

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)
PROGRAM AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Updated March 13, 2013

This page is intentionally blank.

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Four-Factor Framework Analysis.....	3
2.1 Factor 1: Proportion, Numbers and Distribution of LEP Persons	3
2.1.1 Service Area Geographic Boundaries	3
2.1.2 Analysis of Language-related US Census Data	4
2.1.3 Involvement of Community Based Organizations.....	8
2.2 Factor 2: Frequency of Contact with LEP Persons.....	10
2.3 Factor 3: Nature and Importance of PVPC Services to LEP Community.....	10
2.4 Factor 4: Resources Available to PVPC and Overall Cost.....	11
3.0 Safe Harbor Stipulation	12
4.0 Implementation Plan for Language Assistance.....	13
4.1 Identifying LEP Persons Who Need Language Assistance.....	13
4.2 Providing Language Assistance.....	13
4.3 Providing Notice to LEP Persons.....	14
4.4 Monitoring and Updating This LEP Plan.....	14
Figures and Charts	
1-1 Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Region.....	2
2.1.2-1 PVMPO Region Population 5+ Years Who Speak English “Not Well” or “Not at All” #.....	5
2.1.2-2 PVMPO Region Population 5+ Years Who Speak English “Not Well” or “Not at All” % ...	6
2.1.2-3 Hampden County Residents Age 5+ Languages Spoken	7
2.1.1-1 PVMPO Meetings with Community-based Organizations 2007	9
2.3-1 PVTA Onboard Rider Survey 2008: What is the Main Purpose of Your Trip?	10

Accessible Formats

This document is available in accessible formats upon request. Paper copies of this document and additional information about accessible formats may be obtained by contacting:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
60 Congress Street, Springfield MA 01104
(413) 781-6045
www.pvpc.org

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Limited English Proficient (LEP) Plan has been developed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) in consultation with the FTA publication of April 13, 2007, “Implementing the Department of Transportation’s Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients’ Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons: A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers.”

This plan is a living document; it is continually reviewed, updated and improved by PVPC staff to help better meet the needs of the residents of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (PVMPO) region.

This plan describes the strategic approach that PVPC is pursuing to achieve its program to better engage people who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) in metropolitan transportation planning activities. PVPC’s goal is to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to the public involvement process for PVMPO activities. This LEP Plan clarifies PVMPO’s responsibilities with respect to LEP requirements as a recipient of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation to people who are Limited English Proficient in accordance with:

