



St. Bernard Parish Council

8201 West Judge Perez Drive Chalmette, Louisiana, 70043
(504) 278-4228 Fax (504) 278-4209
www.sbpq.net

Fred Everhardt, Jr.
*Councilmember
at Large*

Gillis McCloskey
*Councilmember
at Large*

Patrice Cusimano
*Councilmember
District A*

Joshua "Josh" Moran
*Councilmember
District B*

Cindi Meyer
*Councilmember
District C*

Ryan Randall
*Councilmember
District D*

Amanda Mones
*Councilmember
District E*

Roxanne Adams
Clerk of Council

#12

EXTRACT OF THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF ST. BERNARD, STATE OF LOUISIANA, TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE ST. BERNARD PARISH GOVERNMENT COMPLEX, 8201 WEST JUDGE PEREZ DRIVE, CHALMETTE, LOUISIANA ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024 AT THREE O'CLOCK P.M.

On motion of Mr. McCloskey, seconded by Mr. Moran, it was moved to **adopt** the following resolution:

RESOLUTION SBPC #2352-02-24

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ST. BERNARD PARISH GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT THE ST. BERNARD URBAN RAPID TRANSIT (SBURT) CIVIL RIGHTS TITLE VI PROGRAM UPDATE.

WHEREAS, St. Bernard Parish Government must periodically update the St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit Department's Title VI Program, which is attached along with supporting documents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the St. Bernard Parish Council, the governing authority of St. Bernard Parish, does hereby adopt the St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit Civil Rights Title VI Program Update.

The above and foregoing having been submitted to a vote, the vote thereupon resulted as follows:

YEAS: Cusimano, Moran, Meyer, Randall, Mones, McCloskey

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

The Council Chair, Mr. Everhardt, cast his vote as **YEA**.

And the motion was declared **adopted** on the 20th day of February, 2024.



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Extract #12, continued
February 20, 2024

CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of a motion adopted at a Regular Meeting of the Council of the Parish of St. Bernard, held at Chalmette, Louisiana, on Tuesday, February, 20, 2024.

Witness my hand and the seal
of the Parish of St. Bernard on
this 20th day of February, 2024.

ROXANNE ADAMS
CLERK OF COUNCIL

St. Bernard Transit

Title VI Program

(Updated January 2024)

Ref: FTA Circular 4702.18 Title VI and Title VI Dependent Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Recipients

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to effectively monitor and ensure that St. Bernard Transit is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and applicable federal transit laws and policies established in FTA Circular 4701.1B.

Policy: St. Bernard Transit will ensure that our programs, policies, and activities are in compliance with the FTA Title VI regulations. St. Bernard Transit is committed to creating and maintaining a public transit service that is non-discriminatory and will undertake any preventive and corrective measures and pursue appropriate disciplinary actions regarding conduct that violates this policy and/or the rights it is designed to protect.

Requirement to Provide an Annual Title VI Certification and Assurance

To ensure compliance with 49 CFR Section 21.7, every application for financial assistance from FTA must be accompanied by an assurance that the applicant will carry out the program in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This requirement shall be fulfilled when the applicant submits its annual certifications and assurances to FTA. The text of FTA's annual certifications and assurances is available on FTA's website. St. Bernard Transit complies with the instruction annually in order to receive FTA funding. St. Bernard Transit's annual certification and assurance are signed and pinned in TRAMS every year within the allotted timeframe required.

Required to notify beneficiaries of protection under Title VI

To comply with 49 CFR Section 21.9(d), recipients shall provide information to the public regarding their Title VI obligations and apprise members of the public of the protections against discrimination afforded to them by Title VI. Recipients that provide transit service shall disseminate this information to the public through measures that can include but shall not be limited to a posting on St. Bernard Transit's website (www.sbpq.net/transit). St. Bernard Transit has this information posted on their website, public transit vehicles, and at the transit facility.

St. Bernard Transit's notification reads as follows:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states

"No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." St. Bernard Transit is committed to complying with the requirements of title VI in all of its federally funded programs and activities.

Making a Title VI, ADA, or General Complaint

To file a complaint, please submit it in writing to St. Bernard Transit within 180 days of the alleged incident.

The complaint form can be downloaded at www.sbpq.net/transit or you can call the Transit office at 504-277-1907 (TTY 504-279-1993) to have a form mailed to you. All written complaints will be investigated and answered by the department within 10 business days.

Required to Develop Title VI Complaint Procedures

To comply with 49 CFR Section 21.9(b), recipients shall develop procedures for investigating and tracking Title VI complaints filed against them and make their procedures for filing a complaint available to members of the public upon request. St. Bernard Transit provides a mechanism for staff to take complaints and then forward them to the Title VI Complaint Coordinator (Human Resources director) who categorizes, tracks, develops responses, and forwards them to the St. Bernard Transit Manager for approval.

Title VI Complaint Procedures

There are a number of methods by which members of the public may register a complaint related to the denial of an accommodation request or access to public transportation through any of the following processes:

1. Submit a customer complaint form that is on the transit website.
2. Phone the transit office at 504-277-1907.
3. E-mail the department manager at abecker@sbpg.net
4. Make an in-person complaint at the St. Bernard Parish Government Complex, which is located at 8201 West Judge Perez Drive in Chalmette.

