceptions authorizing the installation and use of a covered application on Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council -owned or -leased devices consistent with the authority provided by Government Code Chapter 620.

Government Code Section 620.004 only allows Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council to install and use a covered application on an applicable device to the extent necessary for:

(1) Providing law enforcement; or
(2) Developing or implementing information security measures.

If Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council authorizes an exception allowing for the installation and use of a covered application, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council must use measures to mitigate the risks posed to the state during the application's use.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council must document whichever measures it took to mitigate the risks posed to the state during the use of the covered application.

3.0 Policy Compliance

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council will verify compliance with this policy through various methods, including but not limited to, IT/security system reports and feedback to leadership.

An employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Scope

This policy applies to all state agencies to whom the Governor issued his December 7, 2022, directive. This policy applies to all Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council employees, including interns and apprentices, contractors, and users of state networks. All Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council employees, contractors, and state network users to whom this policy applies are responsible for complying with these requirements and prohibitions.

4.0 POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to reflect changes in state law, additions to applications identified under Government Code Section 620.006, updates to the prohibited technology list posted to DIR's website, or to suit the needs of Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Employee Certification

☐ I certify that I have removed TikTok from all personal device(s) that I use in the performance of work on government contracts.
☐ I certify that I do not use a personal device for the performance of work on any government contract.

_____
Employee name

_____ _____
Employee signature Date

AN ACT

relating to prohibiting the use of certain social media applications and services on devices owned or leased by governmental entities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subtitle A, Title 6, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 620 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 620. USE OF CERTAIN SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES ON GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY DEVICES PROHIBITED

Sec. 620.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Covered application" means:

(A) the social media service TikTok or any successor application or service developed or provided by ByteDance Limited or an entity owned by ByteDance Limited; or

(B) a social media application or service specified by proclamation of the governor under Section 620.005.

(2) "Governmental entity" means:

(A) a department, commission, board, office, or other agency that is in the executive or legislative branch of state government and that was created by the constitution or a statute, including an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code;

(B) the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, a court of appeals, a district court, or the Texas Judicial Council or another agency in the judicial branch of state government; or

(C) a political subdivision of this state, including a municipality, county, or special purpose district.

Sec. 620.002. DEFINING SECURITY RISK TO THIS STATE. For purposes of this chapter, a social media application or service poses a risk to this state if:

(1) the provider of the application or service may be required by a foreign government, or an entity associated with a foreign government, to provide confidential or private personal information collected by the provider through the application or service to the foreign government or associated entity without substantial due process rights or similar legal protections; or

(2) the application or service poses a similar risk to the security of this state's sensitive information, critical infrastructure, or both, as an application or service described by Section 620.001(1)(A).

Sec. 620.003. PROHIBITION; MODEL POLICY. (a) Subject to Section 620.004, a governmental entity shall adopt a policy prohibiting the installation or use of a covered application on any device owned or leased by the governmental entity and requiring the removal of covered applications from those devices.

(b) The Department of Information Resources and the Department of Public Safety shall jointly develop a model policy for governmental entities to use in developing the policy required by Subsection (a).

Sec. 620.004. EXCEPTIONS; MITIGATING MEASURES. (a) A policy adopted under Section 620.003 may provide for the installation and use of a covered application to the extent necessary for:

(1) providing law enforcement; or

(2) developing or implementing information security measures.

(b) A policy allowing the installation and use of a covered

application under Subsection (a) must require:

(1) the use of measures to mitigate risks posed to this state during the use of the covered application; and

(2) the documentation of those measures.

Sec. 620.005. APPLICATIONS IDENTIFIED BY GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION. The governor by proclamation may identify social media applications or services that pose a risk to this state as described by Section 620.002.

Sec. 620.006. APPLICATION IDENTIFIED BY DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY. (a) The Department of Information Resources and the Department of Public Safety shall jointly identify social media applications or services that pose a risk to this state as described by Section 620.002.

(b) The Department of Information Resources shall:

(1) annually submit a list of applications and services identified under Subsection (a) to the governor;

(2) publish the list on the department's publicly accessible Internet website; and

(3) periodically update the list on that website.

SECTION 2. Not later than the 60th day after the date the Department of Information Resources and the Department of Public Safety make available the model policy required by Section 620.003(b), Government Code, as added by this Act, each governmental entity shall adopt the policy required by Section 620.003(a), Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

_____ _____

President of the Senate Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1893 passed the Senate on April 18, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0; May 16, 2023, Senate refused to concur in House amendments and requested appointment of Conference Committee; May 17, 2023, House granted request of the Senate; May 27, 2023, Senate adopted Conference Committee Report by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 1.

_____

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 1893 passed the House, with amendments, on May 9, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, two present not voting; May 17, 2023, House granted request of the Senate for appointment of Conference Committee; May 28, 2023, House adopted Conference Committee Report by the following vote: Yeas 139, Nays 2, two present not voting.

_____

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

_____
Date

_____
Governor

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #4 Administration.....Manuel Cruz
Executive Director

3. Consideration and ACTION to approve Interlocal Cooperation Contract Between the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley & The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, relating to the use of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Regional Security Operations Center. (RSOC) Services.

As reported by DIR, cyberthreats to public entities continually increase, government entities in all regions need to be protected against attacks that can disrupt the delivery of services or compromise Texan's information. In 2020, DIR recommended that the legislature create Regional Security Operations Centers (RSOC) and placed them in universities around the state to provide personnel & technical support close to local governments that would need assistance with major cybersecurity incidents, as well as network security infrastructure that regional governments can utilize. The RSOC recommendation was included in Senate Bill 475, passed in the 87th Session of the Texas Legislature, and codified in Texas Government Code Chapter 2059, Subchapter E.

Government Code Section 2059.204 permits DIR and its university partner to offer participating entities the following security services through the RSOCs:

1. Real-time network security monitoring to detect and respond to network security events that may jeopardize participating organizations and the residents of this state;
2. Alerts and guidance for defeating security threats;
3. Immediate response to counter security activity that exposes participating entities and the residents of this state to risk including remote and onsite cybersecurity incident responders;
4. Policy and Planning to provide guidance on cybersecurity policies and plans to improve the cybersecurity posture of RSOC customers; and
5. Cybersecurity educational and awareness services to assist participating organizations in establishing and strengthening sound security practices, including developing model policies and planning to assist participating organizations in maturing their cybersecurity posture.

On October 9th, we had the opportunity to meet the staff from the UTRGV RSOC. Only 3 RSOCs have been implemented in Texas. Attached for your review and consideration it a copy of the ILA.

INTERLOCAL COOPERATION CONTRACT
BETWEEN
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY
AND
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
RELATING TO THE USE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY
REGIONAL SECURITY OPERATIONS CENTER(RSOC)SERVICES

THIS INTERLOCAL COOPERATION CONTRACT (ILC) is entered into by and between [Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council] and THE UNIVERISTY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY(UTRGV) (referred to individually as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties"), pursuant to the authority granted and in compliance with the provisions of the Interlocal Cooperation Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 791. This ILC is created to give effect to the intent and purpose of Chapter 2059, Texas Government Code, concerning Regional Network Security Centers, specifically sections 2059.201, 2059.202, 2059.203, 2059.204, and 2059.205 and authorizes RSOC Customer to participate in the RSOC operated by UTRGV. RSOC Customer acknowledges and agrees that this ILC is with UTRGV and, therefore, RSOC Customer does not have privity of contract with any UTRGV service provider(s). The RSOC shall use reasonable efforts to provide the services (the "Services") described in the Service Description.

SECTION I CONTRACTING PARTIES RSOC CUSTOMER: [Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council]
PERFORMING AGENCY: The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV)
Contract No. ISD0001

SECTION II STATEMENT OF SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED 2.1 Effect of ILC and General Process
Specific services will be outlined in the statement of work which will be developed during the onboarding processes.

Per Government Code Section 2059.204, the Department of Information Resources DIR and its university partner may include, but is not obligated to, provide the following security services through the RSOCs:

(a) real-time network security monitoring to detect and respond to network security events that may jeopardize this state and the residents of this state;
(b) alerts and guidance for defeating network security threats, including firewall configuration, installation, management, and monitoring, intelligence gathering, and protocol analysis;
(c) immediate response to counter network security activity that exposes this state and the residents of this state to risk, including complete intrusion detection system installation, management, and monitoring for participating entities;
(d) development, coordination, and execution of statewide cybersecurity operations to isolate, contain, and mitigate the impact of network security incidents for participating entities; and
(e) cybersecurity educational services.

Additional RSOC services may be offered to customers and would be listed in the scope of work or scope of work addendums as added.
This Interlocal Contract is between UTRGV and RSOC Customer and does not replace or supersede any other contracts for services, such as those offered by DIR. The terms of relevant DIR Shared Services Contracts, where applicable, will apply to this ILC and will remain in full force and effect except as may be expressly modified by any amendment to the specific DIR Shared Services Contract. Such amendments will automatically apply to this ILC with no further action by the Parties.

SECTION III RSOC CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION 3.1 RSOC Customer Specific Requirements
RSOC Customer shall notify UTRGV, in writing prior to execution of this ILC, of all RSOC Customer-specific requirements ("RSOC Customer-Specific Legal Requirements") that pertain to any part of RSOC Customer's business that is supported by UTRGV under this ILC. The Parties intend that if the Parties agree such RSOC Customer-Specific Requirements will be identified and included in the scope of work (SOW) to RSOC Customer. RSOC Customer shall use commercially reasonable efforts to notify UTRGV, in writing, of any changes to RSOC Customer-Specific Requirements that may, in any way, impact the performance, provision, receipt and use of Services. If necessary to facilitate UTRGV compliance, RSOC Customer shall provide written interpretation to UTRGV of any RSOC Customer-Specific Requirements. Should any Customer-Specific Requirements that are amended after the execution of this ILC impede or otherwise impact the ability of UTRGV to perform the services provided for herein, UTRGV may terminate this ILC immediately without further obligation to the Customer.

3.2 RSOC Responsibilities
The RSOC is responsible for
(a) provide security monitoring tools;
(b) monitoring of security events;
(c) notification of security events that require follow-up; and
(d) reporting.

3.3 RSOC Customer responsibilities
Where appropriate, RSOC Customer shall support the following:

(a) Software currency standards are established for the environment. RSOC Customers are expected to remediate applications in order to comply with the standards;
(b) Ensure network connectivity and sufficient bandwidth to meet RSOC Customer's needs;
(c) Collaborate with the RSOC to establish and leverage standard, regular change windows to support changes to enterprise systems;
(d) Allocate appropriate resources to perform the installation and support of the RSOC tools to enable RSOC to provide the services;
(e) Coordinate with the RSOC to facilitate the uninterrupted collection of the data required for the RSOC to perform the services;
(f) Collaborate with RSOC to develop and maintain the incident escalation matrix and make personnel available to take action on a RSOC reported incident or alert;

(g) Coordinate with the RSOC to act on planned and unplanned upgrades, maintenance, or other system changes within a mutually agreed upon timeframe;
(h) Engage with the RSOC to act on reported incidents within a mutually agreed upon timeframe;
(i) Participate as possible, in evaluation and continuous improvement discussions to improve offering and services; and
(j) Participate, as possible, in area-wide activities and discussions to improve and enhance the collaboration and cooperation between and among partner organizations to improve the cybersecurity posture of the region.

RSOC Customer acknowledges that any failure on its part to follow the above recommendations may place its own data and operations at risk.

3.4 RSOC Customer Equipment and Facilities
Any use by UTRGV of RSOC Customer Equipment and/or Facilities shall be limited to the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of this ILC. RSOC Customer will retain ownership of RSOC Customer Equipment.

3.5 Security
RSOC Customer agrees to comply with security recommendations outlined in the Statement of Work (See 2.1), as amended from time to time by UTRGV. RSOC Customer agrees to inform UTRGV as to any RSOC Customer specific security considerations. RSOC Customer acknowledges that any failure on its part to follow the above recommendations may place its own data and operations at risk.

RSOC Customer accepts the related potential risks and liabilities that are created by RSOC Customer's failure to comply with the recommendations if it is determined by UTRGV and/or its service provider(s) in their sole discretion, such recommendations would have prevented an issue. UTRGV and/or service provider(s) accepts no responsibility for the risk or liability incurred due to a RSOC Customer's decision to not follow UTRGV's recommendations. Additionally, failure to comply with security standards, policies, and procedures may lead to the suspension or termination of the availability of certain Applications and services. UTRGV will give the RSOC Customer notification of non-compliance.

RSOC Customer recognizes and accepts that cybersecurity, Internet, and technology related activities have inherent risks of breach, compromise, misuse, or disruptions and that no service can guarantee that a breach, compromise, misuse, disruption or similar incident will not occur.

SECTION IV 4.1 PRICING
The RSOC program is funded by DIR through legislative appropriations. Licenses and resources will be applied to RSOC Customer based on available funding and capacity. If a scenario arises where funding is impacted and the RSOC customer wishes to continue to receive the RSOC services they have subscribed to, a cost recovery model will be defined and mutually agreed to via changes to SOW.

** Please note that not all RSOC services will have a cost associated with them or are of a very low cost so, even if funding is impacted, RSOC Partnership can continue regardless of funding from the State of Texas.

4.2 PAYMENT FOR SERVICES
While no costs are anticipated at this time, in the event that such costs would arise, UTRGV shall invoice RSOC Customer for Services on an agreed to schedule based on an addendum to the contract agreed to by both parties. Each invoice shall include the applicable charges for Services received from UTRGV, and all allocated charges incurred by UTRGV on behalf of RSOC Customer in accordance with this ILC.

5. 1 SECTION V TERM AND TERMINATION OF CONTRACT AND SERVICES 5.1 Term and Termination of ILC
The term of this ILC shall commence upon start of services or execution of this ILC, whichever shall come earlier, and shall terminate upon mutual agreement of the Parties. This ILC is contingent on the continued appropriation of sufficient funds to pay the amounts specified in RSOC Customer's Requests for Services, including the continued availability of sufficient relevant federal funds if applicable. Continuation of the ILC is also contingent on the continued statutory authority of the Parties to contract for the Services.

RSOC Customer shall provide at least sixty (60) days' written notice to UTRGV prior to termination. If this ILC is terminated for any reason other than change in funding for RSOC program, lack of sufficient funds, lack of statutory authority, or material breach by UTRGV, RSOC Customer shall pay UTRGV an amount sufficient to reimburse UTRGV for any termination charges and any termination assistance charges incurred as a result of such termination by RSOC Customer. This reimbursement for costs incurred by UTRGV shall be negotiated at the time of the contract termination, if any costs exist.

5.2 Termination of Services
UTRGV may terminate this ILC by giving the Customer sixty (60) calendar days written notice.

SECTION VI MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS 6.1 Public Information Act Requests
Under Chapter 552, Texas Government Code (the Public Information Act), information held by UTRGV in connection with the RSOC is information collected, assembled, and maintained for UTRGV. If RSOC Customer receives a Public Information Act request for information that RSOC Customer possesses, RSOC Customer shall respond to the request as it relates to the information held by RSOC Customer. Responses to requests for confidential information shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of the Public Information Act relating to Attorney General Decisions. Neither Party is authorized to receive or respond to Public Information Act requests on behalf of the other, but both Parties agree to inform the other Party upon receipt and prior to responding to a Public Information Act Request related to this ILC or the services contemplated herein.

6.2 Confidential Information
Each Party shall maintain the confidentiality of information to the same extent that and with the same degree of care used to protect their own confidential information. UTRGV acknowledges that RSOC Customer may be legally prohibited from disclosing or allowing access to certain confidential data in its possession to any third party, including UTRGV and that other data compliance restrictions could apply. RSOC customer further acknowledges that UTRGV will collect and use de-identified data collected in RSOC operations to build a data repository for educational and research purposes.

UTRGV and RSOC Customer shall determine whether:

(1) RSOC Customer is subject to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of1974 (FERPA) regulations at 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 99;

(2) RSOC Customer receives Federal tax returns or return information and must comply with the requirement of IRS Publication 1075 and Exhibit 7 to IRS Publication1075; or

(3) if RSOC Customer is subject to any other requirements specific to the provision of Services.

(4) RSOC Customer is subject to additional data compliance regulations or restrictions requiring specialized requirements to be observed.

The Parties shall negotiate in good faith to determine the ability of and mechanisms for UTRGV to receive data or information protected by such regulations.

6.3 Ownership of Data

The RSOC Customer will retain full ownership of the identifiable data the RSOC Customer feeds to UTRGV as part of this agreement including all right(s), title, and interest in or to the data. UTRGV is permitted to use identifiable data as needed to perform services provided under this agreement. At termination of contract, UTRGV will destroy all identifiable data provided by RSOC Customer within 30 days of termination. UTRGV will retain all right(s), title, and interests in or to de-identifiable data collected and all work product materials related to training, education, and awareness materials developed for RSOC use.

6.3.1

For purposes of this ILC and where applicable, UTRGV hereby acknowledges its obligations to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), including but not limited to the obligation to maintain confidentiality of student education records. Where applicable, The Educational Entity hereby designates UTRGV as a "School Official" as an outside service provider used by the RSOC Customer to perform institutional services, only to the extent that access to the records is required in order to carry out the obligations under this ILC. The Parties understand that any unauthorized disclosure of confidential student information is illegal as provided in FERPA and its implementing regulations. Disclosure of confidential student information received under this ILC to a third party is not authorized. Within 30 days of the effective termination of this ILC, UTRGV shall return any confidential student information or records to RSOC Customer lawfully obligated to maintain the confidentiality of such information or records.

6.4 Notification Information

Contact information for purposes of notification for each Party is set forth below.

RSOC Customer’s Primary Contact for contract
Name: Manuel Cruz
Title: Executive Director
Address: 301 W Railroad St, Weslaco, TX 78596
Telephone: (956) 682-3481
email: mcruz@lrgvdc.org)

UTRGV’s Primary Contact for contract
Name: Kevin Crouse
Title: Chief Information Security Officer

Address: 1202 W University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539
Telephone: 956-665-7823
Email: Kevin.Crouse@utrgv.edu

6.5 Binding Effect
The Parties hereto bind themselves to the faithful performance of their respective obligations under this ILC.

6.6 Amendments
This ILC may not be amended except by written document signed by the Parties hereto or as specified within this ILC or the attachment being amended.

6.7 Conflicts between Agreements
If the terms of this Contract conflict with the terms of any other contract between the Parties, the most recent contract shall prevail.

6.8 Responsibilities of the Parties
The Parties shall comply with all federal, state and local laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations and with the orders and decrees of any courts or administrative bodies or tribunals in any manner affecting the performance of the ILC. The parties do not intend to create a joint venture. Each Party acknowledges it is not an agent, servant or employee of the other. Each Party is responsible for its own acts and deeds and for those of its agents, servants and employees. Notwithstanding the foregoing, UTRGV will cooperate with RSOC Customer in all reasonable respects to resolve any issues pertaining to federal funding in connection with this ILC. RSOC Customer shall comply with all policies, procedures, and processes as provided by UTRGV.

In the event RSOC Customer actions, failure to perform certain responsibilities, or Request for Services result in financial costs to UTRGV, including interest accrued, those costs shall be the responsibility of RSOC Customer. UTRGV and RSOC Customer shall coordinate and plan for situations where conflicts, failure to perform or meet timely deadlines, or competition for resources may occur during the term of this contract.