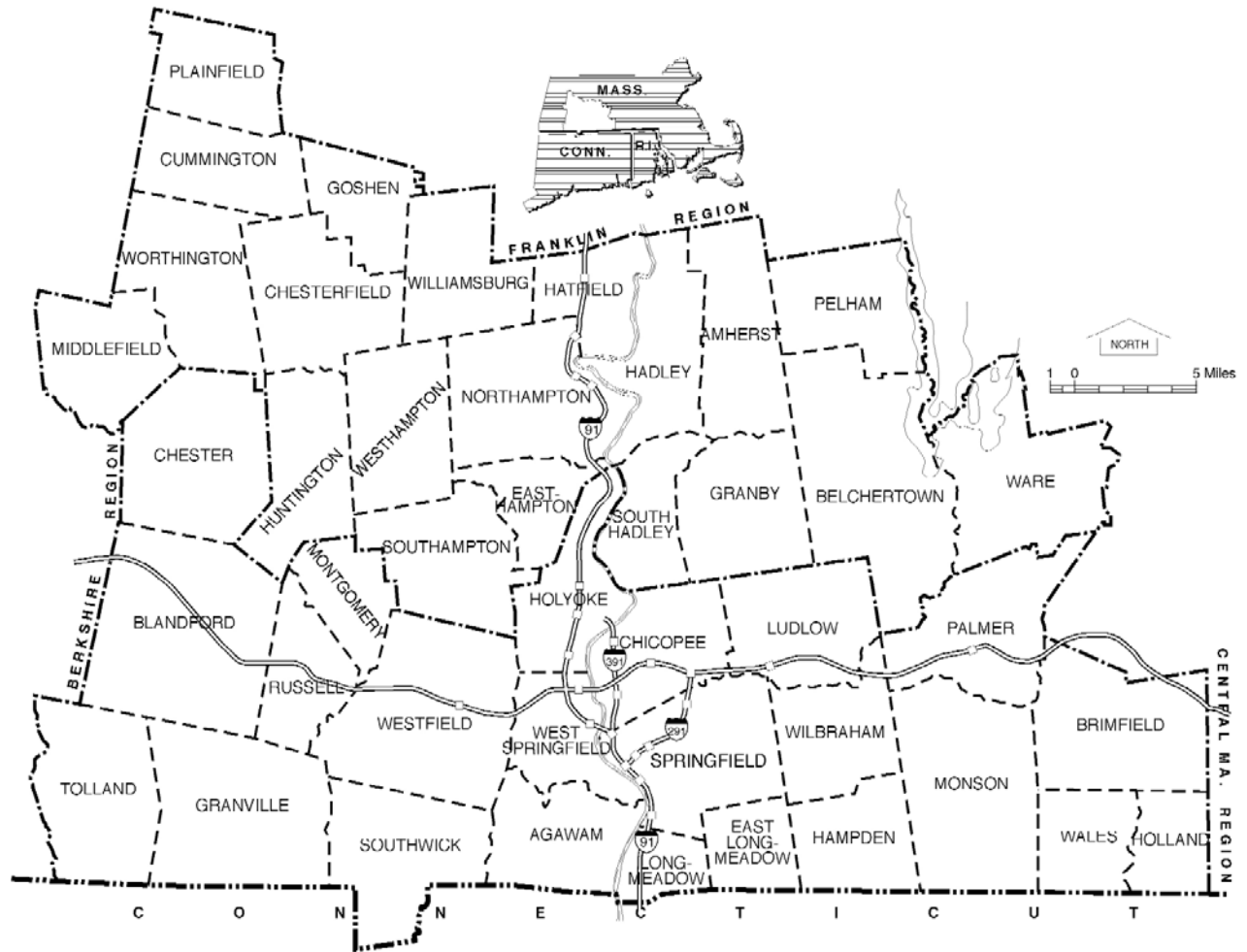
- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.**, and its implementing regulations, which state that no person shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity that receives federal assistance.
- **Executive Order 13166** “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency” of August 16, 2000, which directs that Federal agencies subject to the requirements of Title VI publish guidance for their recipients clarifying LEP obligations. Executive Order 13166 directs that all guidance documents be consistent with the compliance standards and framework detailed in the U.S. Department of Justice’s Policy Guidance “Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency.” This guidance advises that different treatment based upon a person’s inability to speak, read, write, or understand English may be a type of national origin discrimination. Executive Order 13166 applies to all federal agencies, programs and operations of entities that receive funds from the federal government, which includes the PVMPO.

These federal regulations and guidance define persons with Limited English Proficiency as individuals with a primary or home language other than English who must, due to limited fluency in English, communicate in that primary or home language if the individuals are to have an equal opportunity to participate effectively in or benefit from any aid, service or benefit in federally funded programs and activities.

This plan is being made available to people and organizations for which LEP may be a common consideration, including social service, non-profit, and law enforcement agencies. This plan is available in electronic PDF format on the PVPC website at www.pvpc.org. Paper copies of this LEP Plan will be provided to the community based organizations that have been consulted during the development of this plan, as well as the members of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (PVMPO), the Joint Transportation Committee of the PVMPO, the

Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, and any other person or agency requesting a copy.

Figure 1.1 : Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Region



2.0 PVMPO REGION LEP POPULATION ANALYSIS

This section presents an analysis of LEP residents of the PVMPO region. This analysis is modeled on the four-factor analysis of an individualized assessment described in the FTA guidance publication of April 13, 2007 entitled “Implementing the Department of Transportation’s Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients’ Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons: A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers.” Though the four-factor analysis is intended primarily for use by transit agencies, its application to the PVMPO is also helpful in assessing the needs of LEP persons in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

The PVMPO region includes communities with diverse ethnicities, including many people for whom English is not their native language. The representatives and residents of these communities who participate in the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) process are the most regular and significant channels through which PVPC has developed and maintains awareness of the concerns of LEP persons.

