



Appendix F | Additional Input

Moore & Associates, Inc. submitted a complete draft of the project report to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council on January 4, 2022.

On January 14, 2022, the consultant presented the complete draft report to the Regional Transportation Advisory Panel for its adoption. At this meeting, two community stakeholders requested the opportunity to include their comments within the project report. Enclosed herein are those items as submitted by Proyecto Azteca on January 20, 2022.

Given these materials were submitted subsequent to the RTAP meeting, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council directed Moore & Associates to include said items within the report appendix.



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
FIVE-YEAR REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

December 2021

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Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan
Stakeholder Survey



The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council is preparing an update to the region's five-year Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (Plan). The goal of the Plan is three-fold. First, identify mobility/transportation needs of persons living and/or working in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties. Second, help prioritize such transportation needs from the perspective of residents, likely impact, and funding availability. Third, identify practical strategies for addressing the identified transportation/mobility needs.

As a community stakeholder your participation is important to the success of the Plan. Stakeholder organizations such as yours often serve as advocates for the needs (transportation and otherwise) of individuals who are either unable or unwilling to participate in the Plan's public engagement process. This could include seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, veterans, and persons with limited-English proficiency.

By completing this survey, you will help ensure the priorities, and recommendations included in the Plan effectively address the transportation needs throughout the communities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Alternatively, the survey may be completed online at www.LRGVStakeholderSurvey.com. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return your survey no later than **October 15, 2021**. Thank you for your participation!

Section 1: Organization background (all respondents)

1. Tell us about your organization.

Organization Name:	Proyecyo Azteca		
Your Name:	Ann Williams Cass	Your Title:	Executive Director
Email:	AnnWCass@aol.com		

2. Which of the following best describes your organization?

- ☐ Government ☐ Public ☒ Private non-profit ☐ Private for-profit
☐ Other (specify) _____

3. Identify the client populations your organization serves. (Select all that apply.)

- ☒ x Seniors 65 and older ☐ Homeless
☒ x Veterans ☒ x Children and youth
☒ x Low-income individuals ☐ General public
☒ x Persons with disabilities ☐ Other (specify): _____
☒ x Persons with limited English proficiency

4. What are the core functions of your organization? (Select all that apply.)

- ☒ Home-to-school transportation ☐ General public transportation
☒ x Client transportation ☐ Rehabilitation services
☒ x Non-emergency medical transportation ☐ Job placement
☒ x Healthcare ☐ Residential facilities
☒ x Social services ☐ Recreation/social
☒ x Nutrition ☐ Screening
☒ Counseling ☐ Information/referral
☒ Day treatment ☐ Other (specify): _____
☒ x Job training



5. How does your organization assist its clients obtain information about transportation? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Don't assist or aid clients with transportation information in any manner
- ☒ x Provide clients with transportation guides/schedules
- ☒ x Refer clients to transit provider guides or websites
- ☐ Plan transportation for clients using Google Transit or an online trip planner
- ☐ Make telephone calls on behalf of clients/riders
- ☒ x Use 211 Texas to provide information to clients
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

6. Indicate the transportation services provided by your organization. (Select all that apply.)

- ☒ x Do not operate, contract for, or subsidize any transportation services
- ☐ Directly operate transportation with full responsibility
- ☐ Purchase transportation services provided by another entity (contracted)
- ☐ Arrange for volunteer drivers
- ☐ Provide initial assistance in obtaining transportation (client responsible for follow up)
- ☐ Provide mobility management/travel training
- ☐ Subsidize rides/pay for fares
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

The following sections are intended to provide insight into transportation/mobility needs affecting your clients/members/etc. as well as any transportation programs your organization may provide. Because the organizations targeted within the Lower Rio Grande Valley are diverse, not every question may be directly applicable. Please answer the questions as thoroughly as possible. If a question is not applicable to your organization, leave it blank. You will have an opportunity at the end of Section 3 to provide additional comments about your organization, its needs, and its services.

Section 2: Your organization's transportation needs (all respondents)

7. How often do your clients communicate difficulty with these transportation needs?

Need	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Medical trips (doctor visits, dialysis, etc.)	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to veterans' services (including medical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essential shopping (groceries, medicine)	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation to work or school	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daycare or elementary school trips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After-school trips	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weekday trips	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening trips (before 10 pm)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening trips (after 10 pm)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday trips	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday trips	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making same-day reservations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility/path of travel to bus stop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transfers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation outside their home county	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trip planning and information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. What are your clients'/members' primary barriers to accessing transportation? (Please discuss.)