6.9 Audit Rights of the State Auditor's Office
In accordance with Section 2262.154, Texas Government Code and other applicable law, the Parties acknowledge and agree that:

(1) the state auditor, the Parties' internal auditors, and if applicable, the Office of Inspector General of RSOC Customer or their designees may conduct audits or investigations of any entity receiving funds from the state directly under the Contract or indirectly through a subcontract under the Contracts;

(2) that the acceptance of funds directly through this Contract or indirectly through a subcontractor under the Contract acts as acceptance of the authority of the state auditor, under the direction of the legislative audit committee, the Parties' internal auditors, and if applicable, the Office of Inspector General of RSOC Customer or their designees to conduct audits or investigations in connection with those funds; and

(3) that the Parties shall provide such auditors or inspectors with access to any information considered relevant by such auditors or inspectors to their investigations or audits.

6.10 General Terms
Except as expressly provided herein, no provision of this ILC will constitute or be construed as a waiver of any of the privileges, rights, defenses, remedies or immunities available to RSOC Customer. The failure to enforce, or any delay in the enforcement of, any privileges, rights, defenses, remedies, or immunities available to RSOC Customer by law will not constitute a waiver of said privileges, rights, defenses, remedies, or immunities or be considered as a basis for estoppel. Except as expressly provided herein, UTRGV and RSOC Customer do not waive any privileges, rights, defenses, remedies, or immunities available to UTRGV or RSOC Customer.

This Customer Agreement will be construed and governed by the laws of the State of Texas. Venue for any action relating to this Customer Agreement is in Texas state courts in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas, or, with respect to any matter in which the federal courts have exclusive jurisdiction, the federal courts for Hidalgo County, Texas. If one or more provisions of this ILC, or the application of any provision to any Party or circumstance, is held invalid, unenforceable, or illegal in any respect, the remainder of this ILC and the application of the provision to other Parties or circumstances will remain valid and in full force and effect.

6.11 Liability
UTRGV is not responsible to defend, indemnify, or hold RSOC Customer harmless for or against any actions, claims, or complaints, whether formal or informal, actual, or threatened, arising from the failure to act by indemnitor (including, without limitation, negligent or willful misconduct).

RSOC Customer is not responsible to defend, indemnify, or hold UTRGV harmless for or against any actions, claims, or complaints, whether formal or informal, actual, or threatened, arising from the failure to act by indemnitor (including, without limitation, negligent or willful misconduct).

The RSOC Customer understands that, while RSOC services will likely improve and support the cybersecurity posture of the RSOC Customer, there is no guarantee provided or asserted in any way that this service can or will block all attacks or prevent all breaches. In the event of a successful attack and or breach, the RSOC Customer understands that based on many factors, including system settings, user behaviors, log and other information availability, etc. it may not be possible to stop, or identify the source of, a compromise or breach. Furthermore, through this service, it may not be possible to determine the precise number of records affected in the event of a breach.

6.12 Signatory Warranty
Each signatory warrants requisite authority to execute the ILC on behalf of the entity represented.

SECTION VII CERTIFICATIONS
The undersigned Parties hereby certify that:

(1) the matters specified above are necessary and essential for activities that are properly within the statutory functions and programs of the affected agencies of State Government;

(2) this ILC serves the interest of efficient and economical administration of State Government; and

(3) the Services, supplies or materials in this ILC are not required by Section 21, Article 16 of the Constitution of Texas to be supplied under contract given to the lowest responsible bidder.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have signed this ILC effective on date of last signature below.

RECEIVING ENTITY: Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
By:
Printed Name: Manuel Cruz
Title: Executive Director
Date:
Signature:

PERFORMING AGENCY: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY
By: Alex Valdez
Printed Name: Alex Valdez
Title: UTRGV Chief Procurement Officer
Date:
Signature:

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #4 Administration.....Manuel Cruz
Executive Director

4. Consideration and ACTION on Date and Time for Annual Report, Budget Committee, & State of the COG.

ITEM#4.B

ADMINISTRATION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

ITEM #5. A.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

A. Community & Economic Development

Program Action Item

1. Consideration and ACTION to Approve RGV Economic Development Advisory Committee (RGV EDAC) Membership.

   The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) solicited for nominations for EDAC committee members to serve. Each nomination form was reviewed and selected based upon their qualifications, experience, and interest.

   At the December 4, 2024, EDAC meeting, the committee approved the following nominations:

Membership Category	**Entity**
Special EDO	Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC)
Institute of Higher Learning	Texas State Technical College (TSTC)

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

A. Community & Economic Development

Program Action Item

2. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Reappointment for odd Number Year Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Members.

SWAC Reappointed Members	
Raul Garcia	Cameron County
Chief Ricardo Saldana	Hidalgo County
Commissioner Ernie Garcia	Willacy County
Christopher Torres	City of Harlingen
Ramiro Gomez	City of Edinburg
David Arce	City of Weslaco
Jesse Pena	City of Alton
Cesar Gutierrez	City of Palmview
Mauro Sandoval	City of Alton
Jon Deicla	Republic Services
Jaime Lopez	Waste Management
Joel Cruz	Harlingen ISD
Allen Willams	Region One
Patty Alexander	Valley Nature Cener
Marisa Rodriguez	Texas Children in Nature Network
Jeremy San Miguel	UTRGV

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

A. Community & Economic Development

Program Status Reports

- Economic Development Administration

  The EDAC will meet on December 4, 2024, to review the outcomes of the CEDS survey and the inputs from the three in-person public meetings. The staff is diligently working to complete a draft CEDS, which will be provided to the EDAC for final review and approval before being presented to the Board at the March 2025 meeting.

  The LRGVDC is soliciting nominations for EDAC committee members to serve in the following categories: (2) Special EDO. The purpose of the advisory committee is to educate, promote, foster, and coordinate community and regional planning efforts on economic development in the Rio Grande Valley, and other social impacts of existing, new or proposed regulations, policies, and control regarding economic development. The advisory committee will provide advocacy, guidance, technical assistance, and information to the LRGVDC Board on priority matters of economic development. If you have any questions about the nominations process or committee, please contact Melisa Gonzales-Rosas. Nomination forms need to be emailed to vramos@lrgvdc.org.

  The next EDAC meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Board Room. The meeting will require in person attendance. The committee will work to finalize the draft CEDS plan.

  Staff are available to provide technical assistance, project development, and grant administration on EDA proposals and projects. For any assistance or information on EDA in general, contact the Community & Economic Development Department. Staff also serve as the regional point of contact for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and will continue to disseminate information accordingly. Staff also continues to coordinate efforts with other governmental entities on their economic development related activities to maximize benefits of all projects and objectives for the region and avoid any duplication of efforts and resources.

  For more information and resources on EDA's funding opportunities, visit https://sfgrants.eda.gov/s/.

- Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC)

A virtual RSCC Meeting will be held on January 14, 2025, at 10:00 AM.
Staff continue to disseminate vital information to small cities via email. If you have questions, you may contact Brenda Salinas bsalinas@lrgvdc.org

- Community & Economic Development Assistance Fund

  Staff continue to carry out specified technical assistance activities to TxCDBG eligible localities within our operating region, to ensure program compliance. Staff continue to disseminate program information to keep TxCDBG eligible communities informed of information, promote Fair Housing, provide support to the Unified Scoring Committee (USC) member, and host any grant kick off meetings to award communities.

  For more information and resources on the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) funding opportunities, visit our Community Development webpage at http://www.lrgvdc.org/community.html, under the CDBG Rural for Texas tab.

- Solid Waste Management Program:

  The SWAC committee suggested forming a Tire Subcommittee to work on developing a Regional Tire Ordinance. The subcommittee met on October 22, 2024, and November 19, 2024. Representatives from the three counties gathered to discuss the implementation of a regional tire ordinance aimed at improving tire disposal. Participants reviewed examples of existing ordinances and discussed the feasibility of adopting similar measures. The participants identified potential challenges in implementing the ordinance, such as funding, enforcement, and public awareness. The meetings concluded with a plan to draft a preliminary ordinance, and the goal is to also create resolution that would be offered for counties and cities to approve. The enforcement would be at a county and city level.

  Staff co-hosted a Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFER) Grant kick-off meeting was held on November 21, 2024, at Region One Service Center at 2:00 PM. The project goals and objectives along with the overview of the LRGV Composting and Vermiculture Pilot School Project was discussed. Region One staff outlined the roles of teachers and students in this project. The LRGVDC will be providing administrative support for the project and will ensure compliance with TCEQ requirements.

The next Virtual Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting will be on March 4, 2025, at 2:00 PM via GoToMeeting platform.

On November 16, 2024, staff attended the City of McAllen Texas Recycles Day Event, which attracted over 1,000 attendees. Representatives from surrounding cities also participated to promote their recycling efforts and centers to their communities. The CED staff provided educational materials on recycling and water quality and distributed promotional items.

Staff continue to provide technical assistance, outreach, and monitoring for all Solid Waste Projects. Information about the Solid Waste program is available at www.lrgvdc.org/solidwaste.html.

- Water Quality Program

Staff continue to facilitate meetings with water investors in support of new innovative water projects to address the regions water drought needs. Staff has conducted several introduction meetings to provide the outreach to local stakeholders, water board members, drainage and irrigation districts, and water producers for potential projects.

Staff continue to educate the public on water quality issues with monthly themed Facebook posts. Give a thumbs up or leave a comment! Other outreach efforts for this program include staff attending in-person events, and or in

partnership with other LRGVDC departments, and outside organizations. This allows for great C&ED program promotion opportunities for the community. Informational reading material and promotional items on water quality are distributed at these events. In addition, staff has gone out to hand deliver brochures (that include our water resources information) & water quality promo items to our local entities to introduce our department and inform our local entities of our water resource website and let them know that staff is available to aid or answer questions regarding water quality, water projects, or anything water related, if they are unable to find it on our Water Resource Website.

Staff continues to regularly communicate with representatives from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as well as other entities involved in water quality initiatives to strengthen partnerships and generate further activities related to water quality and to highlight the importance of it to the region. Visit our Water Resource webpage at: https://www.lrgvdc.org/water.html

- Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC)

  RWRAC meeting was held on December 4th, the meeting was very informative and provided several water issue and project updates. The following information was presented and shared with the committee: Cameron County Resaca Project, Texas Integrated Flooding Framework (TIFF), USACE Watershed Assessment Project, Region M, Region 15 Flood Planning Group, and update on the LRGVDC FIF Project.

  Staff continue to work with Hidalgo & Cameron Counties for the Flood infrastructure Funds (FIF), TWDB Project No. 40038. The counties will undertake Task 2.2 (Drainage Characterization) and Task 2.3 (Project Assessments) of the TWDB Project No. 40038. The FIF project requires the development, processing, and contracting for characterizing drainage pathways, identifying flood control projects, and assessing the feasibility of those projects; and procures qualified engineering firms and staff to conduct engineering and drainage projects regularly. The project has been approved by TWDB for a no-cost time extension until August 31, 2027.

  Staff continue to support, provide technical assistance, outreach, and administer water projects. Information about water resources is available at https://www.lrgvdc.org/water.html

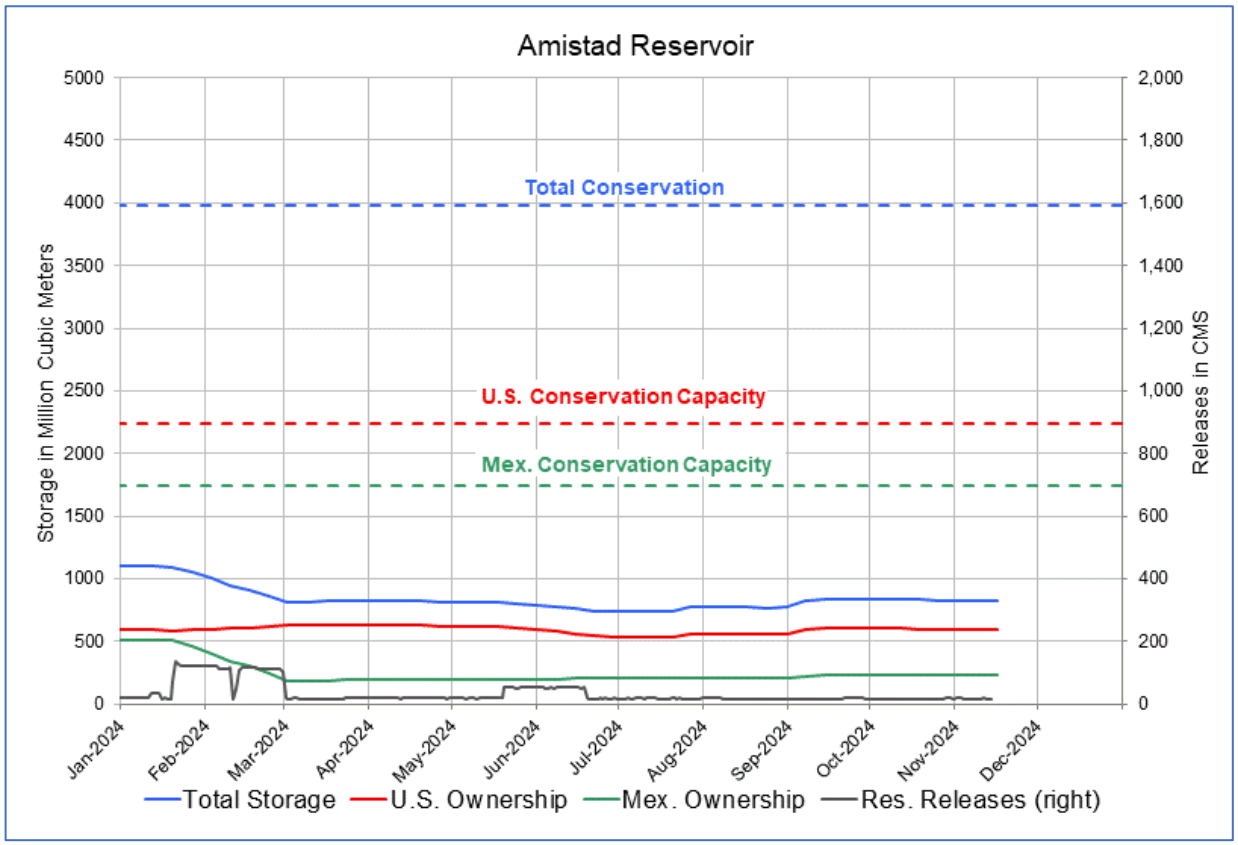
- Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (Region M)

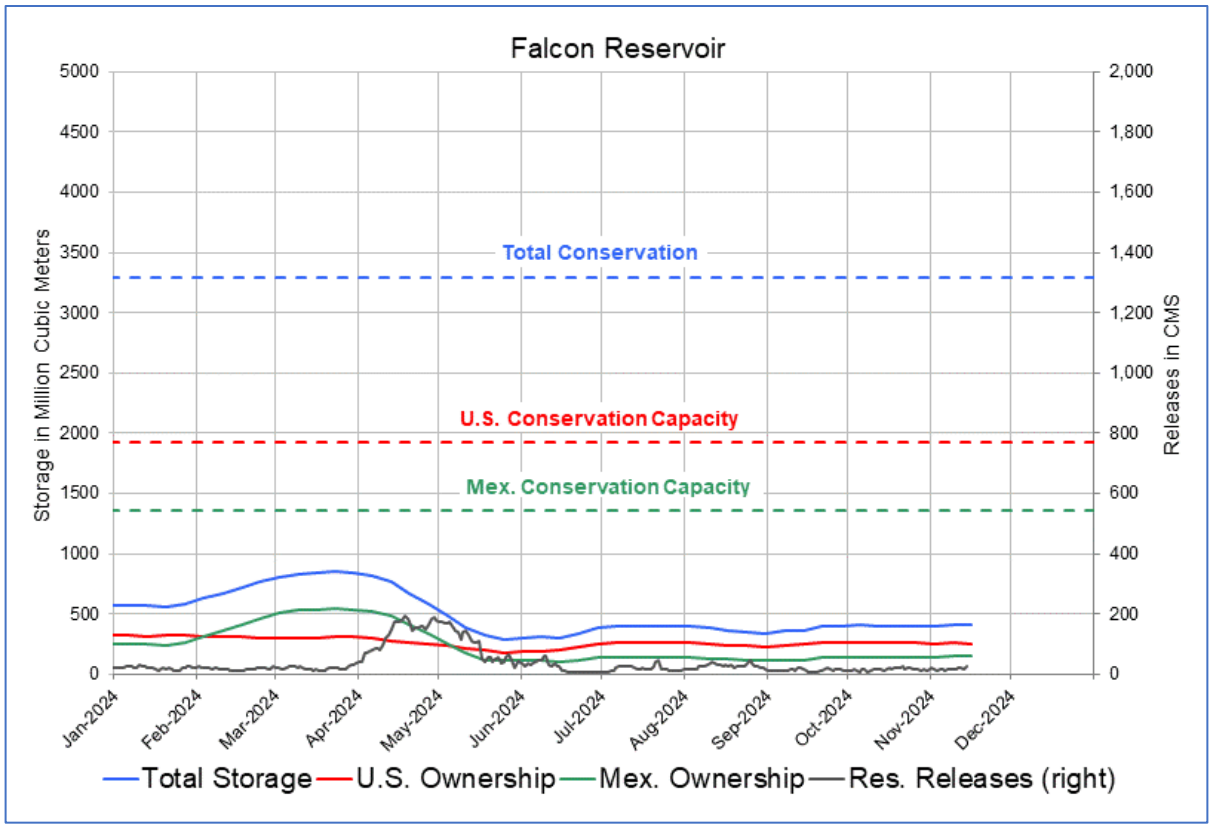
  The Region M met on November 6, 2024, at 9:30 am. There was much discussion from the consultant and the planning group regarding the progress and information gathered to date for the 2026 Regional Water Plan. The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2025. Meeting continues to be held hybrid at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Board Room and via GotoMeeting.

  For any Region M meeting information, please visit website:

http://riograndewaterplan.org

- Reservoir Levels as of November 21, 2024 (taken from IBWC: Home - IBWC




Falcon Reservoir
Storage in Million Cubic Meters
Releases in CMS
5000
4500
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
2,000
1,800
1,600
1,400
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0
Total Conservation
U.S. Conservation Capacity
Mex. Conservation Capacity
Jan-2024
Feb-2024
Mar-2024
Apr-2024
May-2024
Jun-2024
Jul-2024
Aug-2024
Sep-2024
Oct-2024
Nov-2024
Dec-2024
Total Storage
U.S. Ownership
Mex. Ownership
Res. Releases (right)

LRGVDC 3rd Annual Veterans Festival

EDINBURG
985

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELO COUNCIL
CED

SOUTH TEXAS
COLLEGE
HUMAN RESOURCES

ITEM #5. B.

HEALTH
&
HUMAN SERVICES

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

B. Health & Human Services

Area Agency on Aging Status Report

Annual Review 2024: Advancing Together, Building Tomorrow

As we reflect on the achievements of the past fiscal year, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is proud to present the Annual Review for 2024—a celebration of growth, innovation, and our steadfast dedication to enhancing the quality of life for older adults and vulnerable populations in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The year 2024 marked a transformative period for the AAA. Fully staffed and equipped with a robust team, we overcame prior challenges, sustained key initiatives, and expanded services to meet the evolving needs of our community. This report captures the accomplishments that define the year as one of progress, collaboration, and impact.

Key Highlights

Pioneering Programs and Initiatives

Care Transition Intervention Program (CTI): Garnered international recognition while enrolling 1,092 new clients and making 3,237 contacts. We expanded partnerships to six hospitals and added two new coaches to improve delivery service.

Internship Programs: Established comprehensive internship opportunities at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, fostering the next generation of professionals.

Benjamin Rose Institute (BRI): Enrolled 59 new clients and facilitated impactful clinics, including a Veteran Caregiver Support and Resource Clinic.

Community Events and Engagement

Leadership Inclusion & Independence Family-Support Engagement (LIIFE) Disability Conference: Hosted its second annual event with 80 attendees, promoting leadership, family support, and empowerment.

Veterans Festival: Attracted widespread participation and strengthened ties with over 50 collaborating organizations.