The following factors were considered to help gauge the level and extent of language assistance measures required to sufficiently ensure meaningful participation in the MPO process:

- Factor 1: Proportion, numbers and distribution of LEP persons in the PVMPO region
- Factor 2: Frequency of contact with LEP persons
- Factor 3: Nature and importance of metropolitan transportation planning to LEP persons
- Factor 4: Resources available to PVMPO and cost

2.1 Factor 1: Proportion, Numbers and Distribution of LEP Persons

The U.S. Census Bureau reports a range of 4 classifications of how well people speak English. The classifications are ‘very well,’ ‘well,’ ‘not well,’ and ‘not at all.’ Consistent with federal guidance, the PVMPO LEP Plan considers people who are reported by the Census to speak English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’ as Limited English Proficient persons.

2.1.1 Service Area Geographic Boundaries

The PVMPO region consists of the 43 Massachusetts municipalities listed below on Table 2.1 and displayed in Figure 1.1 on the previous page.

Table 2.1 Communities in the Pioneer Valley Region

Agawam	Easthampton	Ludlow	Southwick
Amherst	Goshen	Middlefield	Springfield
Belchertown	Granby	Monson	Tolland
Blandford	Granville	Montgomery	Wales
Brimfield	Hadley	Northampton	Ware
Chester	Hampden	Palmer	West Springfield
Chesterfield	Hatfield	Pelham	Westfield
Chicopee	Holland	Plainfield	Westhampton
Cumington	Holyoke	Russell	Wilbraham
East Longmeadow	Huntington	South Hadley	Williamsburg
	Longmeadow	Southampton	Worthington

2.1.2 Analysis of Language-related U.S. Census Data

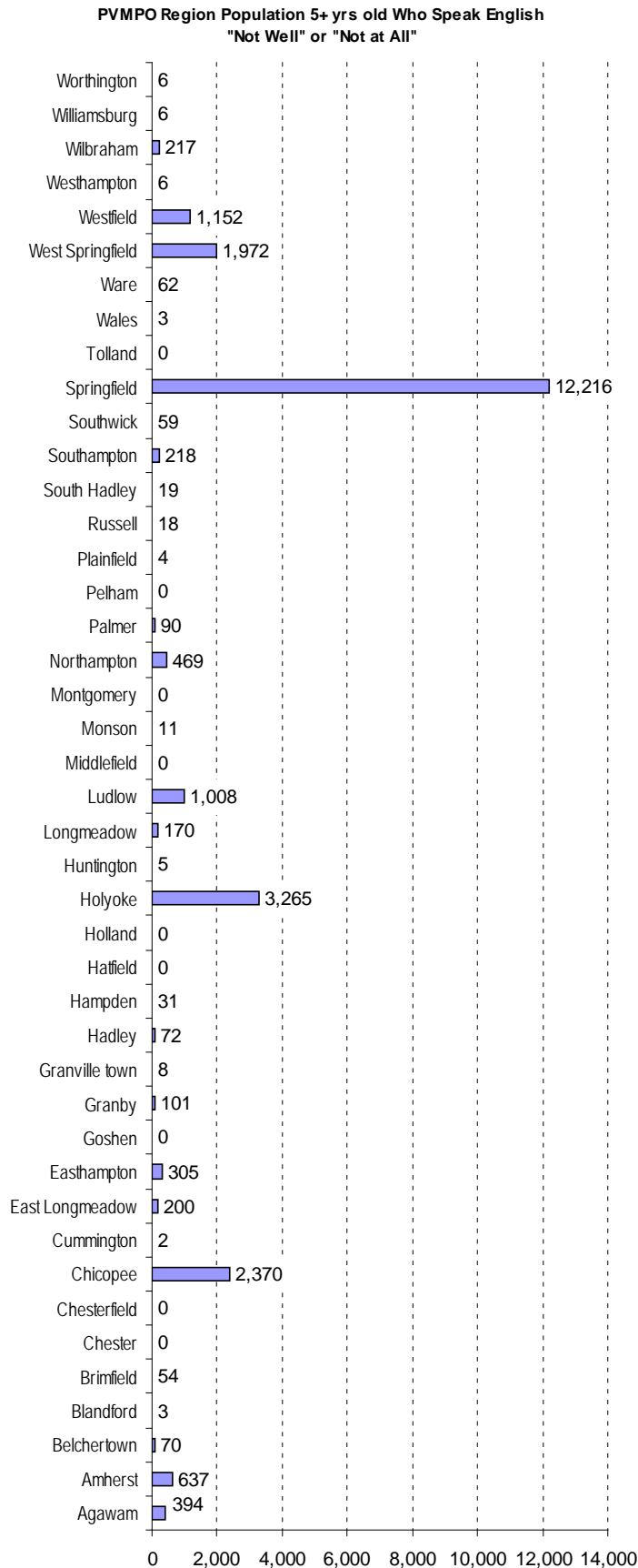
This section presents analysis of demographic data related to the ability to speak English from the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS). Table 2.2 shows the wide range of languages other than English spoken at home in the Pioneer Valley and speaks to the cultural diversity of the region.