____ Information regarding routes and finding a way when they are not on a route. Then it becomes a financial challenge. _____



Section 3: Local transportation coordination (all respondents)

9. What are the most significant challenges your organization encounters with respect to providing and/or coordinating transportation services? (Select all that apply.)

- ☒ x Lack of funding to meet current transportation/mobility needs
- ☐ Lack of funding to support coordination activities
- ☐ Insufficient organizational staffing to provide services
- ☐ Insurance concerns (e.g., terms/conditions do not allow transportation of non-agency passengers, etc.)
- ☒ x Policy considerations (e.g., limitation to where trips can originate or terminate)
- ☒ x Inadequate public transit service
- ☒ x Lack of transportation services in your community?
- ☐ State or other regulations are too restrictive as to who is eligible for transportation services
- ☐ Unable to mix and/or coordinate grants from different agencies
- ☐ Inability to comply with restrictive grant or funding guidelines or reporting
- ☒ x Not part of our organization's core mission
- ☐ Other (specify): _____

10. Is there an ongoing process for identifying duplication of service, under-utilized transportation assets, and service gaps in the community which your organization operates?

- ☒ x Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

11. In your opinion, which enhancements are most needed to improve coordination of public transit and human service transportation in your service area?

_____ Figure out a way to let the low income community be aware of routes and costs _____

12. Are there any other issues, concerns, or information you believe to be relevant to this issue?

_____ We need to do fundraising for the transportation system of the COG and by that I mean writing to the elected officials about why more routes are necessary and need to be funded. _____

13. Are you interested in participating in a stakeholder roundtable to discuss mobility and transportation needs specific to your organization and the community it serves?

- ☒ x Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION DIRECTLY OPERATES, CONTRACTS FOR, OR SUBSIDIZES ANY KIND OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, PLEASE COMPLETE SECTION 4. IF IT DOES NOT, END THE SURVEY HERE. THANK YOU.

Section 4. Transportation services (transportation providers only)

14. Who is eligible to use the transportation provided by your organization?

- ☐ Only enrolled/eligible/authorized clients ☐ Any member of the general public
- ☐ Anyone served by our organization

15. Tell us about the drivers for your transportation program:

_____ # of paid dedicated drivers _____ # of volunteer drivers _____ # of paid staff who drive

16. How many total vehicles do you have available for client/customer transportation? _____

17. Tell us about the number and capacity of your vehicles:



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
FIVE-YEAR REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

December 2021

_____ # of sedans seating 5 or fewer passengers
_____ # of vans seating 10 or fewer passengers
_____ # of vehicles seating 11 to 15 passengers
_____ # of buses seating 16+ passengers
_____ Total # of lift-equipped vehicles

18. How many of your vehicles may need to be replaced in the next five years based on odometer mileage?

_____ # of vans (10 or fewer seats) exceeding 150,000 miles
_____ # of buses (11-20 seats) exceeding 200,000 miles
_____ # of buses (21+ seats) exceeding 250,000 miles

19. Passenger Trips Provided

_____ Average # of one-way passenger trips per MONTH. *Count one trip each time a passenger boards the vehicle. Count a round-trip as two one-way passenger trips.*

20. Compared to your budget prior to COVID, do you expect your organization's transportation budget for 2022 will...?

☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ Stay the same

21. Does your organization intend to continue its client transportation programs during the next five years?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

22. How has COVID-19 affected your transportation program?

23. What types of coordinated services might your organization be interested in learning more about and/or participating in?

- ☐ Sharing vehicles
☐ Cooperative travel training
☐ Joint vehicle purchasing
☐ Joint staff/driver training
☐ Insurance cooperatives
☐ Cooperative vehicle/fleet maintenance
☐ Cooperative fuel purchases
☐ Cooperative transportation marketing/promotion activities
☐ Other (specify): _____

Thank you for your participation! Please return your survey using the enclosed postage-paid envelope or by emailing the completed form to kathy@moore-associates.net.



Transportation Op-Ed
Thursday, February 27, 2020
Elsa Treffeisen

I am a pediatrician from New York City and I have spent the last month here in the Rio Grande Valley with the elective "Community for Children" offered by Dr. Marsha Griffin of UTRGV's School of Medicine. Three of the participants, also pediatricians, wanted to know how access to transportation here in the area affects access to health care. So we decided to take a bus.