56 Outreach Events: Engaged diverse community segments, including veterans, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities.

Senior Center Operations and Nutrition Programs:

Senior Centers

AAA supports the centers at La Joya, Los Fresnos, and Mission Housing Authority with Title III funding, enabling them to provide a range of social and educational activities and maintain vibrant operations.

Nutrition Programs

Congregate Meals: Provided five nutritious meals weekly alongside social activities and education on chronic disease prevention.

Home-Delivered Meals: Delivered five home-cooked meals weekly, based on individual service plans, enhancing independence for homebound seniors.

A new provider, Bright Nutrition, joined the program for Fiscal Year 2025, ensuring high-quality service delivery.

Enhanced Services and Partnerships:

Expanded Health Maintenance and affordable Transportation Services to Willacy County, benefitting 208 individuals and exceeding goals for one-way transportation trips by nearly threefold.

Conducted 12 training sessions for 101 vendors and engaged 76 new vendors in Willacy County.

Collaborated with cities like Edinburg, McAllen, Mission, and Pharr to leverage Community Development Block Grant funding, assisting 109 individuals with critical services like home modifications and medical equipment.

Performance Goals and Outcomes:

Compliance and Oversight: Monitored all Title III services through on-site and desk reviews, ensuring subrecipient compliance.

Caregiver Support Services: Supported 484 unduplicated caregivers through case management, respite services, and health maintenance assistance, exceeding Area Plan goals.

Residential Repair Services: Delivered essential modifications to 303 homes, including ADA-compliant upgrades, ensuring safety and accessibility.

Transportation Services: Facilitated 32,651 trips for non-medical purposes, exceeding the plan's goal by more than 20,000 trips.

Productivity Milestones

Direct Consumer Services: Assisted over 4,000 clients through care coordination, health maintenance, homemaker services, and residential repair programs.

Ombudsman Program: Addressed 344 complaints and interacted with 7,272 individuals while dedicating over 1,000 hours to advocacy activities.

Benefit Counseling: Assisted 209 beneficiaries during open enrollment and facilitated community health events with nearly 100 attendees.

Conclusion

The Annual Review for 2024 demonstrates the Area Agency on Aging's remarkable journey of growth, innovation, and community impact. From achieving international recognition for our programs to fostering the next generation of leaders, AAA has set a high standard for service excellence.

With fully restored staffing, expanded partnerships, and enhanced service delivery, AAA continues to address critical needs, strengthen community ties, and improve the quality of life for those we serve. Looking ahead, we remain committed to broadening our impact, leveraging collaboration, and building a brighter future for the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our staff, partners, and community for their unwavering support. Together, we are advancing toward a shared vision of inclusivity, independence, and well-being for all.

LRGVDC 3rd Annual Veterans Festival

ITEM # 5.C

PUBLIC SAFETY

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

C. Public Safety

Program Action Item ..... Cesar Merla, Assistant Director

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Resolution for FY 2025-26 Non-Profit Security Grant Funding.

   As part of the Public Safety Office's Homeland Security Grants Division (HSGD) grant guidelines, applications must include a resolution that contains information such authorization by its governing body for the submission of an application.

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Resolution: *Non-Profit Security Grant for FY 2025-2026*

WHEREAS, the LRGVDC Board of Directors finds it in the best interest of the local governments of the LRGVDC region that the *Non-Profit Security Grant* project to be operated for 09/01/2025 – 8/31/2026.

WHEREAS, the LRGVDC Board of Directors agrees that in the event of loss or misuse of the Office of the Governor funds, the LRGVDC Board of Directors assures that the funds will be returned to the Office of the Governor in full; and

WHEREAS, the LRGVDC Board of Directors designates the LRGVDC Executive Director as the grantee's authorized official. The authorized office is given the power to apply for, accept, reject, alter or terminate the grant on behalf of the applicant agency.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the LRGVDC Board of Directors approves submission of the grant application for the *Non- Profit Security Grant* project.

Passed and approved this 11th day of December 2024.

Signed by:

_____

Mayor Norma Sepulveda, LRGVDC President

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

C. Public Safety

Program Action Item ..... Cesar Merla, Assistant Director

2. Consideration and **ACTION** to resolutions for FY 2025-26 Homeland Security Grant Funding.

As part of the Public Safety Office's Homeland Security Grants Division (HSGD) grants guidelines, applicants must include a resolution that contains authorization by its governing body for the submission of an application. The LRGVDC Homeland Security program will manage the following grant projects:

a) COG-21 Homeland Security Regional Planner

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Resolution: COG-21 Homeland Security Regional Planning

WHEREAS, the LRGVDC Board of Directors finds it in the best interest of the local governments of the LRGVDC region that the COG-21 Homeland Security Regional Planning project to be operated for 09/01/2024 – 8/31/2025.

WHEREAS, the LRGVDC Board of Directors agrees that in the event of loss or misuse of the Office of the Governor funds, the LRGVDC Board of Directors assures that the funds will be returned to the Office of the Governor in full; and

WHEREAS, the LRGVDC Board of Directors designates the LRGVDC Executive Director as the grantee's authorized official. The authorized office is given the power to apply for, accept, reject, alter or terminate the grant on behalf of the applicant agency.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the LRGVDC Board of Directors approves submission of the grant application for the COG-21 Homeland Security Regional Planning project.

Passed and approved this 11th day of December 2024.

Signed by:

_____

Mayor Norma Sepulveda, LRGVDC President

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

C. Public Safety

Program Action Item ..... Cesar Merla, Assistant Director

3. Consideration and **ACTION** to resolutions for FY 2025-26 Coordinator for the Regional Fire Academy.

   As part of the Public Safety Office's the Regional Fire Academy grant guidelines applications form nonprofit organizations must include a resolution that contains specific information, such as authorization by its governing body for the submission of the application to HSGD. Upon approval the resolution will be uploaded in eGrants on or before the grant deadline.

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Resolution: Coordinator for Regional Fire Academy

WHEREAS the LRGVDC Board of Directors finds it in the best interest of the local governments of the LRGVDC region that the Coordinator for Regional Fire Academy project to be operated for 11/01/2025 – 10/31/2026.

WHEREAS the LRGVDC Board of Directors agrees that in the event of loss or misuse of the Office of the Governor funds, the LRGVDC Board of Directors assures that the funds will be returned to the Office of the Governor in full; and

WHEREAS the LRGVDC Board of Directors designates the LRGVDC Executive Director as the grantee's authorized official. The authorized office is given the power to apply for, accept, reject, alter or terminate the grant on behalf of the applicant agency.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the LRGVDC Board of Directors approves submission of the grant application for the Coordinator for Regional Fire Academy project.

Passed and approved this 11th day of December 2024.

Signed by:

_____

Mayor Norma Sepulveda, LRGVDC President

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

C. Public Safety

Program Action Item ..... Cesar Merla, Assistant Director

4. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Appointment of replacement Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) Member Michael Silva.

   Due to a recent vacancy in the HSAC for the City of Mission, a new member is needed to serve. In accordance with the HSAC Bylaws, the Appointment is of Michael Silva, Mission Fire Chief. This recommendation requires Board Approval.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

C. Public Safety..... Cesar Merla, Assistant Director

Criminal Justice Program

- Staff hosted the Naloxone training on November 1, 2024, at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Boardroom.
- Staff attended the November 12, 2024, Rio Grande Valley Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force meeting at the South Texas Emergency Care, in Harlingen, TX,
- Staff attended the Hidalgo County DA's Office Trauma Informed Care Training on November 14, 2024, at the Center of Education and Economic Development (CEED) in Mission, TX.
- Staff attended the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Regional Security Operations Center Ribbon cutting ceremony on November 14, 2024, Edinburg, TX.
- Staff hosted the De-Escalation Training for Law Enforcement training on November 21, 2024, at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Boardroom.
- Staff attended the virtual meeting on November 21, 2024, Opioid Abatement Fund Council Local Government Roundtable.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

C. Public Safety…… ……..Cesar Merla, Assistant Director

Homeland Security Program

- Staff attended the Hidalgo County Health and Human Service Department for the Mass Fatality Tabletop Exercise on November 6, 2024. at University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Community Engagement and Student Success in Edinburg TX.

- Staff attended a webinar on November 7, 2024, on Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO) Local Government Monthly Roundtable for community-based organizations.

- Staff attended the 2nd Annual TEPHI/CCRRIA Conference 2024 "Communities Leading Communities" at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on November 13.-14, Edinburg, TX.

- Staff attended the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) Recruitment Kickoff on November 19, 2024, at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Executive Boardroom, in Weslaco, TX.

- Staff hosted the 2024 NWS Brownsville/RGV Fall Workshop: An Introduction to Integrated Warning Teams on November 19, 2024 at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Executive Boardroom in Weslaco, TX.

- Staff attended the 3rd Annual LRGVDC Veterans Festival on November 20, 2024, at the La Palma Adult Day Care Center, in Edinburg, TX.

- Staff attended the virtual meeting on November 21, 2024 for the State of the Rio Grande Symposium Confirmation by International Boundary & Water Commission (IBWC) Commissioner Maria Elena Giner.

Deescalation Training Participants

Deescalation Training Participants

Staff providing input during a Mass Fatality Exercise

Staff attending a Mass Fatality Exercise

Staff coordinating and hosting a Narcan training

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service

National Emergency Response and Recovery Training Center

SENIOR OFFICIALS WORKSHOP FOR ALL-HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS

MGT-312

February 20, 2025 9am-3pm Save the Date

LRGVDC Ken Jones Executive Board Room

DHS/FEMA-funded course

FEMA

Learn how to save lives.

Register Here

https://forms.office.com/g/ad9kTNVXVW

NALOXONE TRAINING

Overdose Education & Prevention

Why Attend?

Nationally and locally, overdose death rates have been on the rise and Texas is responding by distributing education and Naloxone to all regions in Texas.

Training includes:

- Opioid trends leading to overdose
- Recognize & Respond to an opioid overdose
- How to Administer Naloxone
- Provide Free Naloxone (after training)

NALOXONE KITS AVAILABLE

For more information contact:
Miguel Garza
(956) 787-7111, ext. 250
mgarza@bhsst.org

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS
Since 1991

Texas A&M Engineering TEEX Extension Service

National Emergency Response and Recovery Training Center

SENIOR OFFICIALS WORKSHOP FOR ALL-HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS

MGT-312

This workshop provides an interactive forum to understand the roles and responsibilities of senior leadership as related to all-hazard disaster preparedness, to share proven strategies and best practices, and to enhance coordination among whole of community partners.

The class will provide a basic understanding of planning, operational coordination and public information and warning through lecture and group discussions. The participant will have the opportunity to work through a customized tabletop exercise focused on the strategic objectives faced by senior leaders. The final outcome of the class is the development of an action plan to improve the preparedness posture of the community/organization.

Topics

- A tabletop exercise tailored for the jurisdiction(s) as the catalyst to generate discussion of policy and emergency operations center activities required to support the incident commander's and state/federal government requirements related to an all-hazard, catastrophic incident
- Roles and responsibilities and preparedness challenges
- Domestic preparedness resources and how to leverage them for your community
- Homeland Security Strategic Planning as it relates to risk and needs assessment and the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for your jurisdiction
- Executive-level incident response and recovery considerations, including medical/public health, situational appraisal, incident management (ICS), mutual aid agreements, media relations, recovery and restoration processes, federal assistance, and business/economic recovery

Prerequisites

FEMA / SID Number

A FEMA SID is required to register for and participate in any training provided by FEMA. The FEMA SID will serve as your unique identifier and be used to maintain the record of FEMA trainings you attended.

Register for a FEMA SID at: **cdp.dhs.gov/femasid**

Course Length

1 Day (6 hours)

Class Size

30 Participants

Venue

Jurisdiction

CE Credits

IACET - 0.6 CEUs

Participants

The course is designed for senior elected, appointed, and whole of community leaders, including but not limited to:

- Elected officials (city, county, state, and tribal)
- City and county managers
- Emergency management directors/coordinators
- Directors of local response agencies
- Chiefs/department heads
- Local business partners
- Public Information Officers
- Hospital Adminstration
- Airport and port facility managers
- School and university administrators and security
- Public and private sector executives (e.g., Communications, Transportation, Utilities)
- Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) (e.g., Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.)
- Department of Defense (DoD) installation commanders and representatives
- Stadium and sports facility managers and directors of security
- Resident federal agency representatives (e.g., FBI, ATF, Secret service, FEMA, TSA)

For more information, contact:
TEXAS A&M ENGINEERING EXTENSION SERVICE
Executive Programs
200 Technology Way
College Station, Texas 77845-3424
855.245.1614 (toll free)
execprograms@teex.tamu.edu
www.teex.org/esti

NDPC National Domestic Preparedness Consortium

N23.5011.06

SAVE THE DATE

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Action Item

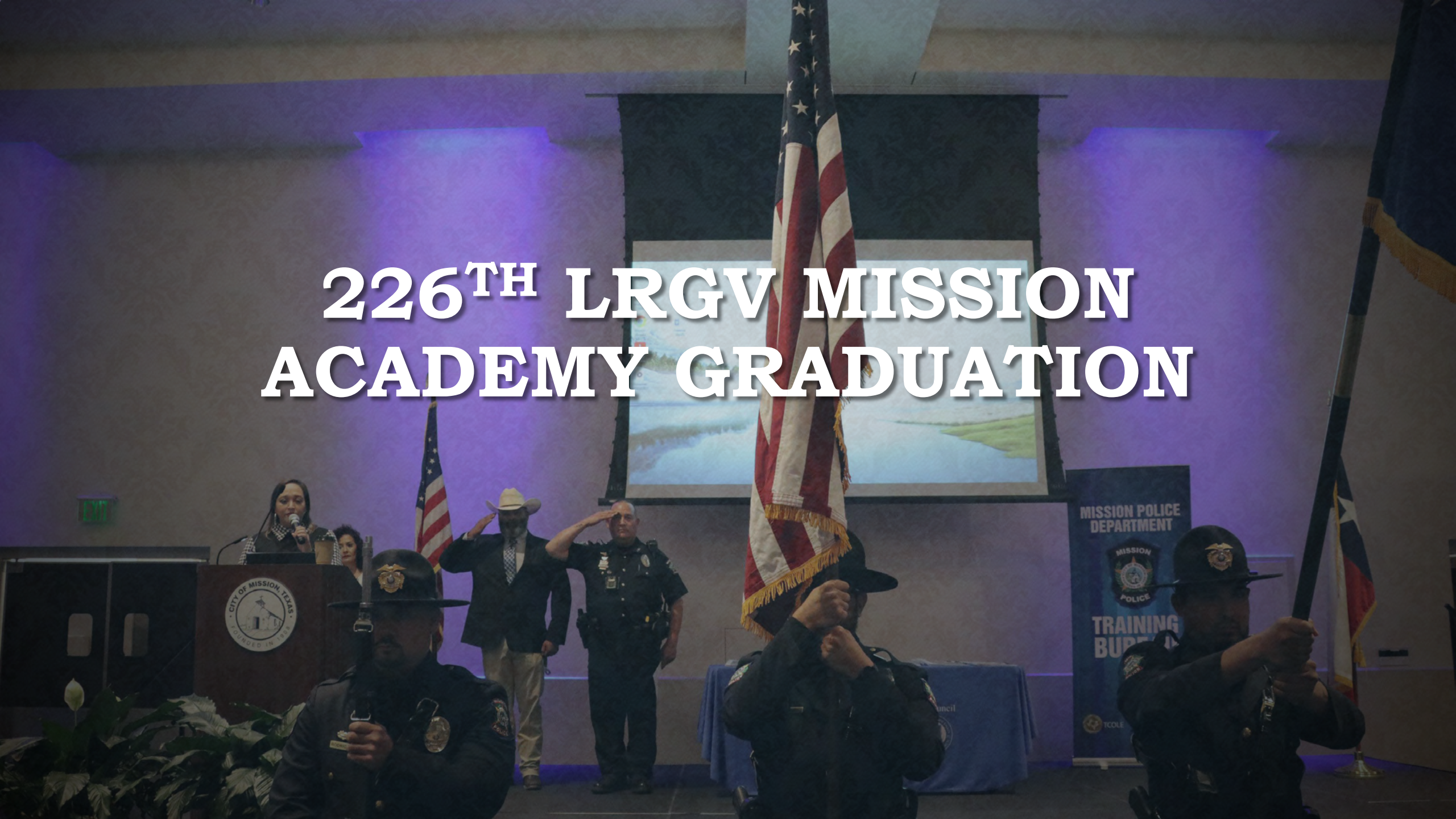
C. Public Safety

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACADEMY

Program Action Items ..... Javier Solis Asst. Director

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve an Interlocal Agreement for Cooperative Extension Services and LRGV Academy Site between the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy and the Rio Grande City Police Department and with authority for LRGVDC Executive Director, Manuel Cruz, to sign and finalize the agreement. The purpose of the agreement is to provide Basic Peace Officer Courses in STARR County. As part of the agreement, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy will report training hours for the Rio Grande City Police Department to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.

HEROES IN ACTION
LRGVDC VETERAN FIRST RESPONDERS
MARKSMANSHIP COMPETITION
19th November, 2024
10:00 AM - TENTATIVELY 5:00 PM
(END TIME MAY FLUCTUATE DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS.)
EL INDIO LAW ENFORCEMENT GUN RANGE
701 S. HUTTO ROAD.,
DONNA, TEXAS
EVENT INFORMATION
GRUNT DIVISION
Open to veterans between 21 and 49 years old.
Features two categories:
Pistol
Carbine



226TH LRGV MISSION ACADEMY GRADUATION

21 Graduates

All 21 passed the TCOLE LICENSING EXAM!

Back-to-back to back 100% Pass Rate on TCOLE Exam!

Total 2024: 80 out of 84 Officers Passed **95%** GPA in 2024!