Table 2.2
Languages other than English Spoken at Home in the PVPC Region

Languages	Total	Percent	Cumulative
Spanish or Spanish Creole	67,249	57.2%	57.2%
Polish	6,990	5.9%	63.1%
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	6,388	5.4%	68.6%
Russian	5,646	4.8%	73.4%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	5,014	4.3%	77.6%
Chinese	2,810	2.4%	80.0%
Vietnamese	2,653	2.3%	82.3%
African languages	2,342	2.0%	84.3%
Italian	2,122	1.8%	86.1%
Other Slavic languages	1,720	1.5%	87.5%
Other Asian languages	1,441	1.2%	88.8%
German	1,421	1.2%	90.0%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	1,267	1.1%	91.1%
Arabic	1,122	1.0%	92.0%
Other Indo-European	967	0.8%	92.8%
Korean	952	0.8%	93.6%
Other Indic	736	0.6%	94.3%
Greek	728	0.6%	94.9%
Japanese	682	0.6%	95.5%
Hindi	677	0.6%	96.0%
Thai	665	0.6%	96.6%
French Creole	608	0.5%	97.1%
Urdu	579	0.5%	97.6%
Serbo-Croatian	536	0.5%	98.1%
Tagalog	484	0.4%	98.5%
Other West Germanic	348	0.3%	98.8%
Persian	308	0.3%	99.0%
Hebrew	219	0.2%	99.2%
Other Pacific Island	167	0.1%	99.4%
Scandinavian	153	0.1%	99.5%
Gujarati	146	0.1%	99.6%
Laotian	99	0.1%	99.7%
Hungarian	96	0.1%	99.8%
Armenian	93	0.1%	99.9%
Other and unspecified	65	0.1%	99.9%
Yiddish	52	0.0%	100.0%
Other Native North American	23	0.0%	100.0%
Hmong	17	0.0%	100.0%
Navajo	0	0.0%	100.0%
Total other than English at Home	117,585	100%	100.0%