It was not a bad day to wait for the bus. It was sunny and it must have been in the 60s. Mother Nature was much kinder here than at home, in 20-degree weather on a February day in New York City. The weather did balance out the discomfort of walking 15 minutes from my extended-stay hotel to the bus stop on a route without sidewalks or working pedestrian traffic lights. The bus was running a bit late, but we called Valley Metro and they informed us of the time of expected arrival. Soon enough, we got on the bus and our adventure began.

We did not go into detail with the bus driver about why we were riding the bus. After all, a lifetime of public transportation ridership from the Bay Area to Barcelona to NYC had taught me to keep it brief with bus drivers; I had never exchanged more than a few words with a bus driver. We would try to fly under the radar and take in this bus experience. This was week three of four of working with the community organization Proyecto Azteca to improve access to medical care via public transportation. As pediatricians in training, we knew that a patient's social and economic circumstances greatly affect their health and medical treatment. And per our conversations with community members and clinics, we realized that oftentimes the cost of continuous access to a car is unattainable for some.

The bus came to a halt. The standing-room only bus soon emptied out. We were at the Harlingen Bus Terminal. Immediately, our bus driver, whom we would soon learn was John, gave us an enthusiastic and thorough breakdown of the Valley Metro bus system. We learned of all the different services provided, including the popular express line that traverses from Brownsville to McAllen. We learned of the different apps for our smartphones and of the changes in public transportation here over the years. The bus took off once more, and this time, we got a personalized tour of the area, peppered in with personal anecdotes. In between his conversations with us, John greeted all of his regulars and caught up with them. It was evident that he cared greatly about his job and his riders. I came away in shock, realizing it had taken me decades of bus ridership and a trip to South Texas to meet a bus driver who sees his profession as a calling. As we got off the bus at our stop and took a selfie with John, he let us know that he would be leaving for San Antonio in two weeks to work at a bus company there. It would come with a big raise.

Unfortunately, high turnover is a common problem with the public transportation agencies in the Lower Rio Grande Valley area. In our meeting with leadership of Valley



Metro and Brownsville Metro, they attributed this to limited funding. Despite financial challenges, the leadership is both passionate and extremely intelligent. What these transit agencies can provide on such a limited budget is truly astounding. In 2017, for example, Valley Metro spent almost \$6 per resident of the area it serves on operating and capital expenses, while the NYC public transit service (MTA or Metropolitan Transit Authority), spent almost \$1,300 per resident of the area it serves. In comparing other similarly rural areas, Kern County (where Bakersfield, CA is located) spent \$14.25 per resident and Fresno County spent \$190.12 per resident. While every region is different, the value of investing in public transportation is undeniable. Public transportation is more environmentally friendly and cheaper for the consumer. Per Valley Metro leadership, the current route connecting different UTRGV campuses has been a massive hit, with extreme popularity among the younger generation.

The ridership is there. Valley Metro and Brownsville Metro say they cannot keep up with the demand. Their buses designated to the On-Demand Service of rural counties have a de facto bus route already. Residents of certain communities, especially low-income housing such as colonias, look forward to the day where a bus route can stop by their community. Increased public transportation would open the door to increased independence: attending their medical appointments, picking up their grandchildren from school, improved employment and better access to food.

So what is stopping public transportation from expanding in this area? Funding, plain and simple. This is a call to invest in the Lower Rio Grande Valley community—its land and its residents—by improving public transportation. What are you waiting for? Invest in your future.

Elsa Treffeisen, MD



Promotora Fact Sheet

Valley Metro Tips & Tricks

- Feel free to call Valley Metro (1-800-574-8322) to check to see if the bus is running on time before going out to your stop
- Many bus drivers get to know their passengers very well, and will be able to pick them up and drop them off anywhere along the route (in other words, not at an official stop) so long as it is safe for the bus to stop in the requested area
- If a patient is within ½ mile of a route, they can call the day before to request "on demand service", and the bus will come pick them up at their location
- Free for the remainder of 2020, plans for \$1 fare starting sometime 2021
- For further questions regarding Valley Metro services, contact Frank Jaramillo (Planner at Valley Metro) at fjaramillo@lrgvdc.org, 956-969-5761 ext. 303

Brownsville Metro

- Undergoing route re-alignment in the first part of 2020, request new system maps from Tracie Orcillez (see above for contact information)

Bus Vouchers

- McAllen Metro: United Way McAllen provides bus vouchers for McAllen Metro to clinics
Contact: Maria Flores (956-686-6331)
only valid with McAllen Metro
- Brownsville Metro: Contact Tracie Orcillez (Transit Manager) at tracie.orcillez@cob.us, 956-541-4881 Ext. 6663 or Cynthia Castillo for information regarding bus vouchers

UT Health RGV Mobile Clinic (aka UniMóvil)

- Mobile clinic makes scheduled visits to various colonias in the area
- For schedule information, call (956) 296-1700 or click:
<https://www.utrgv.edu/school-of-medicine/about/community/unimovil/index.htm>
- For questions, email UniMovil@utrgv.edu.

