



Community Participation Plan

Brownsville Navigation District

Community Participation Plan

Purpose:

The goal of this Community Participation Plan is to maximize the level of public participation for Port projects and programs. This is to ensure that stakeholders, ranging from the Port and City residents as well as tenants and their workers, are represented in the development and decision process. As a public entity, the Port of Brownsville, its tenants, users, activities and economic impacts are often of interest to the public and the maritime industry. The Port will leverage its current public engagement activities to work in concert with the Title VI and Language Access Plans to enhance public engagement for all stakeholders without discrimination of race, color, national origin, or disability.

Goals and Objectives:

As stated above, the main goal of this plan is to maximize the level of public participation, when applicable, for Port projects and programs. The following objectives have been established to meet this goal:

1. Identify the most appropriate methods of communication to reach the public based on project scope and scale.
2. Allow public input through multiple channels.
3. Ensure public meetings are effectively advertised to the public through multiple channels to effectively solicit public input.
4. Ensure that adequate information and documentation, such as visual tools which include graphics, maps, photographs, and any other effective aids to provide a clear understanding of the project and its purpose are shared with the public.
5. Ensure that stakeholders from diverse backgrounds have an opportunity to provide input for Port projects.

Identification of Stakeholders:

Stakeholders are individuals and organizations directly or indirectly affected by the activities of the Port.

General Public: The City's residents include a diverse community of individuals and families. Based on American Community Survey's 5-year estimates, the total population of the City of Brownsville equates to 188,023 residents. According to the same data, approximately 94% of the population is Hispanic.

Public Agencies: Public agencies include federal, state, and local governments, and any quasi-governmental agencies, such as regional transit authorities. Working with these agencies will be vital in the planning of large-scale port projects, as well as acquiring future funding, and engaging with important public stakeholders that public agencies can tap into, such as low- to moderate-income communities.

Community-Benefit Organizations (CBO): Community-Benefit Organizations have access to and understand vulnerable or niche populations within a community which will help inform and obtain input from these communities affected directly or indirectly by Port projects.

Tenants: Tenants of the Port are companies that work within the Port's infrastructure. The input from the tenants will be vital to ensure that business continuity is not affected by any program or projects. The Port would also like to ensure that tenant staff are not negatively impacted by Port decisions.

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Outreach Types

The Port uses a variety of outreach types which are listed below. The goal is to ensure that potential beneficiaries, as well as subrecipients and contractors, are informed of the projects and how it affects them. Outreach also provides a way for them to get involved.

Board Meetings:

The Board of Commissioners typically hold two monthly meetings to discuss and act on Port business. The meetings are open to the public. Citizens and stakeholders can comment on any matters of Port activity or on specific items to be considered by the Board at the meetings. Recordings of the **Board meetings can be accessed by the public via the Port of Brownsville website.**

Website:

The Brownsville Navigation District has a Communications Department that maintains the Port's website. Residents and other stakeholders will be able to utilize the website to find other avenues to identify public participation and project resources. Language access service information will also be found on the webpage with contact information of the individual who can help.

Social Media:

The Communications Department has several social media accounts that contain Port related material. Important information regarding grant awards, projects, and general port news is shared to the public through these communication channels.

Newsletter:

The public can also sign-up to the Port's e-newsletter ("Port Matters"). Port Matters provides updates on Port events, meetings, engagements, and growth.

Public Meetings:

When applicable, the Port will stage public meetings at locations outside of the Port facilities, and in neighborhoods where projects will take place to effectively solicit input from effected populations. There will also be an effort to inform local advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders active in that region and are active in a field of service similar to the activities of the proposed project.

Assurances:

The assurances below will be incorporated into all of the types of public engagement methods outlined above.

Language Interpretation Services:

As a part of the overall Language Access Plan, the Port of Brownsville will provide sufficient access to language interpretation services. These services include access to documentation in the preferred language of effected individuals, as well as translation services to be provided at public and board meetings, when requested.

Public Comment:

Adequate and federally compliant notice will be offered in the advertisement for public meetings, as well as the duration of time that stakeholders have to provide public comment based on program and Agency regulations.

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Reasonable Accommodation for People with Disabilities:

Board and public meetings will be held at facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities. To be considered accessible, the meeting room, restrooms, entrances and exits will need to be accessible for all public participants.

The Port will also ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided, when applicable, to individuals with visual, auditory, cognitive, physical, and neurological disabilities. This would include ASL personnel at public meetings and usage of information and communication technology (ICT) for both in-person and virtual environments.

Performance Methods:

On an annual basis, the Port of Brownsville will conduct an internal review of its public participation effectiveness by examining criteria, such as:

- Records from public and board meetings
- Records of public comment responses
- Newsletter and social media engagement

Title VI Point of Contact

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