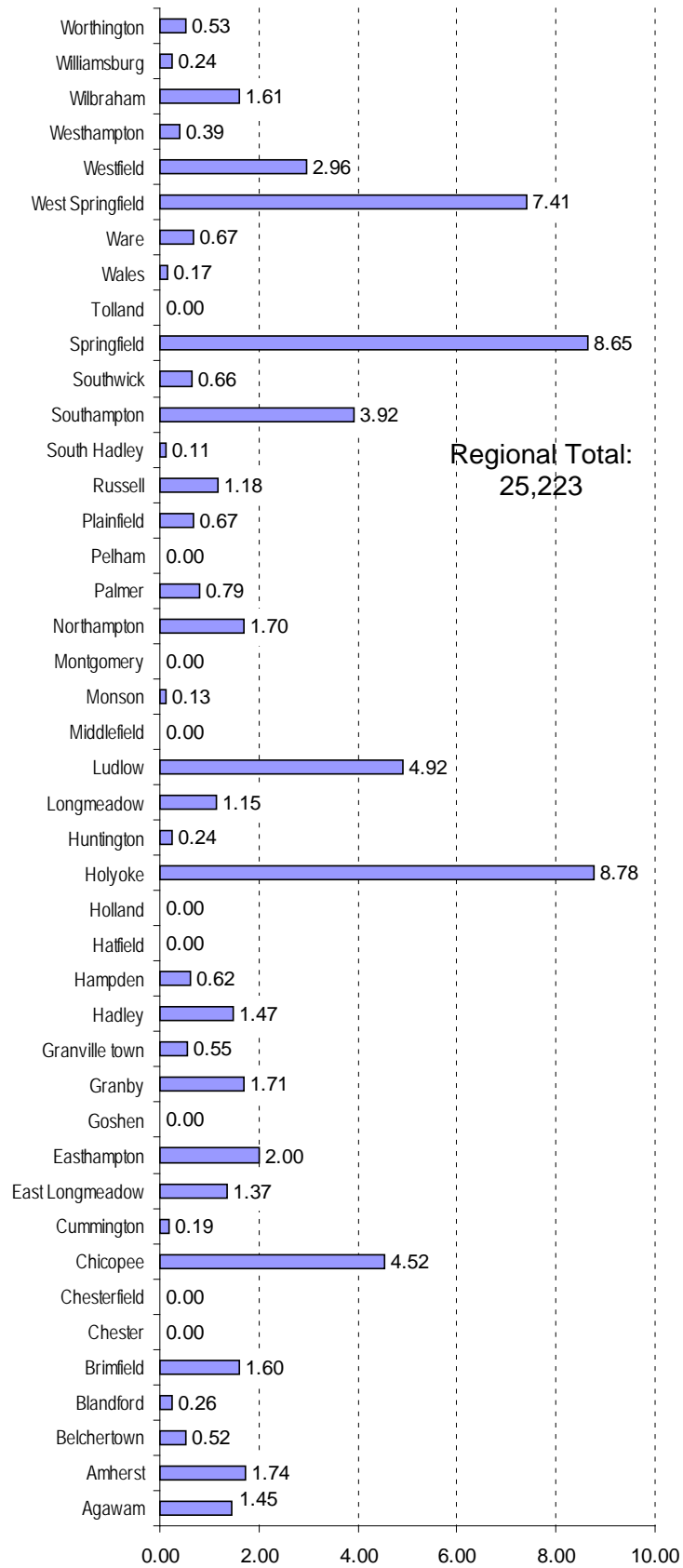
Figure-2.2 shows that the number of LEP persons in the region is 25,223. The five highest number of LEP residents are in communities of Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield and Westfield.

Ludlow, US 43 presented the within may be Based on the 1,000 eligible (See save section



of LEP residents are in communities of Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield and Westfield. Analysis of Census ACS 2006-2010 demographic data for the PVMPO communities in Figure-2 shows that proportion of residents the PVMPO region who considered LEP is 4.3. data available at this time PVPC region exceeds person thresholds for all LEP language groups harbor provisions in 3.0).

**PVMPO Region Population 5+ yrs old Who Speak English
"Not Well" or "Not at All"**



Source: US ACS
Census 2006-10
"Population 5
years and Over by
Language Spoken
at Home and
Ability to Speak
English"

Figure 2.2

Regional Average:
4.3%

Source: ACS
2006-10
"Population 5
years and Over by
Language Spoken
at Home and
Ability to Speak
English"

The most recent data for English proficiency is from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey five-year estimates. ACS only two reporting categories: 1) “Speaks English Very Well” and 2) “Speaks English Not Very Well.” The ACS estimate for Hampshire and Hampden County 2006-2010 is that 25,223 people over the age of 5, or approximately 4.3 of the County’s 585,684 residents over that age, speak English “less than very well.” The region speaks with a diversity of languages other than English however the majority of people surveyed for who English was not their first language are also able to speak English “very well.”

2.1.3 Involvement of Community Organizations and Committees

The PVMPO is engaged with community based organizations that serve LEP persons in two general ways: 1) participating in meetings of organizations and agencies that deal with LEP issues; and 2) the public involvement process.

