

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BROADBAND PLANNING FOR BROWNSVILLE, TX

August 26, 2020 (Brownsville, TX) – The City of Brownsville, in partnership with seven strategic local stakeholders (Brownsville Public Utilities Board, Port of Brownsville, Texas Southmost College, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Greater Brownsville Incentives Cooperation, Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation, and Brownsville Independent School District) have announced a new campaign to help bring faster internet and better internet access to online Brownsville citizens.

To kick off the data-driven planning initiative, the City of Brownsville is encouraging all residents to take a survey that will help them prioritize areas that need better internet connectivity with greatest urgency.

The survey is now available online at <https://brownsvillefiber.servicezones.net>.

Citizens and stakeholders will be able to participate using a cell phone, tablet, or computer from any connected location. However, those that can complete the survey from their home or business address are strongly encouraged to do so. For those that can take the survey from home, there is an optional speed test component that will help planners map current accessibility across the community more accurately.

"During these challenging times, access and affordability factors are more important than ever before. As we think about technology advancements in our community, we need to plan with citizen needs prioritized," Mayor Trey Mendez said. "There is a lot of benefit that comes with high speed internet connectivity. We need to be thinking carefully about how to ensure our citizens have access to telehealth, remote learning, e-commerce, e-government, smart home technology, and other important services that will help our community thrive. I am excited that so many community organizations have stepped up to partner with the city and prioritize this initiative."

In the months ahead, citizen input gathered through this survey will be overlaid with infrastructure data to help planners identify the best paths, partners, and near-term opportunities that can be leveraged for additional infrastructure development. Citizens will have until the end of the calendar year to share their feedback but planning efforts will begin as soon as actionable patterns begin to emerge from the community response.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the issue of the digital divide to the forefront of our community, we have seen how a lack of connectivity has impacted the sustainability, growth, and competitive advantage of commerce in the city of Brownsville," said Esmy Villarreal, President & CEO of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce. "We are proud to be a part of this community-wide effort to close the digital divide in Brownsville that will accelerate the growth of our city in all aspects from education, to commerce, and beyond."

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