

# HARLINGEN-SAN BENITO MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan



SEPTEMBER 2016



 HALFF



September 14, 2016



Mr. Joel Garza, Director  
Harlingen San-Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization  
502 E. Tyler Street  
Harlingen, Texas 78550

RE: Harlingen-San Benito MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Mr. Garza:

Halff Associates, Inc. is pleased to submit the final Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the Harlingen-San Benito MPO and its member communities. We have enjoyed teaming with you to develop a bicycle and pedestrian plan designed to increase the use of non-motorized transportation options by residents of the HSBMPO study area, and to provide access to recreational opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles.

The Harlingen-San Benito Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan provides HSBMPO study area communities with a blueprint to develop a coordinated network of bikeway and shared use facilities linking people to important region-wide attractions and destinations. It includes methods by which study area communities may prioritize and rank local pedestrian projects; and, it identifies policies and practices that may be used to support infrastructure investments while creating well-rounded active transportation programs.

The master plan recommends specific pedestrian and bicycle facility projects within each HSBMPO study area community that will form the backbone of local active transportation networks. These projects form interconnected routes that increase citizen access to jobs, recreation, and services. Many of these projects can be implemented relatively quickly and inexpensively. Ultimately, the master plan seeks to meet regional bicycle and pedestrian needs identified by planning participants and revealed through the analysis of local data. Development of the recommended bicycle and pedestrian network will provide HSBMPO study area communities with an additional asset that makes your region one of the premier places to live in South Texas.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to have worked with HSBMPO staff and officials, the appointed bicycle and pedestrian task force, and participating study area citizens to complete this important project.

Respectfully submitted,

HALFF ASSOCIATES, INC.

Christian F. Lentz, AICP



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## Acknowledgments

The Harlingen-San Benito MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan has been developed jointly by the staff of the Harlingen-San Benito MPO and a planning team led by Halff Associates, Inc. A special thanks is extended to the many residents and property owners, and community leaders who contributed to this plan by offering their time, resources, knowledge, and insight into the bicycle and pedestrian needs of Harlingen-San Benito MPO study area communities. The following individuals are recognized for their significant contributions to the preparation of this guiding document:

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*This plan has been funded through grants provided by both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The contents of this plan do not substitute the official views or policy of the United States Department of Transportation.*



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## HARLINGEN-SAN BENITO MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

### FOREWARD

The Harlingen-San Benito MPO is the regional transportation planning organization responsible for working with local, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, to plan coordinated transportation systems designed to move people, goods, and services affordably, efficiently, and safely throughout the MPO area. The function of the Harlingen-San Benito MPO is to coordinate regional transportation planning between the State of Texas and nine member entities/municipalities, which include: Harlingen, San Benito, Primera, Santa Rosa, Palm Valley, Rio Hondo, La Feria, Los Indios, Combes, Mercedes (Ex-Officio) and Precincts 3 & 4 of Cameron County, and consist of a combined population of over 160,729 persons. The Harlingen-San Benito MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan represents a measurable commitment on behalf of study area communities to include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as an integral component of their shared transportation networks.

With the recent passage of the FAST Act on December 4, 2015, there is recognition that simply extolling the benefits and virtues of bicycling and walking will not be sufficient to build a multi-modal transportation system which includes tangible accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. The next step is to pro-actively plan for and design the types of facilities that should be incorporated into the system. The FAST Act states:

“The Secretary shall encourage each State and metropolitan planning organization to adopt standards for the design of Federal surface transportation projects that provide for the safe and adequate accommodation (as determined by the State) of all users of the surface transportation network, including motorized and non-motorized users, in all phases of project planning, development, and operation.” Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act, Pub. L. No. 114-94, § 1442 (2015)

The Harlingen-San Benito MPO has taken this mandate to heart and has developed a bicycle and pedestrian plan that: **A)** Establishes a study area-wide network of bikeway and shared-use routes; **B)** Establishes the criteria for developing an area-wide pedestrian network; **C)** Identifies regionally significant bicycle and pedestrian facility design considerations; and, **D)** Identifies priority bicycle and pedestrian projects for all Harlingen-San Benito MPO communities.



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