The staff of the PVMPO participates on an ongoing basis in the meetings and activities of the following community and municipal organizations that address in part the needs of LEP persons:

- Directors of Councils on Aging in PVMPO communities.
- Human service organizations.
- Emergency management agencies and staff of PVMPO member communities.
- Homeland Security Councils of Hampden and Hampshire Counties.

PVMPO staff also participates regularly in meetings and activities of municipal and volunteer committees in PVMPO member communities, including those of the City of Northampton Public Transportation Committee. PVMPO staff also conducts outreach to the Town Amherst Public Transportation Committee. Both committees address issues of concern to LEP residents of the region.

PVMPO continues to work with other transportation agencies, including the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Office of Community and Economic Development and others to identify other community based organizations not traditionally involved in service of LEP persons. Table 1 (next page) lists the organizations, meeting dates with PVMPO and transportation concerns identified during outreach performed for the most recent update of the PVMPO Title VI plan to MassDOT.

Table 1
Recent LEP Outreach Activities

Winter 2011

- Populations of non-native English speakers were identified using Census data during the updating of LEP information for the PVT A Non-transit User Study, PVPC Coordinated Human Services Plan, and LEP Programs.
- Provided a Spanish translation on YouTube for the bikes on bus instructional video.

Spring 2011

- Coordination of with Springfield North End Community Organizations on a “Fun on the Riverwalk” to foster healthy lifestyle choice and encourage community use of the Springfield Riverwalk and Bikeway in a neighborhood with significant number of Spanish speakers.
- Meeting with Russian bus operators to develop outreach ideas for engaging native Russian speakers.
- Locations where significant numbers of Russian speakers live identified.

Summer 2011

- Produced and posted Russian-language bus rider information sheet plus five different “how to ride” sheets in Russian for bus stops near buildings or in neighborhoods where Russian speakers live.
- Introduced “Pioneer Valley Try Transit Week” to broaden transit’s appeal and remove cultural barriers and stereotypes.
- Began working with Springfield Public Housing (Saab Court) and Lutheran Social Services in West Springfield on outreach through English as a Second Language (ESL) classes with Russian, Spanish, Somali, Burmese and Chinese native speakers.

Fall 2011

- Engaged a total of 58 non-English speakers through a series of LEP events that included classroom and bus onboard trainings. Schedules and maps were provided at all events. Poster-sized plots schedules and route maps were produced and left at LSS and Saab Court for ongoing use and reference:
 - Oct. 6: Russian native speakers (10) – LSS, West Springfield with bus
 - Oct. 6: Russian native speakers (none attended) – Saab Court, Springfield
 - Oct. 20: Spanish native speakers (10) – LSS, West Springfield
 - Oct. 20: Russian native speakers (12) – LSS, West Springfield
 - Oct. 20: Burmese native speakers (8) – LSS, West Springfield
 - Oct. 20: Somali native speakers (12) – LSS, West Springfield
 - Oct. 20: Chinese native speakers (6) – LSS, West Springfield
- Met with the Director of Environmental Programs for Nuestras Raíces in Holyoke to discuss transportation issues for after school youth programs. Nuestras Raíces Nuestras Raíces currently manages 8 community gardens and two youth gardens, and plans to expand the network of gardens each year. Student transportation for students remains an issue.

Common Questions/Concerns Heard From Non-English Speakers

- Non English speaking residents are not always fully engaged in project design and development. Traditional methods of outreach may not always be effective.
- Many reported difficulty when boarding the bus the first time. Non-English speakers said they were unable to understand the cost of the fare when they initially boarded. Some Somali participants put in large denominations (i.e. \$5, \$10, \$20) bus fare and thought the bus could produce change; they said that in their country, they pay when they board and receive change based on where they get off of the bus.
- Transfer policy and purchase are a source of confusion to non-English speakers. Participants said it was difficult to understand the transfer time limit description.
- Non-English speakers expressed interest in traveling to Holyoke Mall and other major shopping destinations. Staff described how to travel to the Mall via the P20.
- It is difficult for customers to estimate travel times and bus arrival times when there are long intervals between time points (i.e., R1- between Westfield Center and SBT).
- Onboard safety concerns were expressed by customers. Staff pointed out the security cameras and described safety policies.
- Staff addressed participant's questions regarding route frequency differences. Participants were confused as to why certain Springfield PVTA routes leave every half hour while the R-10 only runs every hour.