New Police Officers added to the Region	21
Total In-Service Courses Taught	2
Total Officers Trained	37
Total Contact Hours	412
Total Officers Trained in ALERRT Active Shooter Response	22

LRGV ACADEMY REPORT NOVEMBER 2024

YEAR TO DATE

New Police Officers added to the Region	80
Total In-Service Courses Taught	119
Total Officers Trained	2,017
Total Contact Hours	85,727
Total Officers Trained in ALERRT Active Shooter Response	459

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

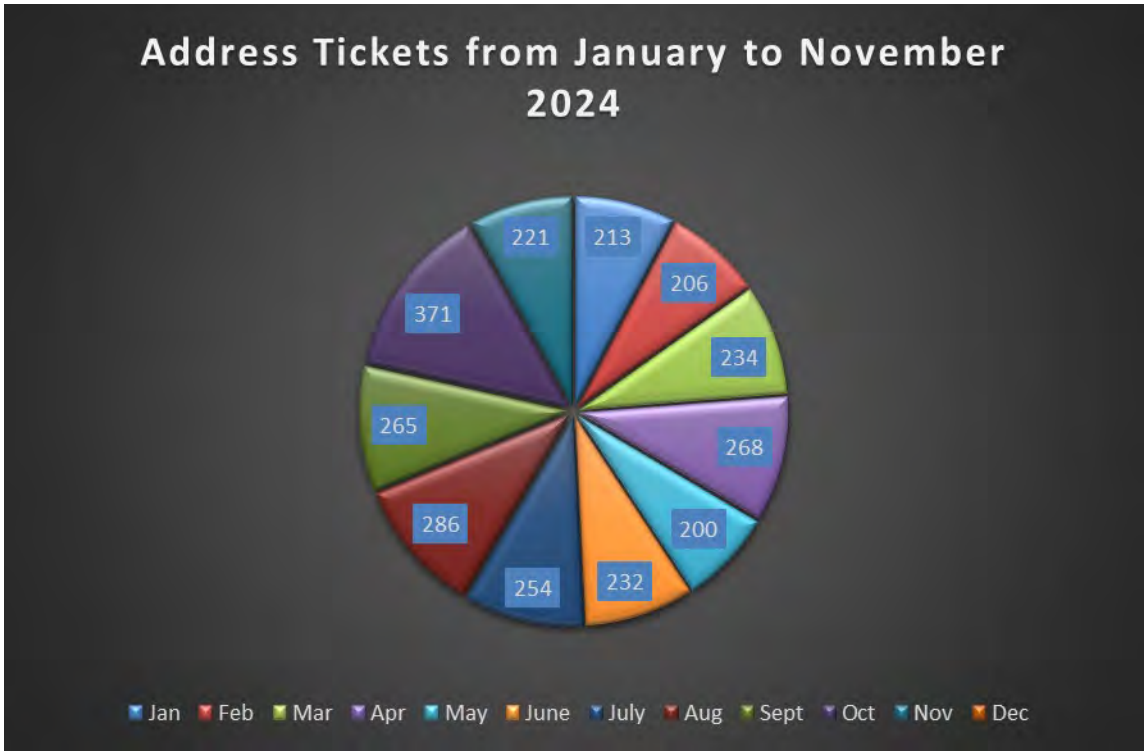
Item #5: Department Reports

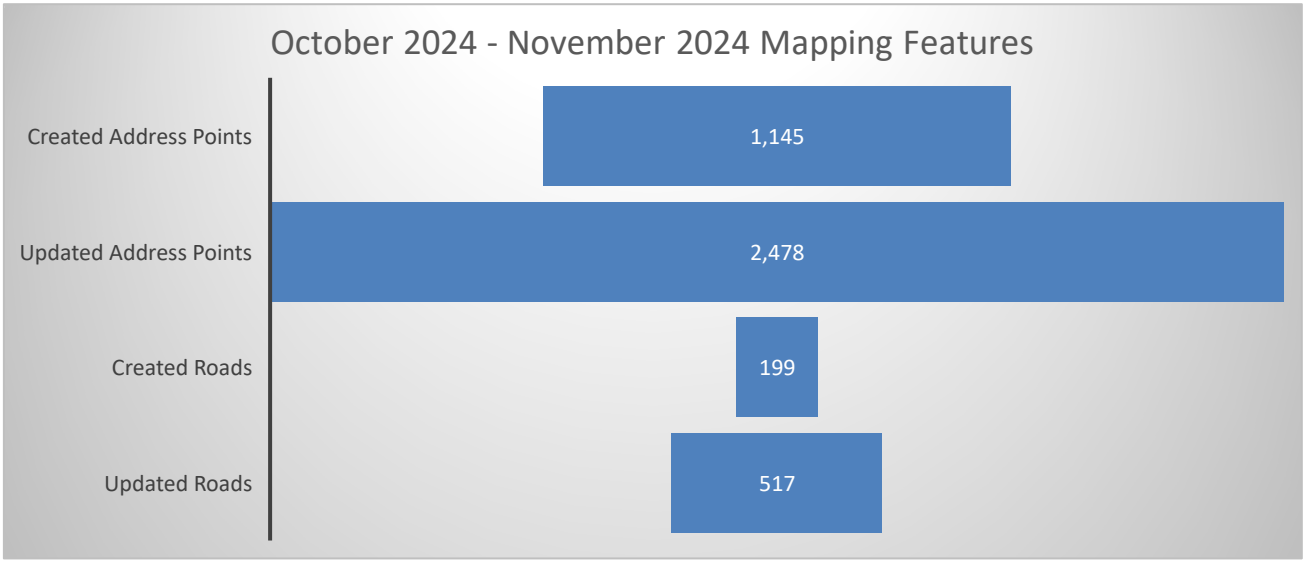
C. Public Safety

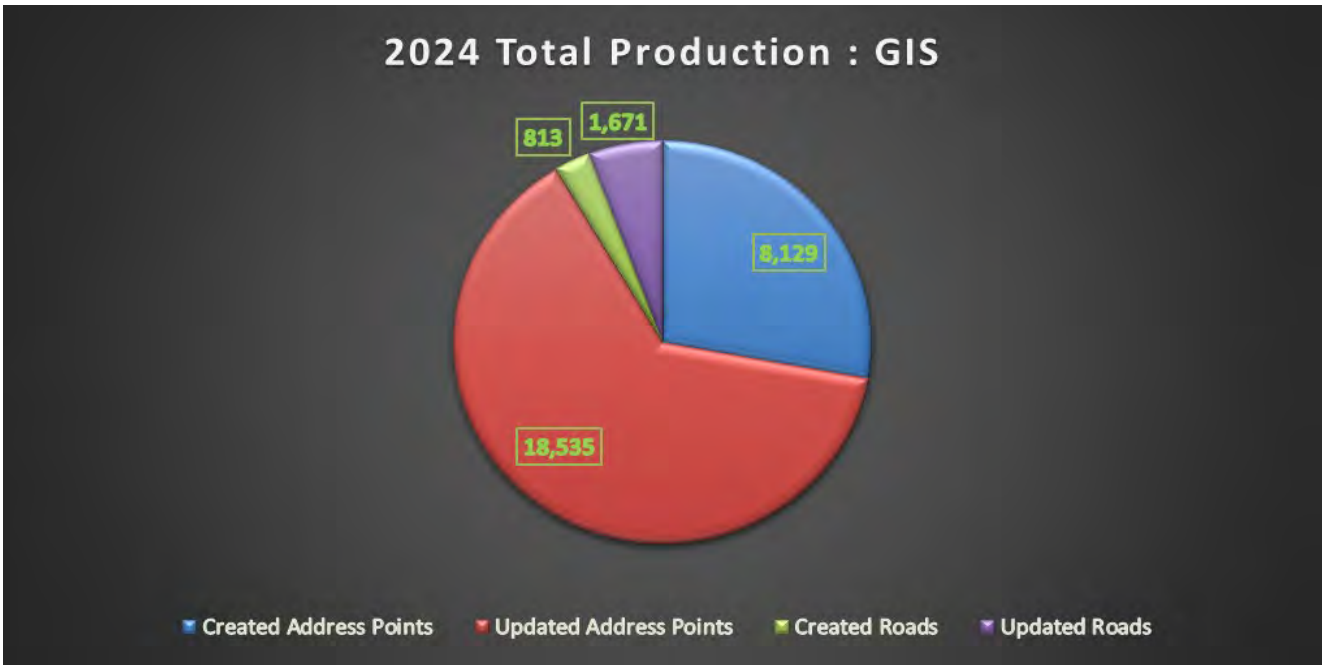
Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District Status Report

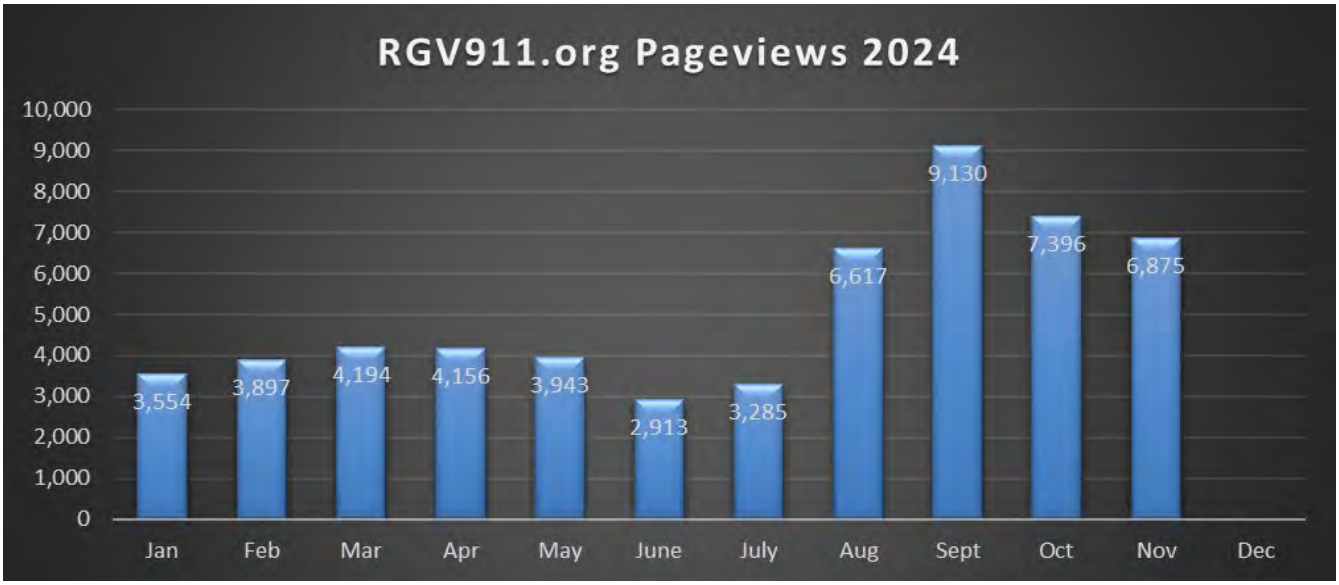
- GIS Division

The GIS Data Hub has made significant advancements, transitioning to **www.rgv911.org** as its main platform, which has improved public and governmental access to downloadable informational maps and streamlined data requests. These efforts have already resulted in improved operational efficiency, as seen in the **Hub site's page views**, which were 7,396 in October, and 6,875 in November so far. The GIS team if preparing for the ArcGIS enterprise 11.3.1 update as well.




October 2024 - November 2024 Mapping Features
Created Address Points
1,145
Updated Address Points
2,478
Created Roads
199
Updated Roads
517


2024 Total Production : GIS
813
1,671
8,129
18,535
Created Address Points
Updated Address Points
Created Roads
Updated Roads


RGV911.org Pageviews 2024
10,000
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
3,554
3,897
4,194
4,156
3,943
2,913
3,285
6,617
9,130
7,396
6,875
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
June
July
Aug
Sept
Oct
Nov
Dec

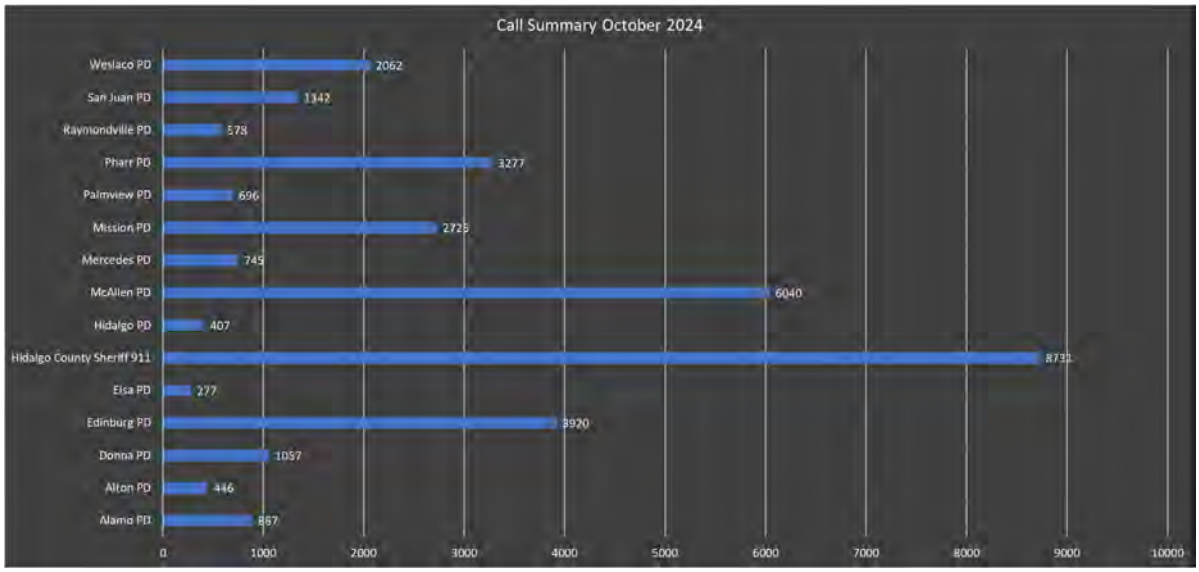
- 9-1-1 | Information Technology

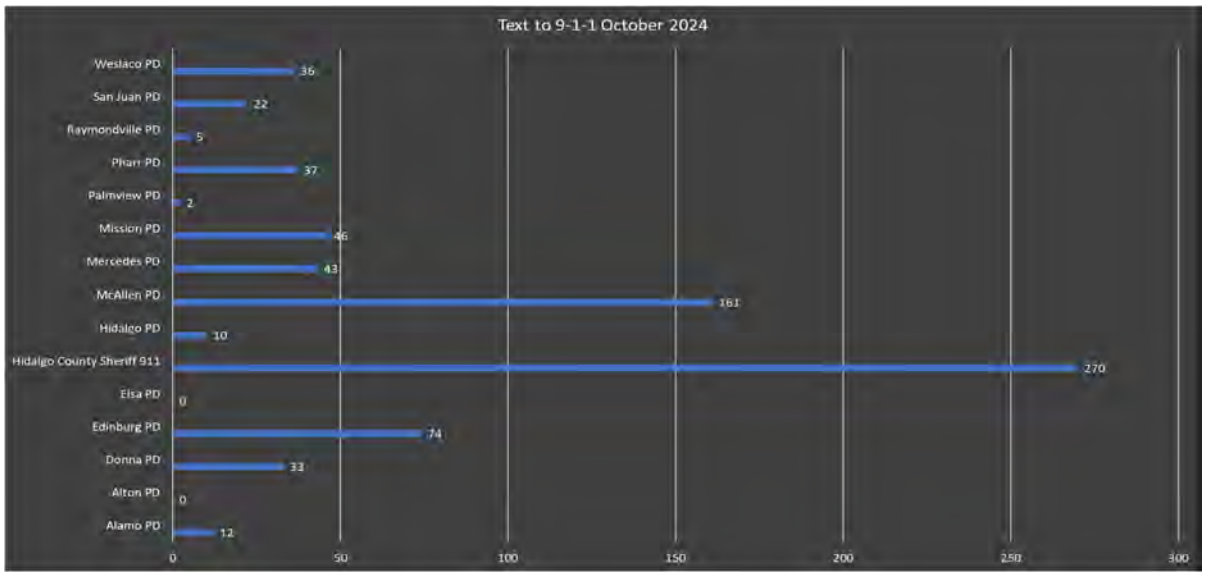
The 9-1-1 | Information Technology team has successfully completed all scheduled audits for the year. These audits specifically target the 9-1-1 system to ensure optimal operational efficiency.

In coordination with Clifford Power, annual generator maintenance is underway. This includes an oil change, battery replacement, and a two-hour load bank test. The purpose of this test is to verify that the generator can operate at its full capacity for the duration of the test.

Regarding our cybersecurity initiatives, the penetration test conducted on our network was successfully completed, and no significant security risks were identified. The comprehensive assessment confirmed that the implemented security controls, including firewalls and updated equipment, are effectively safeguarding the network against potential threats.

Our ongoing priority is to ensure that the 9-1-1 call delivery systems and GIS mapping technologies work seamlessly together, maintaining 99.9% operational efficiency to support our public safety partners and the community.





- Community Engagement

  October and November have been especially productive months for the Public Education Team and public safety initiatives. October marked the conclusion of National Night Out, a valuable opportunity to connect with communities and emphasize the importance of 911. In November, efforts are focused on wrapping up the year, ensuring all programs have reached as many people as possible and that any remaining goals are completed. Together, these months close out a successful year of engagement, education, and support for public safety.

  Teach Me 911 Program, October 3, 2024. Together with the Weslaco Fire Department, we presented the TEACH ME 911 program to the students at Horizon Montessori School in the City of Weslaco. The children learned the simple yet important steps for calling 911, including when to call, how to call, and what to say. We discussed various emergency situations and helped them understand when it's appropriate to dial 911. We wrapped up by clarifying the difference between true emergencies and non-emergencies, reinforcing the responsibility that comes with using 911. Teaching children these essential skills is vital to ensuring their safety and the safety of others. It's always rewarding to see young students grasp the importance of 911 in their lives.

  Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo National Night Out, October 3, 2024. The event, held at La Stella Independent Senior Living Apartments, was a wonderful opportunity to engage with the senior community. We had a great time discussing the importance of 911 and how it plays a crucial role in ensuring their safety. It was a pleasure to provide valuable information and answer their questions. We look forward to future opportunities to collaborate and continue educating the community!

  4th Annual Battle Against Breast Cancer 5k, October 5, 2024. Willacy County Sheriff's Office invited us to participate in such an important initiative. Their leadership and commitment to the event made it a great success. We look forward to continuing to support causes that bring our community together, rain or shine!
  Texas Public Safety Fall Symposium / PETS at TNT meetings in Bryan, TX, October 7 – 9,2024. The Public Education team participated in the quarterly PETS at TNT meetings. Topics of discussion included fundraising strategies and the exchange of ideas for enhancing public education efforts. We had a great keynote speaker who addressed the critical topic of domestic violence, the team took this opportunity to network and share successful event ideas with other districts. This was also a new adventure for our Public Education Team. For the first time, we presented a class to the symposium attendees. The topic was Educating for Impact: 911 Programs and Public Safety Wellness. Our goal was for attendees to walk out with something new that they could apply in their work. It was a great experience, and we are confident it won't be our last.

  Teach Me 911 Program, October 15, 2024. We teamed up with the Weslaco Fire Department to bring the Teach Me 911 program to the children at Mid Valley Christian School. The kids were enthusiastic and eager to learn when to call 911, how to do it, and what to say in emergencies. They also got to see firsthand how fire safety practices work hand-in-hand with quick and accurate calls to 911. It was an incredible experience watching the next generation gain essential skills that could one day help save lives!

WCSO National Night Out, October 15, 2024. In the city of Lasara. It was a community-focused gathering aimed at promoting safety awareness and building relationships between law enforcement and local residents. The team engaged with families and individuals, sharing important 9-1-1 safety tips and resources. The evening featured various activities that encouraged community interaction and support. The collaboration highlighted the importance of public safety and the ongoing efforts to strengthen connections in Willacy County.

Buckner CFS Parents Convivio in the city of Mission, October 16, 2024. The 911 Public Education Team were invited as guest speakers. Buckner CFS is a Christian-based non-profit organization that supports families through various state-funded programs, including the Family and Youth Success (FAYS) program. This program helps families navigate conflicts and everyday challenges while promoting resilience in youth through personalized coaching and group-based learning. Parent Convivios are a wonderful way for parents to connect, share experiences, and build a sense of community in a fun and supportive environment. We were thrilled to share valuable information on 911 services and emergency preparedness with everyone who attended.

NENA (National Emergency Number Association) Telecommunicator Tunnel Vision Training, October 18, 2024. Our goal is to ensure that 911 dispatchers are fully equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to excel in their vital roles. This training is essential for helping our dispatchers stay aware of all critical information during high-stress situations. By broadening their skills and perspectives, we aim to enhance their ability to make well-informed decisions that save lives. We are committed to continually providing opportunities for growth and development to ensure they remain at their best. Our dedication to training reflects our mission to support 911 dispatchers in delivering exceptional service to every caller.

City of Weslaco Health Fair, October 22, 2024. RGV911 was invited to promote the importance of knowing when and how to call 911. We shared valuable information with the community about emergency preparedness and the role of 911 in saving lives. It was a great opportunity to connect with residents and raise awareness about public safety. Overall, the event was a wonderful blend of health education and community engagement.

City of Palmhurst and the Palmhurst Police Department 13th Annual National Night Out, October 22, 2024. The event featured live music, delicious food, and engaging entertainment for all ages. A key highlight of the evening was the 911 education, providing valuable information on emergency response and public safety. The night blended enjoyment with learning, making it a fun experience for the entire community.