Google Maps

- Brownsville routes available on Google Maps under public transportation option. Other routes should be coming to Google Maps in the near future.

For any other questions on transit in the Rio Grande Valley, feel free to contact Ann Cass of Proyecto Azteca at annwcass@aol.com



Rio Grande Valley Bus Guide



AGENCY	SERVICE	HOURS	PHONE #	COST	ADDITIONAL INFO
Brownsville Metro	General Service	Mon-Sat 6am-8pm	(956) 548-6050 (956) 541-4881	General: \$1; Transfers: \$0.25 (valid for 2 hours) Students*: \$0.75; Seniors (Medicare)* or Disability*: \$0.50;	Wheelchair accessible. Has bike racks.
Brownsville Metro	ADA Paratransit Service	Mon-Sat 6am-7:30pm	(956) 541-8381	\$1.50	Curb-to-curb services for qualified individuals with disabilities*. Schedule one to seven days prior.
Metro McAllen	General Service	Mon-Sat 6am-9pm; Sun 8am-6pm	(956) 681-3510	General: \$1; Transfers: FREE (valid for 1 hour); Students**, Seniors** (60 & over), Medicare** or Disability**: \$0.50; Children 6 & under: FREE	Wheelchair accessible. Has bike racks.
Metro McAllen	Paratransit Service	Mon-Sat 6am-9pm; Sun 8am-6pm	(956) 681-3535	General: \$0.50; Companion: \$0.50; Personal Care Attendants: FREE	Provides service for people with disabilities* within 3/4 mile of routes.
Valley Metro	General Service	Mon-Sat 6am-8pm	1 (800) 574-8322	FREE	Wheelchair accessible. Has bike racks. Flex service picks up & drops off anywhere within 1/2 mile of route. Call at least one day in advance.
Valley Metro	On Demand Service	Starr & Zapata: Mon-Fri; Willacy: Mon-Sun; 6am-8pm;	1 (800) 574-8322 (956) 487-0068	FREE	On-demand service is available in Willacy, Starr & Zapata counties. Call at least 24 hours in advance.

*Must apply to agency to qualify / **With ID

Taking the bus:

- ~ Get a bus schedule for your route. Find them online, in community centers or at major bus stops.
- ~ Get to your stop 5-10 minutes early.
- ~ Check the bus route number above the windshield.
- ~ Pay once you get on- have exact change!
- ~ Talk to the bus driver if you're confused or get on the wrong bus.
- ~ Pull the yellow cord or push the red button if you're getting off at the next stop.
- ~ Get off at your destination.

ONLINE INFORMATION

Use the online interactive map:

- 1) Go to rgvmpo.org
- 2) Click on Maps
- 3) Click on UMAP (Interactive Map)
- 4) Click on OK
- 5) Click on Transit Routes



Download the apps:

Ride Systems: Brownsville Metro/City of McAllen/-
South Padre Island/University of Texas Rio/Valley
Metro/Valley Metro Express
Double Map: Valley Metro (Texas)

PROYECTO AZTECA



Created through a partnership between Proyecto Azteca

and Community for Children



/ February 2020.

Guía de Autobús del Valle del Rio Grande



AGENCIA	SERVICIO	HORAS	TELEFONO	COSTO	INFORMACION
Brownsville Metro	Servicio General	Lun-Sab 6am-8pm	(956) 548-6050 (956) 541-4881	General: \$1; Transbordo: \$0.25 (válido for 2 horas); Estudiantes*: \$0.75; Personas Mayores (Medicare)* o con Discapacidad*: \$0.50; Niños menores de 6 años: GRATIS	Accesible por silla de ruedas. Tiene espacio para llevar bicicletas.
Brownsville Metro	Servicio de Paratransito de ADA	Lun-Sab 6am-7:30pm	(956) 541-8381	\$1.50	Transporte de "anden a anden" para individuos calificados con discapacidades*. Programe con uno a dos días de anterioridad.
Metro McAllen	Servicio General	Lun-Sab 6am-9pm; Dom 8am-6pm	(956) 681-3510	General: \$1; Transbordo: GRATIS (válido por 1 hora); Estudiantes**, Personas Mayores** (60 & más), Medicare** o con Discapacidad**: \$0.50; Niños 6 & más: GRATIS	Accesible por silla de ruedas. Tiene espacio para llevar bicicletas.
Metro McAllen	Servicio de Paratransito	Lun-Sab 6am-9pm; Dom 8am-6pm	(956) 681-3535	General: \$0.50; Acompañante: \$0.50; Asistentes de Cuidado Personal: GRATIS	Ofrece servicio para personas con discapacidades dentro de 3/4 de milla de las rutas.
Valley Metro	Servicio General	Lun-Sab 6am-8pm	1 (800) 574-8322	GRATIS	Accesible por silla de ruedas. Tiene espacio para llevar bicicletas. Servicio flexible te recoge y te deja en cualquier sitio dentro de 1/2 milla de la ruta. Llame mínimo un día antes.
Valley Metro	Servicio a Pedido	Starr & Zapata: Lun-Vie; Willacy: Lun-Dom; 6am-8pm;	1 (800) 574-8322 (956) 487-0068	GRATIS	Servicio a pedido está disponible en los condados de Willacy, Starr & Zapata. Llame mínimo 24 horas antes.