Key Points/Lessons Learned

- Many of the growing health concerns in Springfield's North End neighborhoods identified by the Brightwood Health Center and Springfield Partners for Healthier Communities are influenced by the build environment. It is imperative that transportation projects and infrastructure constructed in this community fully incorporate the "Complete Streets" guidance adopted in the Massachusetts Highway Design Guide and that community engagement during the design phase of project development recognize cultural and language barriers that may be unique to Springfield's North End neighborhoods. Sidewalks, bike lanes, inviting streetscapes that provide opportunities for positive social interaction are critical to creating healthy vibrant neighborhoods. Traditional "English only" outreach during project planning may fall short of achieving these goals.
- Support from Lutheran Social Services was critical to the success of this effort. LSS provided translators for Burmese, Chinese, Somali and Russian.
- Outstanding internal support from Z. Valentin for Spanish translation and P. Chege for Somali translation.
- Bus ride very important for success of these events.
- Outstanding participation/translation by bus operators D. Kishko and P. Chege was critical.

Next Steps

- Recommend continuing with similar evening outreach events for Russian, Somali, Spanish, Chinese and Burmese at LSS ESL classes at 6-month intervals (when there is evening light).

- PVPC will continue to coordinate work closely with Baystate’s Brightwood Health Center, Springfield Partners for Healthier Communities and the Springfield Planning Department to identify language barriers and address issues as they relate to the planning, design and construction of transportation projects.
- Recommend developing and focusing efforts in the next 6 months on outreach to Spanish speakers through ESL classes at other social service agencies.
- Expand “Try Transit Week” marketing and promotion efforts. Work to create new social norms for the public’s perception of transit by engaging civic and community leaders.
- Identify transportation issues for
- Future organizations/agencies identified for new LEP outreach:
 - ✓ Holyoke Community College ESL classes at Holyoke Transportation Center
 - ✓ Valley Opportunity Council in Holyoke
 - ✓ Catholic Charities ESL classes in Springfield
 - ✓ Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts.

2.2 Factor 2: Frequency of Contact with LEP Persons

PVMPO members and staff are in contact with organizations and individuals representing the concerns of LEP persons on a daily basis. The contacts include:

- Planning support to the PVRTA, which serves a large number of LEP persons daily.
- Coordination of public involvement and community outreach activities for the PVMPO and PVRTA, such as bus rider forums, para-transit rider meetings, public hearings and meetings with community groups.
- Coordination and cooperation with community based organizations. (Appendix J)
- Coordination with social service organizations.

2.3 Factor 3: Nature and Importance of PVMPO Transportation Planning and Service to LEP Community

PVMPO is committed to making the metropolitan transportation planning process as accessible as possible to all people who live within the region. This outreach to LEP persons is important because PVMPO staff also provides comprehensive planning, surveying and public involvement services the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, which provides fixed route and para-transit service to 24 of the most populous PVMPO communities. Significantly, LEP persons may be more dependent on transit service than English speakers in the region. Any denial, delay or reduction in access to the public transit services provided because of language-related barriers is unacceptable. The PVMPO staff publishes notices of significant planning efforts in Spanish newspaper that are distributed free of charge and conducts regular surveys of transit customers in the region.

2.4 Factor 4: Resources Available

The PVMPO programs the transportation projects that utilize federal and state sources of operating assistance for transit, as well as and capital assistance for transportation and transit projects. Support for LEP outreach and related services are integrated with the planning and development of these projects.

Going forward, the PVMPO will continue to identify LEP concerns and seek appropriate additional funding and strategies for integration with programmed transportation projects in the region that may be available and appropriate for LEP programs and services.

3.0 SAFE HARBOR STIPULATION FOR WRITTEN TRANSLATIONS

Federal law provides a “safe harbor” stipulation so that recipients and sub-recipients of federal funds can ensure with greater certainty that they comply with their obligations to provide written translations in languages other than English. A safe harbor means that if a recipient or sub-recipient provides written translations in certain circumstances, such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient's or sub-recipient's written-translation obligations under Title VI.