Donna PD National Night Out, October 23, 2024. We focused on educating everyone about the easy steps to calling 911 and the importance of knowing your location when making the call. It's always a pleasure to engage with the community and ensure everyone is prepared for emergencies.

Alton Police Department's National Night Out, October 24, 2024. It was a fantastic event with Halloween costume competition and trick or treat games. Our 911 public education focused on safety tips for Halloween, ensuring everyone knows how to stay safe while trick-or-treating. It was a great night filled with fun, costumes, games, and important safety education.

VIDA Conference in the City of Mission, October 25, 2024. The event offered valuable sessions on health education, providing attendees with the latest updates on medications and treatment options. Mental health resources were also a significant focus, addressing the unique needs of those impacted by HIV. This event was hosted by Westbrook Clinic.

Mercedes Pd National Night Out, October 26, 2024. It was a wonderful evening connecting with the community, meeting friendly faces, and building stronger bonds. Grateful for the chance to support and share in the safety and unity of the city of Mercedes.

Delta Independent Living in the city of Weslaco, October 29, 2024. We are thrilled to have been invited as keynote speakers by Delta Independent Living! This incredible organization provides essential services and support for older adults and people with disabilities, making our mission to share 911 education even more impactful. During our session, we introduced the importance of texting 911 when calling isn't possible and covered easy steps for dialing 911 in an emergency. Remember: "know your location" and "stay on the line" are key.

La Joya PD National Night Out, October 29, 2024. It was a pleasure connecting with the community, and the display of red, white, and blue in honor of all first responders was truly inspiring. Looking forward to more events that bring us together.

Halloween Door Decorating Contest, October 31, 2024. The RGV911 Public Education Team kicked off the Halloween spirit with a "Decorate Your Door" contest among all the PSAPs, and we were thrilled to see seven teams participate! The contest was a big success, showcasing some incredible creativity. Congratulations to our winners, Pharr Public Safety Communications.

Dia de Los Muertos event in the City of Granjeno, November 2, 2024. Mayor Yvette Cabrera invited the RGV9-1-1 GIS team to help the community verify if their addresses were registered with the district. This event in Granjeno was a wonderful opportunity for residents to start the process of registering their addresses or simply updating their information with the district.

Dia-Beat-It Community Health Fair, November 12, 2024. This free community health fair provided a wonderful service to our community, offering essential health screenings like vision, oral, BMI, blood pressure, glucose, and liver check-ups for everyone. Our RGV911 team was on-site, sharing valuable information on the simple steps to calling 911 in case of an emergency. Thanks to everyone who came by to learn, connect, and take charge of their health! Together, we're making a difference for a safer, healthier community.

NENA (National Emergency Number Association) Telecommunicate Training "Enhanced Caller Management". November 15, 2024. NENA training focused on enhancing call management for 911 dispatchers. It was a powerful experience, filled with practical skills and new techniques to handle emergency calls more effectively. Our goal is always to serve our communities better, and this training brings us closer to that. 2nd Annual Success in Transition Fair, November 16, 2024.

RGV911 was honored to participate in the 2nd Annual Success in Transition Fair today in the city of McAllen, connecting with students with disabilities and their families. We shared important 911 information, empowering attendees to feel confident in knowing when and how to call for help in emergencies. It's always a privilege to support events that build awareness and inclusion within our community.

City of Granjeno Thanksgiving Luncheon, November 16, 2024. The Granjeno Thanksgiving Festival was a fantastic event! It was wonderful to see the community come together for great food and fun activities. We loved offering educational games and sharing important 911 information with everyone.

LRGVDC 3rd Annual Veterans Fest, November 20, 2024. We had an amazing time at the Vet Fest, honoring our incredible veterans for their service and sacrifice. The event was filled with fun games, exciting prizes, and raffles that brought everyone together for a night to remember. The RGV911 staff truly enjoyed the evening, connecting with our community and celebrating our heroes.

Teach Me 911
at Horizon Montesori
School

Housing Authority
of the County of Hidalgo
National Night Out

WCSO
4th Annual Battle Against
Breast Cancer 5k.

2024 Public Safety
Fall Symposium
Bryan TX

Texas 911 Public Educators of Texas
&
Texas 911 Trainers
Quarterly Meeting

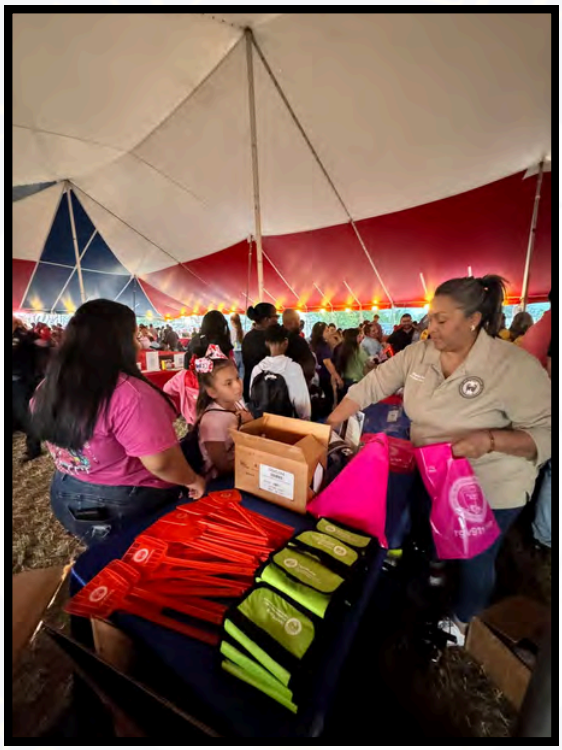
Teach Me 911 Program
Mid-Valley Christian School

WCSO
Lasara NNO

Buckner CFS at their Parent Convivio

NENA (National Emergency Number Association) Dispatcher Training

City of Weslaco Health Fair



City Of Palmhurst National Night Out

City of Donna
National Night Out

City of Alton
National Night Out

Vida Conference
in the City of Mission

City of Mercedes
National Night Out

Delta Independent
Living

City of La Joya
National Night Out

City of Pharr Public Safety Communications Winners of the Halloween Door Contest

City of Granjeno Dia De Los Muertos Celebration

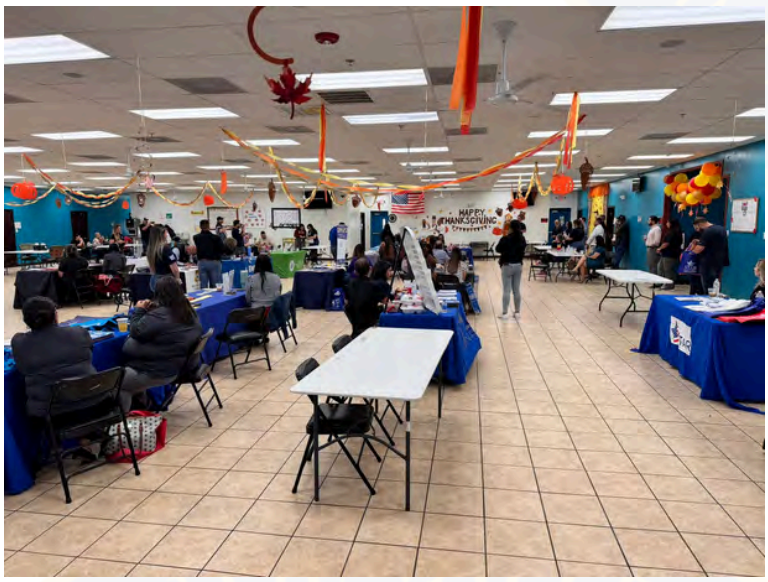
Dia-A-Beat Health Fair in the City of Weslaco

NENA (National Emergency Number Association) Dispatcher Training

2nd Annual Success in Transition Fair in the city of Mcallen

City of Granjeno Thanksgiving Festival

LRGVDC
3rd Annual Vet Fest



LRGVDC
3rd Annual Vet Fest

LRGVDC
3rd Annual Vet Fest

ITEM #5. D.

TRANSPORTATION

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Status Report .....Tom Logan, Director

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Department's **Americans with Disabilities Act "ADA" Policy and Procedures.**

   - Valley Metro's ADA Policy and Procedures is designed to ensure equal access and non-discrimination for individuals with disabilities in various sectors, including employment, public services, transportation, and telecommunications.

   - Updates have been made to the following:

     Public Transit Service days
     Scheduling
     Suspension for No-Shows
     Maintenance of Wheelchair Lifts, Ramps, and Securement Devices
     Other Mobility Aids and Equipment
     Disorderly or Abusive passengers
     Other Considerations
     Complaints, Commendations, and Reasonable Modification Requests
     Training

Item #5: Department Reports

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Status Report .....Tom Logan, Director

2. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Department's **Operations Policy and Procedures.**

- Valley Metro's Operations Policy and Procedures are a set of guidelines and rules that govern how the organization's daily activities are conducted. They ensure consistency, efficiency, and compliance with laws and regulations. These documents help define how business processes should be carried out and outline the responsibilities of staff and management.

- Updates have been made to the following:

"VALLEY METRO" has been reflected throughout the policy in lieu of Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) Regional Transit Services.
Updated Organizational Chart.
1.5 Distribution of Information
1.7 Chain of Command – While on Duty
2.3 Prohibited Activities
L. Unauthorized Route Deviations
2.11 Attendance and Punctuality
2.19 Accident/Incident Response Procedure
K. Flashlight
3.1 Importance of Customer Service
3.19 Articles Not Permitted on Buses
K. Recreational electric scooter
APPENDIX A – NON-Revenue Vehicle Usage Policy
APPENDIX B – Valley Metro Building and Bus Camera Access Policy Agreement
APPENDIX C – Child – Free Workplace Policy
APPENDIX D – Bloodborne Pathogen SOP

Item #5: Department Reports

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Status Report .....Tom Logan, Director

3. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Department's **Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP).**

- Valley Metro's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) is a federally mandated safety management system that public transportation agencies in the U.S. are required to implement to improve safety practices and reduce risks in transit systems.

- Updates have been made to the following:

1. Executive Summary
   B. Certification of Compliance -673.13 (a)(b)
2. Transit Agency Information -673.23(D)
   Updated Organizational Chart
   A. Authorities & Responsibilities
3. Safety Policies and Procedures
   C. PTASP Annual Review -673.11 (a)(5)
   Table 3
   F. Safety Performance Measures -673.11(a)(3)
   Table 5 - Baseline
   Table 6 – Flex Route
   Table 7 – Demand Response Safety Performance
5. Appendix A
   Table 8 PTASP Supporting Documents
6. Appendix B
   A. Board Minutes or Resolution
7. Appendix C
   A. Infectious Disease Exposure Response Plan
8. Appendix D
   Safety Risk Assessment

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Item #5: Department Reports

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Status Report .....Tom Logan, Director of Regional Transit

- Ridership Report

Valley Metro provides regional transportation service of both **Rural** and **Urban** transit systems in the five-county region of the Rio Grande Valley. The **Urban System** is provided in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties and includes UTRGV Ridership. Services run Monday – Saturday from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. The **Rural System** operates in the rural areas of Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, Starr, and Zapata Counties. Services run Monday – Sunday from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Breakdown of Ridership per system:

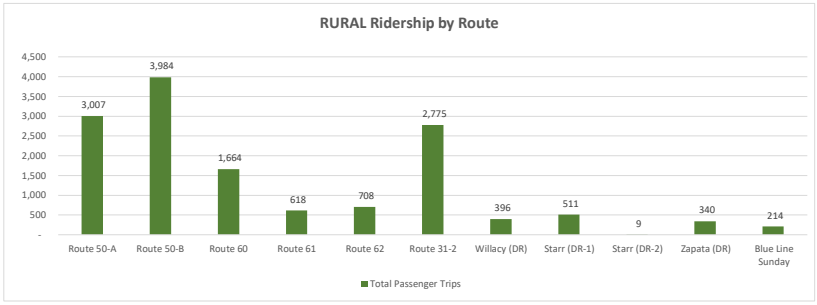
RIDERSHIP BY SYSTEM			
Agency	Sept	Oct	TOTAL
VALLEY METRO	28,526	32,845	61,371
UTRGV	70,277	79,188	149,465
STC	692	969	1,661
TSTC	113	142	255
Total	99,608	113,144	212,752

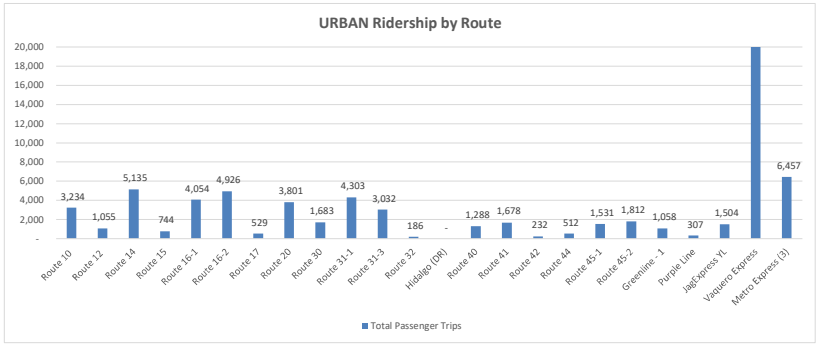
RURAL AND URBAN COUNT			
AREA	Sept	Oct	TOTAL
Rural	5,837	6,672	12,509
Urban	93,771	106,472	200,243
Total	99,608	113,144	212,752

RIDERSHIP BY COUNTY			
COUNTY	Sept	Oct	TOTAL
Hidalgo County	88,309	99,912	188,221
Cameron County	8,757	10,470	19,227
Willacy County	134	262	396
Starr County	2,250	2,318	4,568
Zapata County	158	182	340
Total	99,608	113,144	212,752

RIDERSHIP COUNT
YEAR TO DATE FY 2024 (October)

	Route	Total Passenger Trips	Route Activity	Area(s) Served
RURAL	Route 50-A	3,007	1%	Brownsville, Port Isabel
RURAL	Route 50-B	3,984	2%	Brownsville, Port Isabel
RURAL	Route 60	1,664	1%	Roma, Rio Grande City
RURAL	Route 61	618	0%	Rio Grande City
RURAL	Route 62	708	0%	Rio Grande City
RURAL	Route 31-2	2,775	1%	Cameron-Hidalgo
RURAL	Willacy (DR)	396	0%	Willacy County
RURAL	Starr (DR-1)	511	0%	Starr County
RURAL	Starr (DR-2)	9	0%	Starr County
RURAL	Zapata (DR)	340	0%	Zapata County
RURAL	Blue Line Sunday	214	0%	Brownsville, Port Isabel
URBAN	Route 10	3,234	2%	Edinburg
URBAN	Route 12	1,055	0%	Edcouch, Elsa, Edinburg
URBAN	Route 14	5,135	2%	Edinburg
URBAN	Route 15	744	0%	Edinburg
URBAN	Route 16-1	4,054	2%	Courthouse Circulator
URBAN	Route 16-2	4,926	2%	Courthouse Circulator
URBAN	Route 17	529	0%	Edinburg T-line
URBAN	Route 20	3,801	2%	Mission
URBAN	Route 30	1,683	1%	Pharr, San Juan
URBAN	Route 31-1	4,303	2%	Hidalgo-Cameron
URBAN	Route 31-3	3,032	1%	Hidalgo-Cameron
URBAN	Route 32	186	0%	Donna
URBAN	Hidalgo (DR)	-	0%	City of Hidalgo
URBAN	Route 40	1,288	1%	Harlingen
URBAN	Route 41	1,678	1%	Harlingen
URBAN	Route 42	232	0%	San Benito
URBAN	Route 44	512	0%	Primera, La Feria, Santa Rosa
URBAN	Route 45-1	1,531	1%	Cameron County
URBAN	Route 45-2	1,812	1%	Cameron County
URBAN	Greenline - 1	1,058	0%	Rio Grande City
URBAN	Purple Line	307	0%	Weslaco, Pharr
URBAN	JagExpress YL	1,504	1%	Weslaco, Pharr, McAllen
URBAN	Vaquero Express	149,465	70%	Edinburg
URBAN	Metro Express (3)	6,457	3%	Rio Grande Valley
	TOTAL	212,752	100%	**Total Ridership Count subject to change when finalized



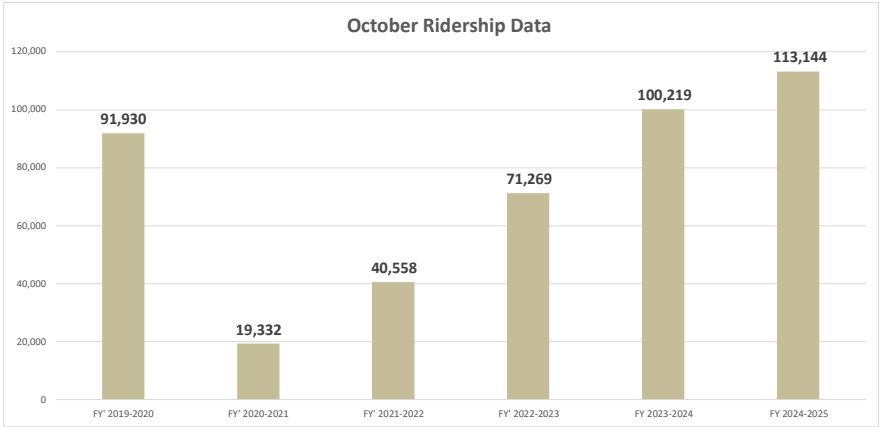


Active Routes	Rural	Urban	Total
Flex Routes	7	21	28
Demand Response	4	0	4
Fixed-Metro Express	0	3	3
	11	24	35

YEAR TO DATE RIDERSHIP REPORT

Year to Date - October 2024	Year to date October 2023	DIFFERENCE	% DIFFERENCE
212,752	194,601	18,151	9%

* Rural service - service in rural low -population areas outside of urbanized areas	* Urban service- service between or within urbanized areas



Fiscal Year	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Total	Difference	%Change
FY' 2019-2020	78,440	91,930	74,137	44,709	72,199	84,562	75,604	85,670	50,318	56,330	56,234	64,773	834,906	145,243	21%
FY' 2020-2021	17,149	19,332	16,190	16,072	16,620	14,611	19,300	18,169	18,080	19,842	19,774	31,381	226,520	-608,386	-73%
FY' 2021-2022	42,242	40,558	37,262	26,918	22,233	53,128	45,400	44,843	28,314	30,112	35,091	24,384	430,484	203,964	90%
FY' 2022-2023	69,699	71,269	58,154	33,800	47,975	66,785	62,828	63,687	36,978	34,870	33,997	50,988	631,030	200,546	47%
FY 2023-2024	94,382	100,219	81,110	43,030	58,327	85,696	67,691	89,262	42,003	38,917	40,945	55,357	796,939	165,909	26%
FY 2024-2025	99,608	113,144	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	212,752	-584,187	-73%
Monthly Change from Previous FY	29,909	41,875	-58,154	-33,800	-47,975	-66,785	-62,828	-63,687	-36,978	-34,870	-33,997	-50,988	-418,278	-784,733	-1
Percent Change	43%	59%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-66%	-391%	-257%