*Debe solicitar con empresa para calificar / **Con identificación

Tomar el bus:

- ~ Consiga un horario de autobús para su ruta. Encuéntrelo por internet, en los centros de comunidad o en paradas principales de autobús.
- ~ Llegue a su parada 5-10 minutos temprano.
- ~ Chequee la ruta del autobús sobre el parabrisas.
- ~ Pague cuando se suba- tenga cambio exacto!
- ~ Hable con el conductor de autobús si se confunde o si se sube al bus incorrecto.
- ~ Hale la cuerda amarilla o oprima el botón rojo si se va a bajar en la siguiente parada.
- ~ Bájese en su parada.

INFORMACION EN LINEA

Use el mapa interactivo en línea:

- 1) Vaya a rgvmpo.org
- 2) Haga click en Maps
- 3) Haga click en UMAP (Interactive Map)
- 4) Haga click en OK
- 5) Haga click en Transit Routes



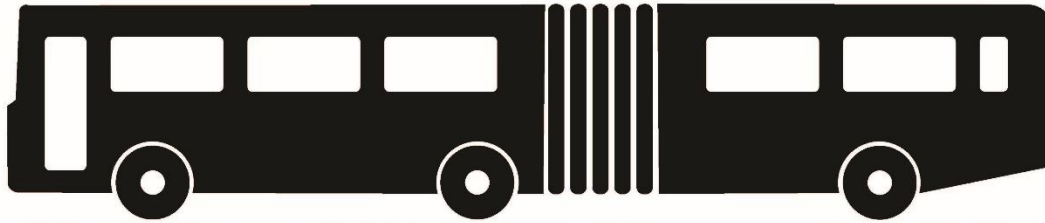
Descargue las aplicaciones:

Ride Systems: Brownsville Metro/City of McAllen/-
South Padre Island/University of Texas Rio/Valley
Metro/Valley Metro Express
Double Map: Valley Metro (Texas)

Creado a través de una colaboración entre Proyecto Azteca  y Community for Children  / Febrero 2020.



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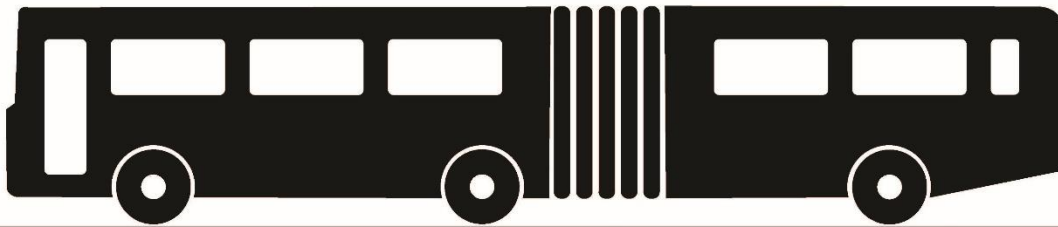
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Guía de Autobús del Valle del Rio Grande



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- 1) Vaya a rgvmpo.org
- 2) Haga click en Maps
- 3) Haga click en UMAP (Interactive Map)
- 4) Haga click en OK
- 5) Haga click en Transit Routes



Descargue las aplicaciones:

Ride Systems: Brownsville Metro/City of McAllen/
South Padre Island/University of Texas Rio/Valley
Metro/Valley Metro Express
Double Map: Valley Metro (Texas)

Creado a través de una colaboración entre Proyecto Azteca



y Community for Children



/ Febrero 2020.



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