The failure to provide written translations does not mean there is noncompliance, but rather provides a guide for recipients and sub-recipients that would like greater certainty of compliance than can be provided by a fact-intensive analysis.

For example, even if a safe harbor is not used, if written translation of a certain document(s) would be so burdensome as to defeat the legitimate objectives of its program, it is not required. Other ways of providing meaningful access, such as effective oral interpretation of certain vital documents, could be acceptable or preferable under such circumstances.

Strong evidence of compliance with a recipient's or sub-recipient's written-translation obligations under safe harbor includes providing written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered.

This safe harbor provision applies to the translation of written documents only. It does not affect the Title VI requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and reasonable.

In the PVMPO region all eligible LEP language groups exceed the “1,000 or greater” population threshold for which written translations of vital documents can be provided (see table 3.1). Using the Safe Harbor standard, PVPC is committed to provide written translations of all key documents to residents of our 43 communities.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

This section describes PVMPO's current and future plans for providing language assistance to LEP persons in the region.

4.1 Identifying LEP Persons Who Need Language Assistance

PVMPO identifies LEP persons who need language assistance through the following activities and services:

- Coordination with municipal, regional and state agencies engaged in transportation planning processes.
- Outreach to community based organizations and municipal agencies to ask their assistance in identifying LEP persons who may need language assistance.
- Outreach to social service agencies in the region.
- Planning coordination and public involvement services and activities with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority.
- Inclusion of instructions on how to request language translation of key written documents on public meeting notices.
- Asking persons attending public hearings if Spanish language translation and/or signing interpreter services are desired or needed (services are always available).
- Demographic assessment of census data to ascertain likely geographic location of potential LEP customers.

4.2 Providing Language Assistance

This section describes the current and future services that the PVMPO provides for enhancing the access of its system to LEP persons.

Information regarding PVMPO transportation planning processes is made available through multiple means, including translated public meeting notices and providing a bilingual staff whenever possible. PVMPO's future programs and services to enhance accessibility of transit services to LEP persons include:

- Partnerships with PVTA and community organizations to develop a list of language translation volunteers who are available for public meetings. This option could be used where advanced notice is provided that translator services are needed. This option may also help increase the number of languages for which translation services are available.
- Development of written translation and oral interpreter service providers database. This would improve the speed and convenience with which written documents can be translated for the public, and reduce the need to have public requests for them.
- Ensuring that PVMPO members are aware of the USDOT LEP guidance and support their LEP planning activities, as appropriate.
- Regular updates to this LEP Plan, as needed by new events, such as the release of language-related demographic data from the 2010 decennial census and/or indications of increases in LEP population.
- Identification of community based organizations that are not being contacted through existing outreach.

4.3 Providing Notice to LEP Persons

USDOT LEP guidance states: “Once an agency has decided, based on the four factors, that it will provide language service, it is important that the recipient notify LEP persons of services available free of charge. Recipients should provide this notice in languages LEP persons can understand.”

PVMPO provides this notification through the following:

1. Meeting notices in print and on the PVMPO website that include instructions on how to request language assistance (with advance notice).
2. The statement in outreach documents that language services are available from the agency.
3. Working with community-based organizations and other stakeholders to inform LEP individual of the recipient’s services, including the availability of language assistance services.
4. Including notices in local newspapers in languages other than English. (Local Spanish news media is traditionally used by the MPO)

Future notification services are expected to include:

- An inventory of existing public service announcements and community outreach opportunities.
- Improved incorporation of notices of language assistance availability in existing outreach.
- Targeted community outreach to LEP persons, especially via the community based organizations that may serve and represent them.

4.4 Monitoring and Updating This LEP Plan

PVMPO will continue to monitor and update this LEP Plan. Related activities will likely include:

- Establishing and implementing a process to obtain feedback from LEP persons, directly, as well as community members and agencies.
- Conducting internal monitoring and random spot checks of LEP services.
- Refining and improving the LEP Plan described above consistent with feedback received.
- Considering new language assistance needs when expanding service.
- Regularly updating the plan (annual basis) or when significant new language-related demographic data becomes available.

END