FY 2025 VALLEY METRO RIDERSHIP REPORT

RIDERSHIP BY CITIES - PICK-UP LOCATION

CITY	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	TOTAL
Edinburg	8,531	9,234	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17,765
UTRGV Edinburg	70,277	79,188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	149,465
Pharr	1,111	1,740	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,851
Mission	980	1,052	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,032
McAllen	4,205	4,782	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,987
San Carlos	16	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
La Blanca	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Elsa	92	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	192
Edcouch	34	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	74
Sullivan City	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
La Villa	46	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	82
San Juan	344	468	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	812
Alamo	413	455	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	868
Donna	484	623	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,107
Weslaco	1,406	1,749	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,155
Mercedes	367	418	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	785
La Feria	253	371	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	624
Harlingen	2,417	3,021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,438
San Benito	314	382	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	696
Brownsville	3,846	4,313	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,159
Santa Rosa	54	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	125
Los Fresnos	265	370	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	635
Laguna Vista	139	223	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	362
Laguna Heights	211	267	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	478
Port Isabel	1,246	1,437	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,683
Rio Grande City	1,994	2,054	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,048
Willacy County	134	262	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	396
Starr County	256	264	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	520
Zapata County	158	182	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	340
Total	**99,608**	**113,144**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**212,752**

RIDERSHIP BY SYSTEM

Agency	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	TOTAL
VALLEY METRO	28,526	32,845	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	61,371
UTRGV	70,277	79,188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	149,465
STC	692	969	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,661
TSTC	113	142	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	255
Total	**99,608**	**113,144**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**212,752**

RURAL AND URBAN COUNT

AREA	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	TOTAL
Rural	5,837	6,672	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12,509
Urban	93,771	106,472	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200,243
Total	**99,608**	**113,144**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**212,752**

RIDERSHIP BY COUNTY

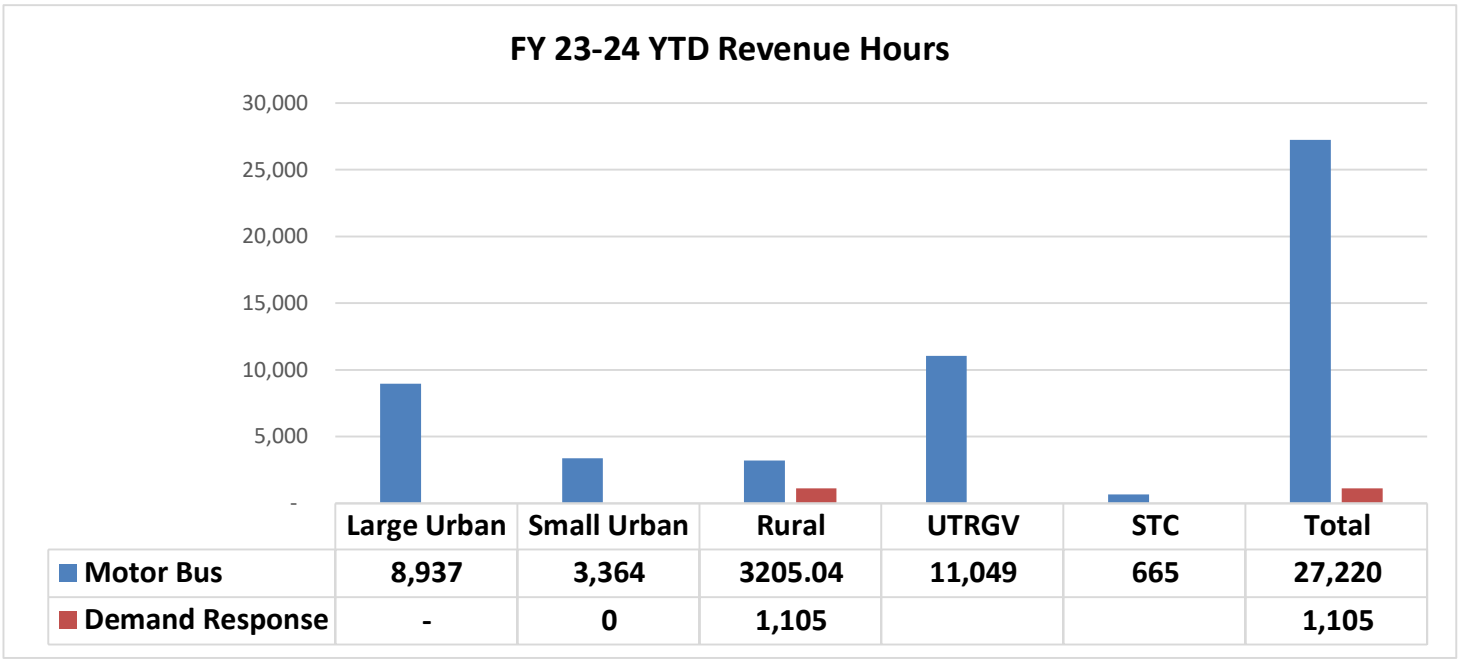
COUNTY	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	TOTAL
Hidalgo County	88,309	99,912	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	188,221
Cameron County	8,757	10,470	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19,227
Willacy County	134	262	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	396
Starr County	2,250	2,318	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,568
Zapata County	158	182	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	340
Total	**99,608**	**113,144**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**212,752**

RIDERSHIP BY PRECINCTS

PRECINCT	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	TOTAL
Precinct 1	5,124	6,227	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,351
Precinct 2	8,334	10,494	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18,828
Precinct 3	1,711	2,090	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,801
Precinct 4	85,406	96,374	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	181,780
Harlingen MPO Area	3,417	4,278	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,695

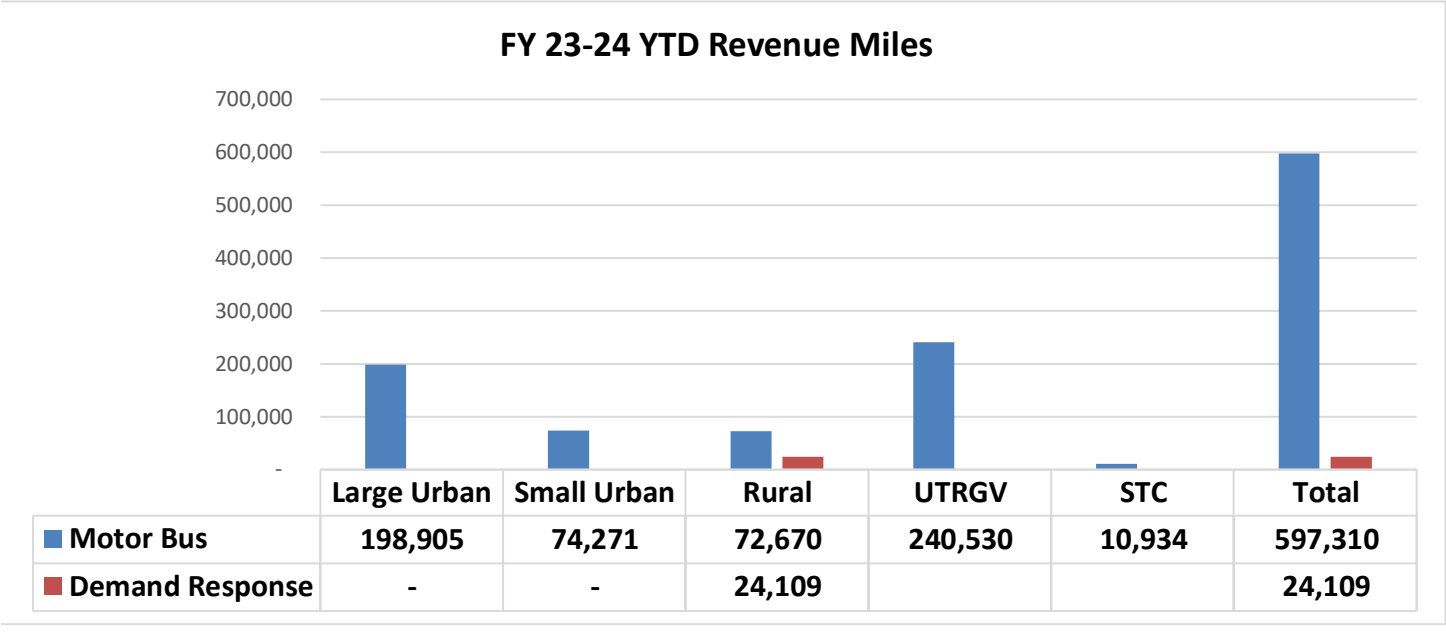
Year to Date 2024-2025 Distribution of Revenue Hours

	Large Urban	Small Urban	Rural	UTRGV	STC	Total
Motor Bus	8,937	3,364	3205.04	11,049	665	27,220
Demand Response	-	0	1,105			1,105



Year to Date 2024-2025 Distribution of Revenue Miles

	Large Urban	Small Urban	Rural	UTRGV	STC	Total
Motor Bus	198,905	74,271	72,670	240,530	10,934	597,310
Demand Response	-	-	24,109			24,109



Valley Metro - South Texas College - FY 2024-2025
Y-T-D Student Passenger Counts

Routes	10	12	14	20	31-1	31-2	31-3	32	Purple Line	GL-1	60	61	62	DR-1	Zapata	Total
September	5	26	0	14	16	20	39	0	143	457	619	24	17	0	14	1394
October	2	20	0	16	37	21	64	0	135	484	517	9	4	1	0	1310
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
February	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
March	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
April	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	14
Total	**7**	**46**	**0**	**30**	**53**	**41**	**103**	**0**	**278**	**941**	**1136**	**33**	**21**	**1**	**28**	**2718**

STC RIDERSHIP COUNT (Non Valley Metro Routes)

Routes	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Total
Yellowline 1 & 2	692	812	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1504**
Park & Ride													**0**
Total	**692**	**812**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1504**
Grand Total	**2086**	**2122**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**4222**

South Texas College - Mid Valley JagExpress
STC Student Passenger Counts Comparison
FY 2024-2025 MONTH TO DATE RECAP

Direct Service Routes

Routes	STC	UTRGV	General Public	Total
Route 12 Edcouch/Elsa-Edinburg	46	556	1009	**1055**
Route 31-1 Business 83	53	55	4250	**4303**
Route 31-2 Business 83	41	6	2734	**2775**
Route 31-3 Business 83	103	18	2929	**3032**
Yellow Line	1504	0	0	**1504**
Purple Line	278	3	29	**307**
Green Line	941	0	117	**1058**
Route 60 Greenline Roma	1136	0	528	**1664**
Route 61 RGC West	33	0	585	**618**
Route 62 RGC East	21	0	687	**708**
DR-1 RGC	1	0	510	**511**
DR-2 RGC	1	0	8	**9**
Zapata	28	0	312	**340**
Vaquero Express	0	70277	149465	**149465**
Total	**4,186**	**70,915**	**167,349**	**167,349**

Routes	Connecti	STC	UTRGV	General Public	Total
Route 10 Edinburg - McAllen	12, 31	**7**	**537**	**2,690**	3,234
Route 14 UTRGV VABL	12	**0**	**4,860**	**275**	5,135
Route 15 Edinburg	12	**1**	**99**	**544**	644
Route 20 Mission - McAllen	31	**30**	**528**	**3,243**	3,801
Route 30 Pharr San Juan - Edinburg	31	**0**	**29**	**1,654**	1,683
Route 32 Donna International Bridge	31	**0**	**0**	**186**	186
Route 40 Harlingen Medical	31	**0**	**6**	**1,276**	1,282
Route 41 Harlingen Retail	31	**5**	**0**	**1,668**	1,673
Route 42 San Benito Harlingen	31	**4**	**50**	**124**	178
Route 44 La Feria/Santa Rosa/Primera	31	**6**	**29**	**442**	477
Route 45-1 Cameron Career Connection	31	**6**	**167**	**1,358**	1,531
Route 45-2 Cameron Career Connection	31	**2**	**164**	**1,644**	1,810
Total		**61**	**6,469**	**21,573**	**21,634**

Total Service

	STC	UTRGV	General Public	Total
Grand Total	**4,247**	**77,384**	**188,922**	**270,553**

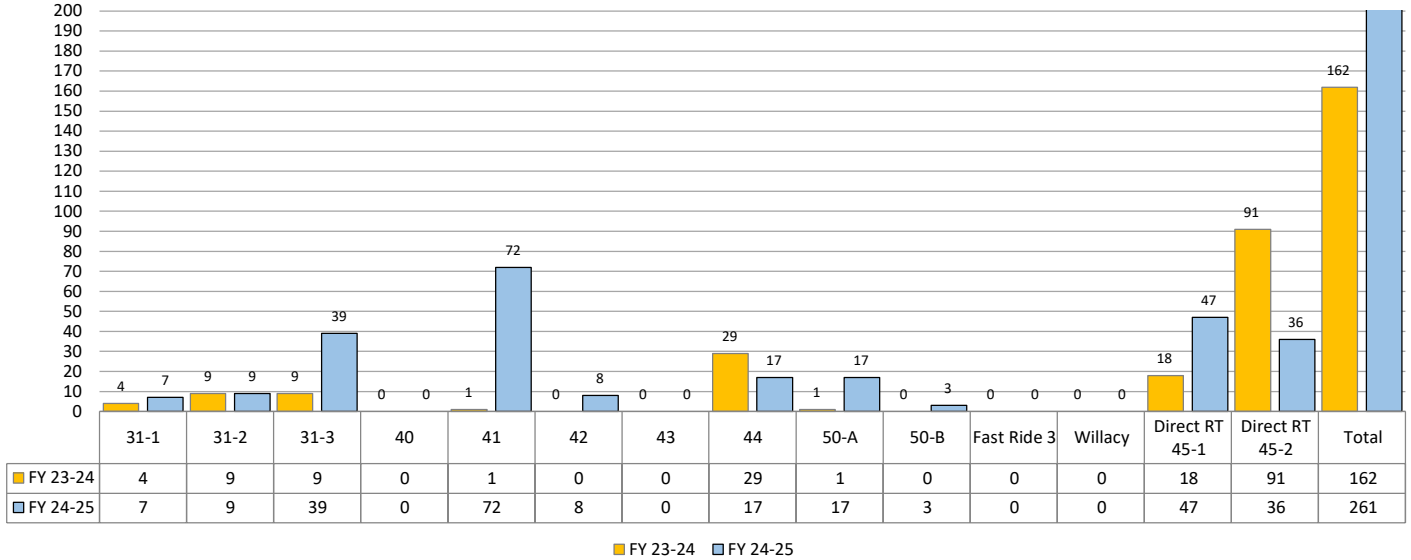
FY 2024-2025 Valley Metro

TSTC MONTHLY PASSENGER COUNT

Routes	31-1	31-2	31-3	40	41	42	43	44	50-A	50-B	Fast Ride 3	Willacy	Direct RT 45-1	Direct RT 45-2	Total
September	7	2	18	0	30	7	0	5	3	2	0	0	17	22	**114**
October	0	7	21	0	42	1	0	12	14	1	0	0	30	14	**147**
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
February	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
March	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
April	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
August	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**7**	**9**	**39**	**0**	**72**	**8**	**0**	**17**	**17**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**47**	**36**	**261**
FY 2024-2025	**4**	**9**	**9**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**29**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**18**	**91**	**162**
Change Over Previous FY	**4**	**9**	**9**	**0**	**71**	**8**	**0**	**-12**	**16**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**29**	**-55**	**99**

	Sept.	Oct.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug	Total
Direct Routes	**39**	**44**	**161**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**244**
Indirect Routes	74	98	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
Monthly Total	113	142	259	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**514**

2024 - 2025 Valley Metro Routes TSTC Student Passenger Count

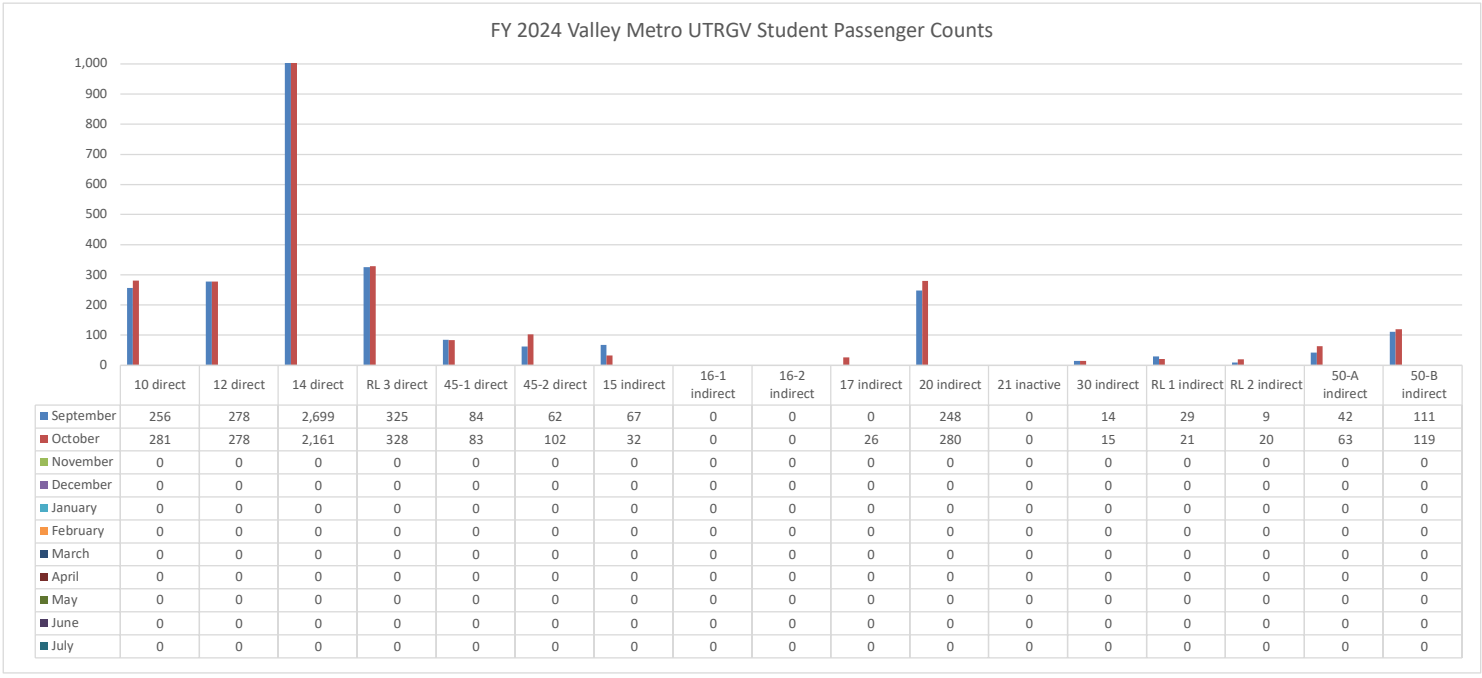


	31-1	31-2	31-3	40	41	42	43	44	50-A	50-B	Fast Ride 3	Willacy	Direct RT 45-1	Direct RT 45-2	Total
FY 23-24	4	9	9	0	1	0	0	29	1	0	0	0	18	91	162
FY 24-25	7	9	39	0	72	8	0	17	17	3	0	0	47	36	261

FY 2024-2025 Valley Metro - UTRGV Student Passenger Counts

Routes	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Totals
10 direct	256	281	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	537
12 direct	278	278	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	556
14 direct	2,699	2,161	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,860
RL 3 direct	325	328	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	653
45-1 direct	84	83	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	167
45-2 direct	62	102	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	164
15 indirect	67	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	99
16-1 indirect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16-2 indirect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17 indirect	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
20 indirect	248	280	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	528
21 inactive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30 indirect	14	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
RL 1 indirect	29	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
RL 2 indirect	9	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
50-A indirect	42	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	105
50-B indirect	111	119	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	230
Vaquero Express	70,277	79,188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	149,465
FY 2024-2025	74,513	83,052	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	157,565
FY 2023-2024	22,394	20,172	18,508	6,343	4,579	27,634	19,744	22,967	7,609	9,187	24,716	8,378	192,231
Change Over Previous FY	52,119	62,880	-18,508	-6,343	-4,579	-27,634	-19,744	-22,967	-7,609	-9,187	-24,716	-8,378	-34,666

Routes	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Totals
Direct Routes	3,704	3,233	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		6,937
Indirect Routes	532	631	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1,163
Total VM Count	4,236	3,864	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		8,100
Vaquero Express	70,277	79,188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		149,465
Combined Total	74,513	83,052	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		157,565



	10 direct	12 direct	14 direct	RL 3 direct	45-1 direct	45-2 direct	15 indirect	16-1 indirect	16-2 indirect	17 indirect	20 indirect	21 inactive	30 indirect	RL 1 indirect	RL 2 indirect	50-A indirect	50-B indirect
September	256	278	2,699	325	84	62	67	0	0	0	248	0	14	29	9	42	111
October	281	278	2,161	328	83	102	32	0	0	26	280	0	15	21	20	63	119
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
February	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
March	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
April	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

• Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) Activity:

RTAP Committee held a virtual meeting on October 24, 2024, and discussed the following:

- The meeting, led by Luis M. Diaz, commenced with a roll call to confirm attendance and ensure quorum. The group discussed and approved the minutes from the previous meeting without any proposed revisions.
- Claudia Olmedo provided updates from the subcommittee, focusing on initiatives to enhance public awareness of transportation options and the recent fare increase by Brownsville Metro.
- Eva Garcia presented the RGVMPO's five-year plan, emphasizing the need for improved transit alternatives and data collection, including the development of a regional map that integrates sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus facilities.
- Eva Garcia shared updates on recent changes to regional transit data, highlighting the importance of ADA accessibility and security camera placements at bus stops. She expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts of various agencies in updating this data and underscored the necessity of ongoing data verification to meet regional goals.
- Javier Dominguez, LRGVDC recapped insights from regional planning stakeholders about the proposed regional transit authority, addressing concerns regarding House Bill 71 and its impact on funding. He discussed potential funding sources for a feasibility study and emphasized the importance of realistic expectations regarding the study's timeline.
- Upcoming events, including a presentation on the economic impact of transit and a ballot training workshop, were also mentioned.
- Ilda Capriccioso outlined the objectives of the Active Transportation and Tourism Plan, which aims to create a cohesive network of bike and pedestrian infrastructure in Hidalgo County, emphasizing community engagement and strategic funding.
- The meeting concluded with discussions on transit provider updates, revealing varied ridership trends among different agencies.
- Proposed start date for the 2025 meetings are scheduled to begin in January 2025, with suggestions for an earlier start time to facilitate more thorough discussions.

Valley Metro Mobile App and Smart Cards went into effect on September 16

CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT

https://lrgvdc-prod.gfcp.io/efare

VALLEY METRO - REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Valley Metro's mission is to provide safe and reliable transportation options that connect our community to opportunity, support economic vitality, and enhance quality of life throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

VALLEY METRO SYSTEM MAP

CONNECTING THE VALLEY ONE RIDE AT A TIME

Types of Systems Provided

- **21 Fixed Routes**
  Providing service in the counties of Hidalgo, Cameron, and Rio Grande City. (with advanced notice, most routes may deviate up to 1/2 mile of the main route)
- **3 RGV Metro Express (limited stops)**
  Connecting Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen, Edinburg, and Port Isabel
- **5 Demand Response**
  Serving Willacy, Starr, and Zapata Counties
- **5 Microtransit-Fast Ride**
  Serving Cameron and Hidalgo County, City of Edinburg, Mission to Sullivan City, and San Benito to Brownsville on Military Road.
- **B-Cycle**
  Available in McAllen, Harlingen, and Brownsville.

Serving the RGV's Five-County Region:

- Cameron
- Hidalgo
- Starr
- Willacy
- Zapata

VALLEY METRO TRANSIT TERMINAL LOCATIONS

- Edinburg - 617 West University
- Weslaco - 510 S. Pleasantview
- Harlingen - 1216 Fair Park Blvd.
- Rio Grande City - 407 E. Mirasoles

Proudly serving:

- General public
- Elderly, over 60
- Persons with Disabilities
- Veterans
- People with Medicare/ Medicaid
- Students, Faculty, and Staff from schools and institutions of higher learning

Valley Metro Fares:

- Regular Fare - $2.00
- Discounted fares - $1.00 for the following:
  - Students and faculty,
  - Persons with disability
  - Elderly over 60
  - Veterans
  - Medicare recipients
- 20-Ride Pass - $20.00
- ($10.00 with discount)
- Transfers $1.00
- Other fares vary by service

Passes may be purchased on the bus routes or at LRGVDC 301 W. Railroad, Weslaco, TX

VM Transit Website

Route Maps with locations

ValleyMetro Weslaco

Ride Systems

Track our buses in real time

VM Regional Call Center 1-800-574-8322

Promoting Voter Participation through Public Transit

Get the Vote Out Initiative

LRGVDC
Valley Metro

Fun Facts:

- In 2021, the U.S. President recommended increasing voter accessibility and participation by leveraging public transportation services. In alignment with this recommendation, LRGVDC - Valley Metro proposes an initiative to offer free rides to voters who present their voting card. This service aims to reduce barriers to voting, particularly for those who may face transportation challenges.

- The "Get the Vote Out" initiative was presented to the LRGVDC Board of Directors as an Election Day promotion on August 28, 2024, and received unanimous approval.

- Valley Metro staff quickly began planning and implementing the initiative to ensure its success.

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

EST. 1967

Valley Metro

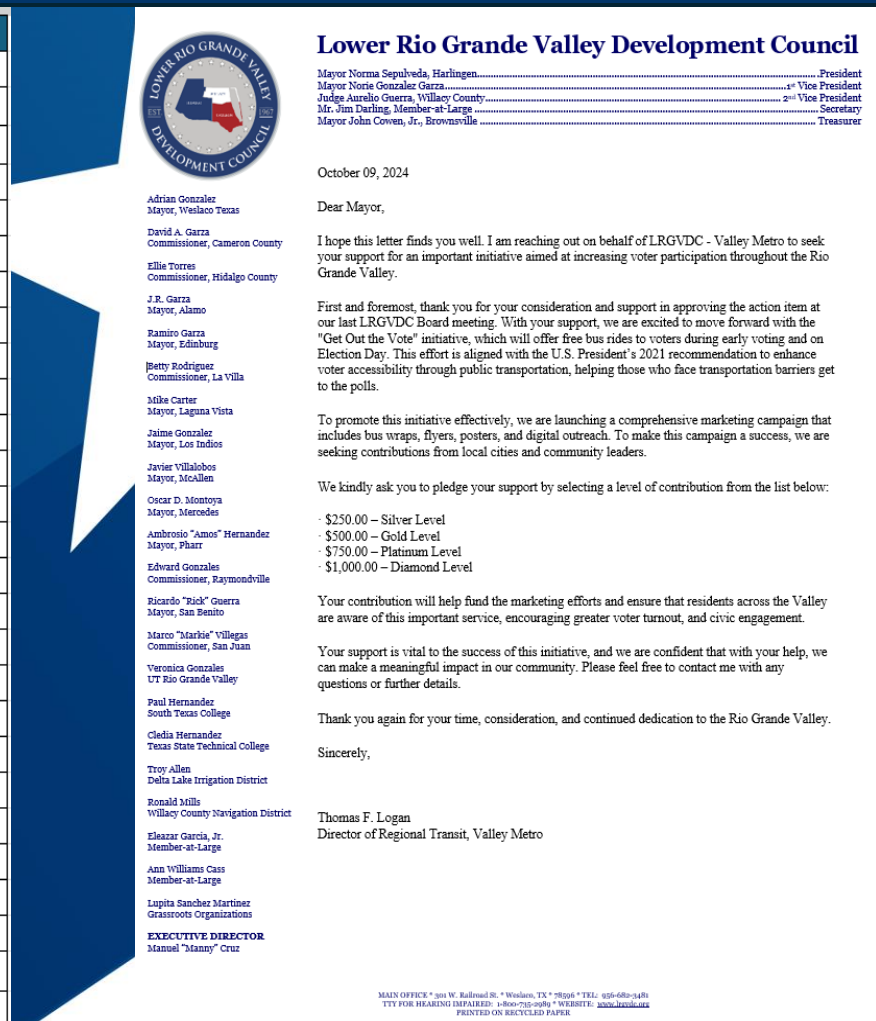
1.1k Social Media plays

As part of the "Get Out the Vote" initiative, Valley Metro distributed over 2000 flyers, posted social media notices, placed banners and posters to raise awareness about this "Free Rides" to voting opportunities and available transportation services. These materials were strategically placed in high-traffic areas such as bus terminals, community centers, local businesses, and on Valley Metro buses to ensure maximum visibility.

The flyers and posters provided important information about early voting dates, QR codes for polling station locations, and details about the free rides offered to help voters reach the polls. By reaching out to the community through these tangible forms of communication, Valley Metro ensured that residents were informed and motivated to participate in the electoral process.

LRGVDC Valley Metro's Inaugural "Get the Vote Out" Pledge

NAME	TITLE	ENTITY
J.R Garza	Commissioner PL. 3	Alamo, City of
John Cowen	Mayor	Brownsville, City of
David Moreno	Mayor	Donna, City of
Ramiro Garza	Mayor	Edinburg, City of
Norma Sepulveda	Mayor	Harlingen, City of
Alejandro Flores	Mayor	Los Fresnos, City of
Javier Villalobos	Mayor	McAllen, City of
Norie Gonzalez Garza	Mayor	Mission, City of
Dr. Ambrosio "Amos" Her	Mayor	Pharr, City of
Edward Gonzales	Commissioner Place 4	Raymondville, City of
Rick Guerra	Mayor	San Benito, City of
Marco "Markie" Villegas	Commissioner Place 5	San Juan, City of
George Guadiana	Mayor	San Perlita, City of
Alma D. Salinas	Mayor	Sullivan City, City of
Adrian Gonzalez	Mayor	Weslaco, City of
David A. Garza	Commissioner Pct 3	Cameron County
Ellie Torres	Commissioner Pct 4	Hidalgo County
Aurelio "Keter" Guerra	Judge	Willacy County
Paul Hernandez	Dean of Student Affairs	STC
Luke Lucio	Associate Vice Chancellor	TSTC
Veronica Gonzales	Vice President of Gov.	UTRGV
Lupita Sanchez Martinez	GrassRoots Organization	Voces Unidos Network
Jim Darling	Member-at-Large (GM)	Member-at-Large (GM)
Tony Chavez	Member-at-Large (Board)	Member-at-Large (Board)
Ann Cass	Member-at-Large (Board)	Member-at-Large (Board)
Troy Allen	General Manager	Delta Lake I.D.
Ronald Mills	Director	Willacy Co Nav Dist



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Mayor Norma Sepulveda, Harlingen ..... President
Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza ..... 1st Vice President
Judge Aurelio Guerra, Willacy County ..... 2nd Vice President
Mr. Jim Darling, Member-at-Large ..... Secretary
Mayor John Cowen, Jr., Brownsville ..... Treasurer

Adrian Gonzalez, Mayor, Weslaco Texas
David A. Garza, Commissioner, Cameron County
Ellie Torres, Commissioner, Hidalgo County
J.R. Garza, Mayor, Alamo
Ramiro Garza, Mayor, Edinburg
Betty Rodriguez, Commissioner, La Villa
Mike Carter, Mayor, Laguna Vista
Jaime Gonzalez, Mayor, Los Indios
Javier Villalobos, Mayor, McAllen
Oscar D. Montoya, Mayor, Mercedes
Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez, Mayor, Pharr
Edward Gonzales, Commissioner, Raymondville
Ricardo "Rick" Guerra, Mayor, San Benito
Marco "Markie" Villegas, Commissioner, San Juan
Veronica Gonzales, UT Rio Grande Valley
Paul Hernandez, South Texas College
Cledia Hernandez, Texas State Technical College
Troy Allen, Delta Lake Irrigation District
Ronald Mills, Willacy County Navigation District
Eleazar Garcia, Jr., Member-at-Large
Ann Williams Cass, Member-at-Large
Lupita Sanchez Martinez, Grassroots Organizations
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Manuel "Manny" Cruz

October 09, 2024

Dear Mayor,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am reaching out on behalf of LRGVDC - Valley Metro to seek your support for an important initiative aimed at increasing voter participation throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

First and foremost, thank you for your consideration and support in approving the action item at our last LRGVDC Board meeting. With your support, we are excited to move forward with the "Get Out the Vote" initiative, which will offer free bus rides to voters during early voting and on Election Day. This effort is aligned with the U.S. President's 2021 recommendation to enhance voter accessibility through public transportation, helping those who face transportation barriers get to the polls.

To promote this initiative effectively, we are launching a comprehensive marketing campaign that includes bus wraps, flyers, posters, and digital outreach. To make this campaign a success, we are seeking contributions from local cities and community leaders.

We kindly ask you to pledge your support by selecting a level of contribution from the list below:

- $250.00 – Silver Level
- $500.00 – Gold Level
- $750.00 – Platinum Level
- $1,000.00 – Diamond Level

Your contribution will help fund the marketing efforts and ensure that residents across the Valley are aware of this important service, encouraging greater voter turnout, and civic engagement.

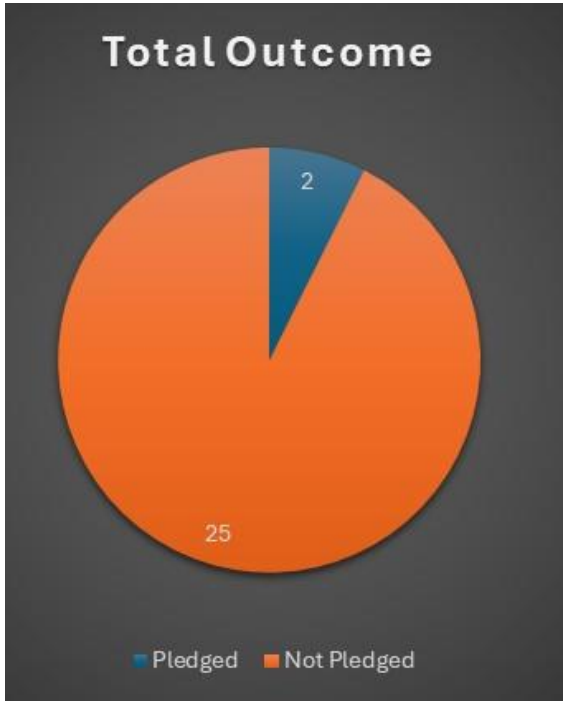
Your support is vital to the success of this initiative, and we are confident that with your help, we can make a meaningful impact in our community. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or further details.

Thank you again for your time, consideration, and continued dedication to the Rio Grande Valley.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Logan
Director of Regional Transit, Valley Metro

MAIN OFFICE * 301 W. Railroad St. * Weslaco, TX * 78596 * TEL: 956-682-3481
TTY FOR HEARING IMPAIRED: 1-800-735-2989 * WEBSITE: www.lrgvdc.org
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

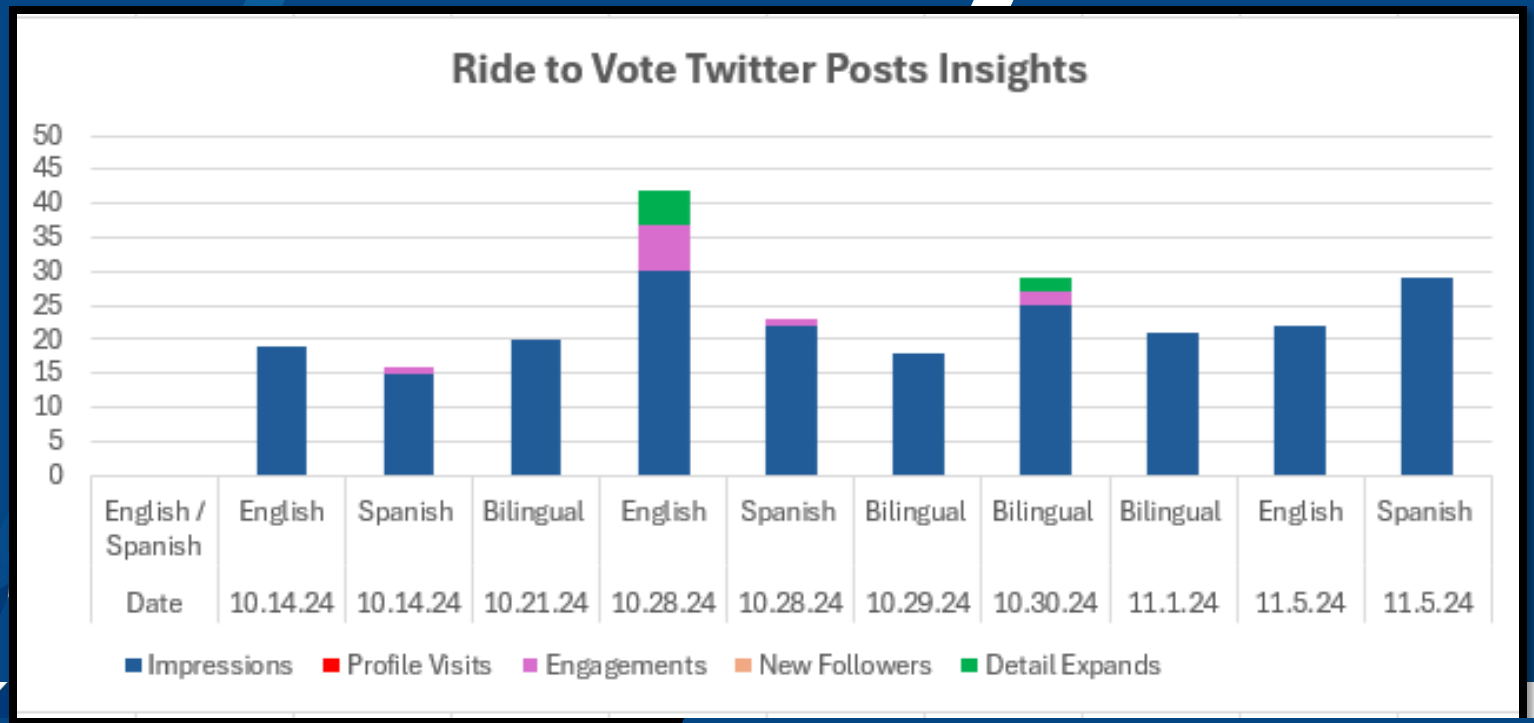


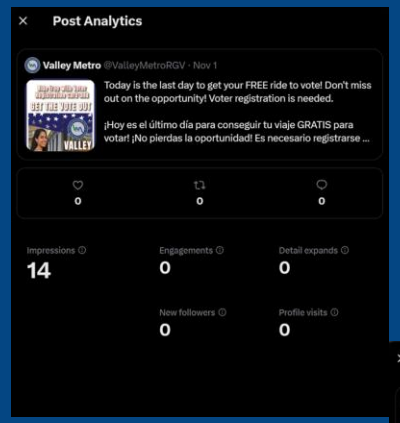
On October 10, 2024, LRGVDC Valley Metro issued a call for support for the "Get the Vote Out" initiative. A pledge letter was sent via email to all 27 members of the LRGVDC Board of Directors, seeking their endorsement and involvement in the effort.

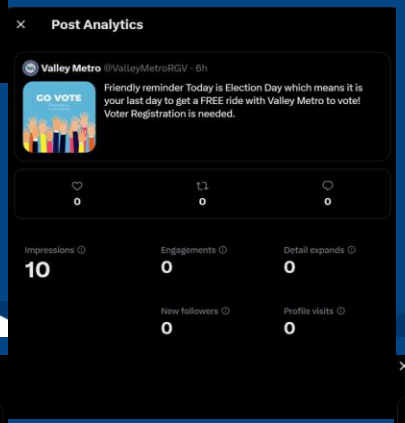
Date	English / Spanish	Reach	Impressions
10.14.24	Bilingual	423	491
10.20.24	Bilingual	348	388
10.20.24	English	348	388
10.21.24	Bilingual	74	94
10.25.24	Bilingual	50	60
10.28.24	Bilingual	279	310
10.29.24	Bilingual	54	56
10.30.24	Bilingual	43	45
10.31.24	Bilingual	51	59
10.31.24	Bilingual	41	48
10.31.24	Bilingual	76	87
10.31.24	Bilingual	76	55

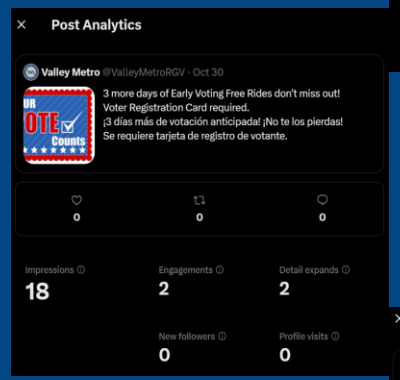
Some of LRGVDC and Valley Metro's Social Media Posts

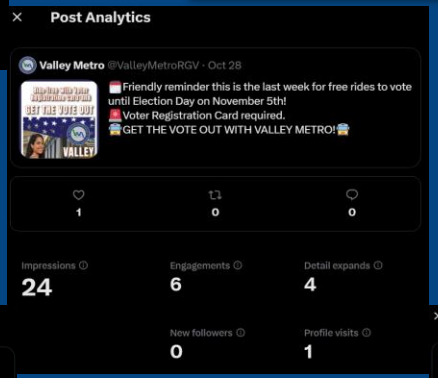
Receiving a total of 51 shares and 1,815 video plays


Ride to Vote Twitter Posts Insights
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
English / Spanish
English
Spanish
Bilingual
English
Spanish
Bilingual
Bilingual
Bilingual
English
Spanish
Date
10.14.24
10.14.24
10.21.24
10.28.24
10.28.24
10.29.24
10.30.24
11.1.24
11.5.24
11.5.24
Impressions
Profile Visits
Engagements
New Followers
Detail Expands

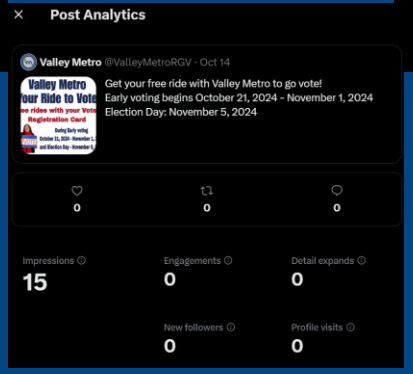

Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · Nov 1
Today is the last day to get your FREE ride to vote! Don't miss out on the opportunity! Voter registration is needed.
¡Hoy es el último día para conseguir tu viaje GRATIS para votar! ¡No pierdas la oportunidad! Es necesario registrarse ...
Impressions 14
Engagements 0
Detail expands 0
New followers 0
Profile visits 0


Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · 6h
Friendly reminder Today is Election Day which means it is your last day to get a FREE ride with Valley Metro to vote! Voter Registration is needed.
Impressions 10
Engagements 0
Detail expands 0
New followers 0
Profile visits 0

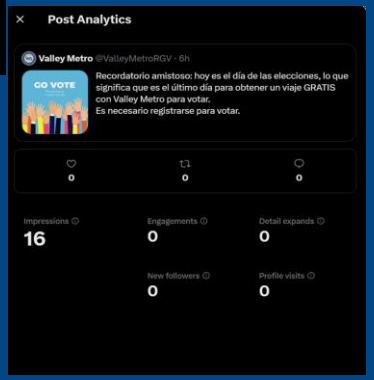

Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · Oct 30
3 more days of Early Voting Free Rides don't miss out! Voter Registration Card required.
¡3 días más de votación anticipada! ¡No te los pierdas! Se requiere tarjeta de registro de votante.
Impressions 18
Engagements 2
Detail expands 2
New followers 0
Profile visits 0


Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · Oct 28
Friendly reminder this is the last week for free rides to vote until Election Day on November 5th!
Voter Registration Card required.
GET THE VOTE OUT WITH VALLEY METRO!
Impressions 24
Engagements 6
Detail expands 4
New followers 0
Profile visits 1

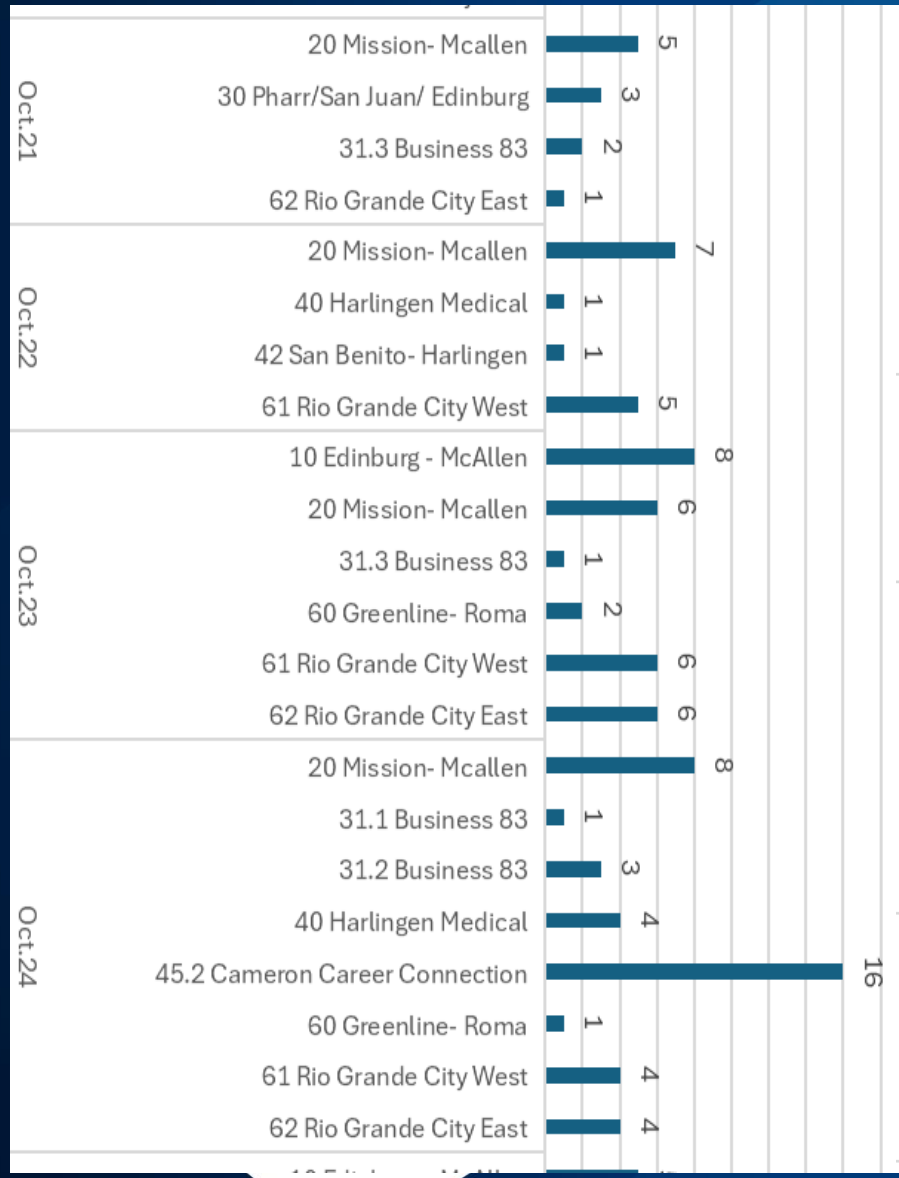
Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · Oct 14
¡Obtenga su viaje gratis con Valley Metro para ir a votar!
La votación anticipada comienza el 21 de octubre de 2024 y finaliza el 1 de noviembre de 2024
Día de las elecciones: 5 de noviembre de 2024
Impressions 11
Engagements 1
Detail expands 0
New followers 0
Profile visits 0

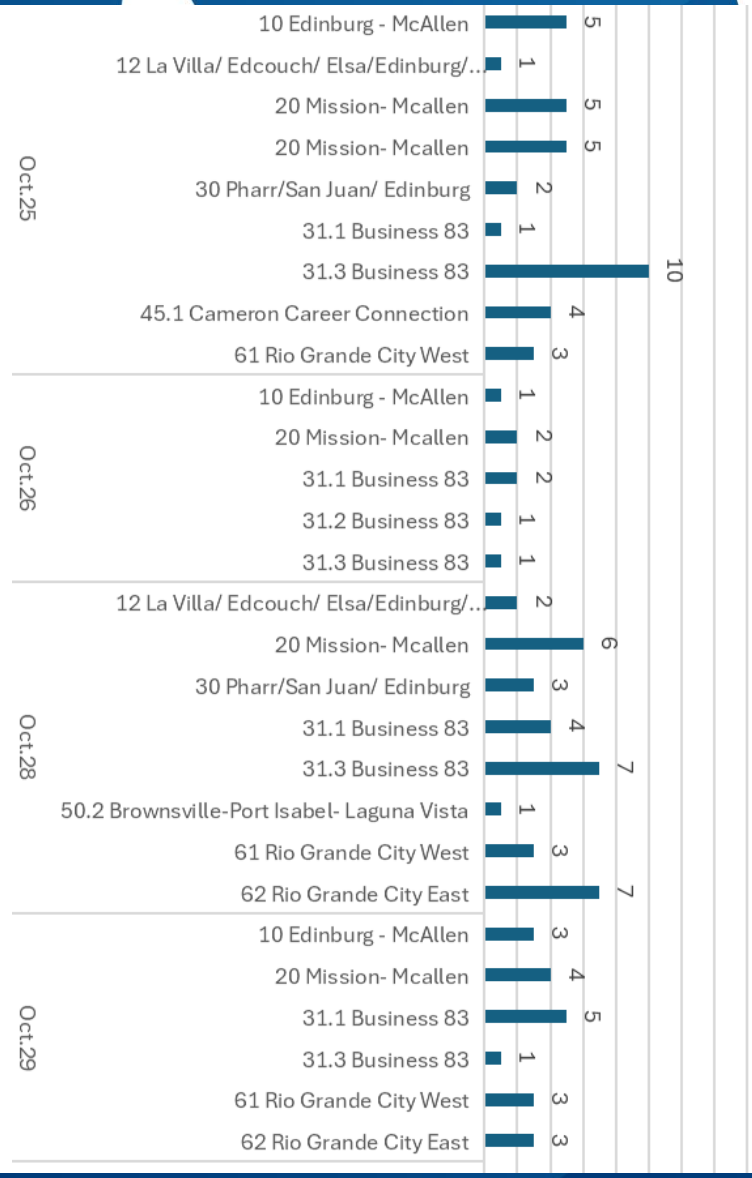

Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · Oct 14
Get your free ride with Valley Metro to go vote!
Early voting begins October 21, 2024 - November 1, 2024
Election Day: November 5, 2024
Impressions 15
Engagements 0
Detail expands 0
New followers 0
Profile visits 0

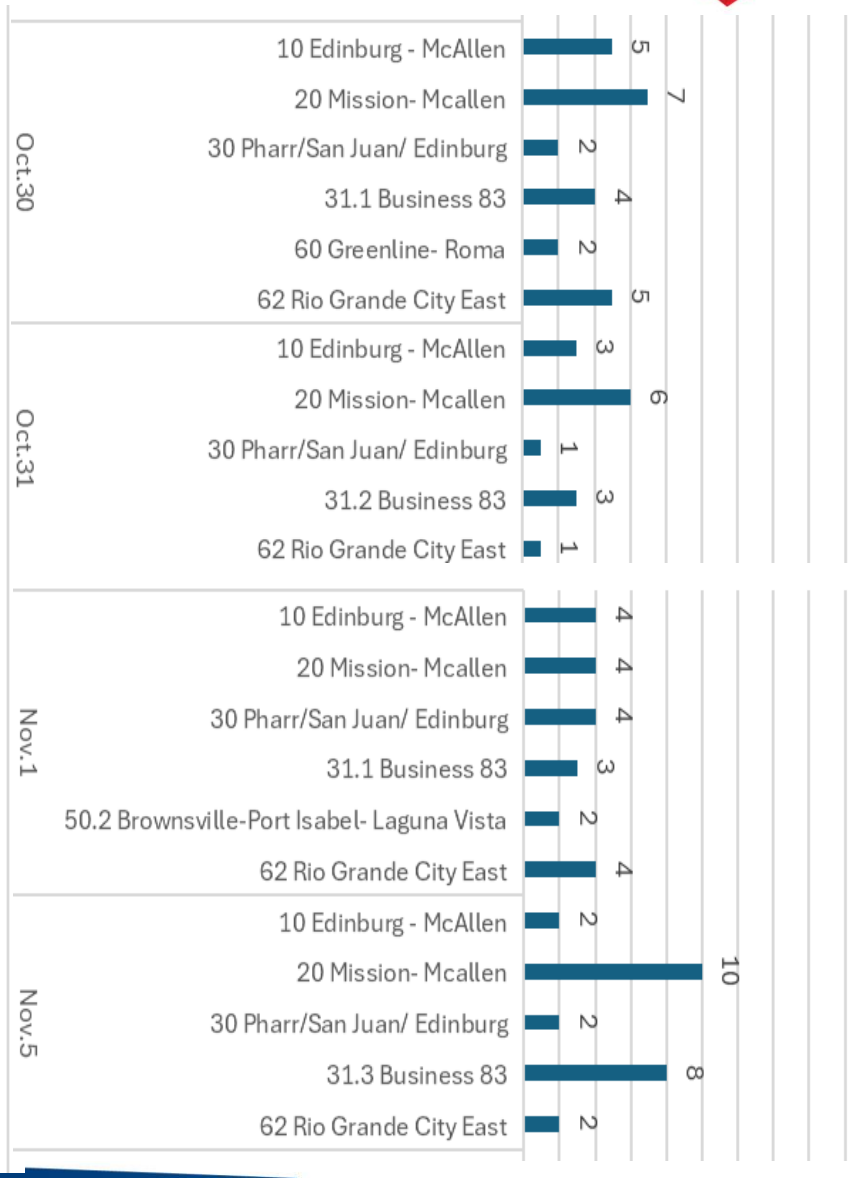
Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · Oct 28
Recordatorio amistoso: ¡esta es la última semana de viajes gratis para votar hasta el día de las elecciones el 5 de noviembre!
Se requiere tarjeta de registro de votante.
¡VOTA CON VALLEY METRO!
Impressions 17
Engagements 1
Detail expands 0
New followers 0
Profile visits 0


Post Analytics
Valley Metro @ValleyMetroRGV · 6h
Recordatorio amistoso: hoy es el día de las elecciones, lo que significa que es el último día para obtener un viaje GRATIS con Valley Metro para votar.
Es necesario registrarse para votar.
Impressions 16
Engagements 0
Detail expands 0
New followers 0
Profile visits 0

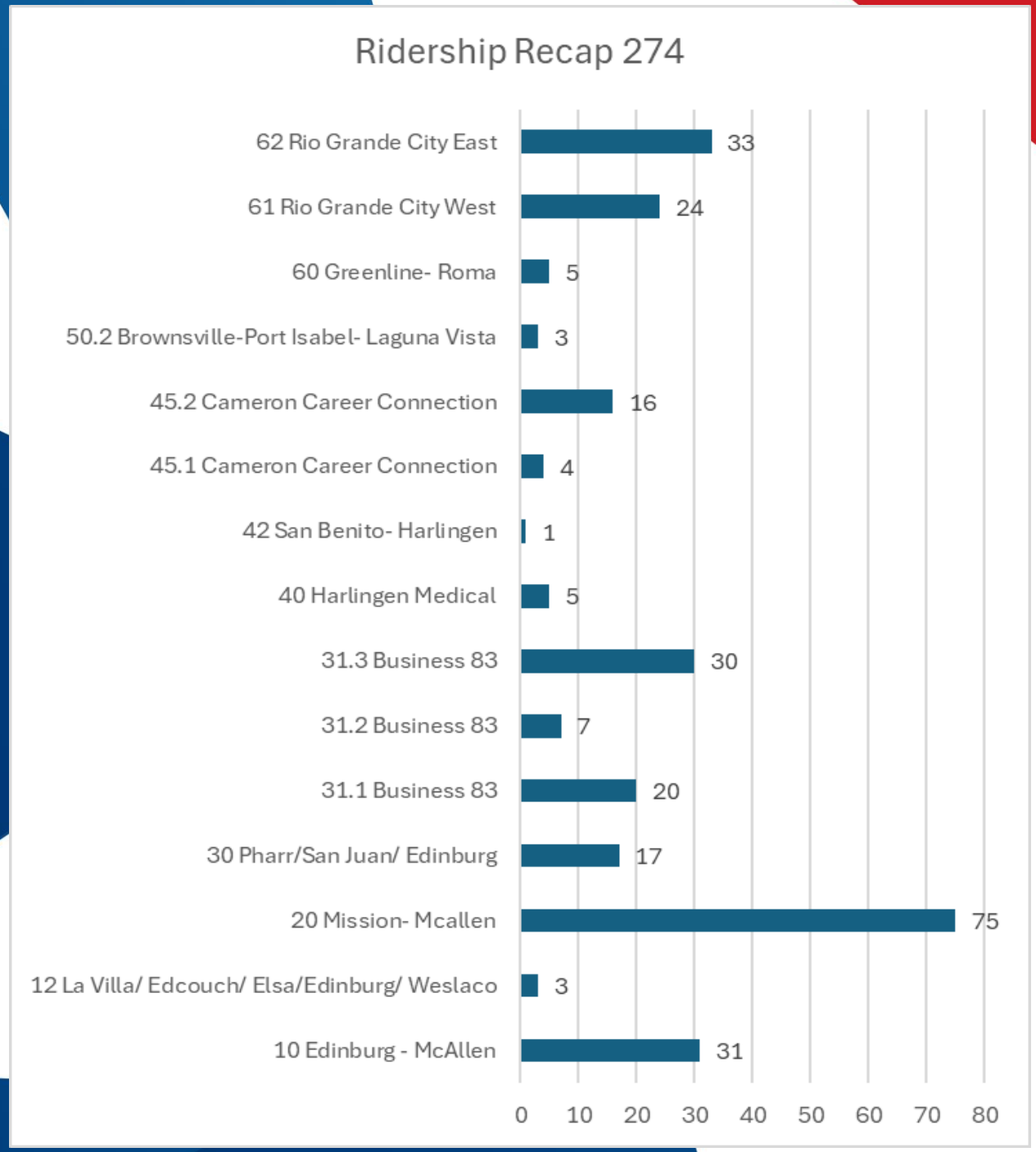
Ridership Statistics







Ridership Statistics



10 banners were sponsored by Frontier Signs and were displayed on six Metro Express buses.

Spanning from Brownsville, Harlingen, Mercedes, Weslaco, McAllen, and Edinburg.

Metro Express Bus numbers:

- 1809
- 1810
- 1812
- 237
- 2301
- 2302

THANK YOU

SIGNS FRONTIER AWNINGS
57 Hannah Dr 78520
Brownsville TX

We appreciate your sponsorship
Mr. William Franco!

Thank you for your pledge and support!

city of Brownsville

We sincerely appreciate Mayor John Cowen Jr. And the City of Brownsville for their dedicated support of the 'Get the Vote Out' initiative.
Your commitment to our community's success is invaluable!

VOCES UNIDAS

Our sincere gratitude to Voces Unidas and Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez for their invaluable contribution to the 'Get the Vote Out' initiative. Your support played a key role in its success.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
EST. 1967
Valley Metro

THANK YOU!