5. Mail a written complaint to St. Bernard Transit 8201 West Judge Perez Drive Chalmette, LA 70043

The written complaint procedure is as follows:

- 1) Those wishing to file a complaint are encouraged to fill out the complaint form posted on the St. Bernard Transit webpage. The complaint should be made within sixty (60) days of the alleged incident. The individual making the allegation may also designate a representative to complete and file the complaint as well. The form can be downloaded off the website and submitted via email, fax, USPS, or personally picked up by St. Bernard Transit staff. In the event the individual making the complaint refuses to complete the complaint form, the transit manager will interview the individual making the complaint and with the verbal consent of the individual making the complaint, complete the form on his/her behalf.
- 2) In the event a written complaint is received, it will be logged onto the transit complaint spreadsheet and retained in the complaint file for a period of five (5) years from the date the complaint was received by the transit department.
- 3) The complaint will be reviewed by the Transit Manager, Parish Attorney and Parish Government administration and promptly investigated.
- 4) St. Bernard Transit will respond to the complaint within ten (10) business days of receipt, including in the reply the parish's position regarding the complaint, affirming the validity of the complaint, challenging the validity of the complaint, or if additional time is required to further investigate the complaint.
- 5) In the event the transit department, legal counsel, and parish administration believe the complaint is valid, St. Bernard Transit will state its plan of action to resolve the situation. If it involves personnel who have engaged in any action that violated the civil rights of the passenger, then the complaint will be forwarded to the parish government personnel department for appropriate disciplinary action.
- 6) In the event the transit department, legal counsel, and parish administration challenges the validity of the complaint, St. Bernard Transit will state in writing its position on the matter, cite evidence supporting the parish's findings, and if applicable whatever action that may be taken by St. Bernard Transit related to the complaint.
- 7) In the event the transit department requires additional time to further investigate the complaint, St. Bernard Transit will contact the individual making the complaint and communicating the projected timeframe for the investigation's conclusion.

Members of the public may also file a Civil rights complaint with the FTA. The address to file a complaint is: Director, FTA Office of Civil Rights East Building, 5th Floor- TCR 1200 New Jersey, SE Washington, DC 20590

Disposition of Complaints

Substantiated Complaints- If the complaint is substantiated, this policy and procedure prohibiting discrimination will be reviewed with the offender. Appropriate disciplinary action and/or training will be undertaken pursuant to the agency's disciplinary procedures.

Unsubstantiated Complaints- If there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation(s), both parties to the complaint will be informed of the reason(s) for this disposition.

Unfounded Complaints- If it is determined that an act reported pursuant to this policy/procedure did not in fact occur, a finding that the complaint was unfounded shall be made.

Exonerated Complaints- If it is determined that an allegation reported to this policy/procedure did in fact occur, but was lawful and proper within the guidelines established herein, then a finding exonerating the individual who was the subject of the allegation shall be made.

Required to Record Title VI Investigations, Complaints, and Lawsuits

To comply with 49 CFR Section 21.9(b), recipients shall prepare and maintain a list of any active investigations conducted by entities other than the FTA, litigation, or complaints naming the recipient that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. This list shall include the date of the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegation(s); the status of the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint; and actions taken by the recipient in response to the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint. The St. Bernard Transit Title VI Complaint Coordinator (Human Resources Director) will maintain these files.

As of January 2024, St. Bernard Transit has had no Title VI investigations, complaints, or lawsuits.

Required to Provide the Racial Breakdown of Non-Elected Advisory Bodies:

St. Bernard Transit does not have non-elected advisory bodies that are transit-related.

Required to Provide Meaningful Access to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons

Title VI and its implementing regulations require that FTA recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are Limited English Proficient.

St. Bernard Transit's LEP Plan is attached.

Required to Provide Assistance to Subrecipients and Monitor Compliance to Title VI

St. Bernard Transit does not have subrecipients.

Required to Submit a Public Participation Plan

St. Bernard Transit's Public Participation Plan is attached.

Required to Assess the Location of New Facility Construction Using Equity Analyses

Beyond building several new bus shelters on an annual basis, St. Bernard Transit is not seeking to engage in major construction projects. The locations of the bus shelters being determined by both ridership, the practicality of the location due to right of ways and available space, and connectivity to existing walkways.

Required to Provide Additional Information Upon Request

At the discretion of the FTA, information other than that required by the referenced circular may be requested, in writing, from a recipient in order to investigate complaints of discrimination or to resolve concerns about possible noncompliance with Title VI requirements. The St. Bernard Transit Title VI Complaint Coordinator is available to provide additional information as needed and to respond to any inquiry.

Required to Prepare and Submit a Title VI Program

FTA requires recipients to report certain general information to determine their compliance with Title VI. The collection and reporting of this program constitute the recipients' Title VI Program. To ensure compliance with 49 CFR 21.9(b), FTA requires that all recipients document their compliance with this chapter by submitting a Title VI Program to FTA's regional civil rights office once every three years.

Discrimination

Any act or omission of an act that would prevent the use of or exclude a person from access to public transportation based on (but not limited to) race, sex, disability, or religion.

Responsibilities

All employees of St. Bernard Transit shall follow the intent of these guidelines in a matter that reflects St. Bernard Parish Government policies.

Supervisors and managers receiving information regarding violations of this order shall determine if there is any basis for the allegation and shall proceed with a resolution to it.

Supervisor Responsibility

Each supervisor and manager shall:

- 1) Ensure that there are no barriers to service or accommodation that would prevent public transit usage or access.
- 2) Train subordinates as to what constitutes discrimination and barriers to access.
- 3) Take prompt and appropriate action to avoid and minimize the incidence of any form of discrimination.
- 4) Notify the transit manager in writing of the circumstances surrounding any reported allegations of discrimination no later than the next business day.

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

The *Limited English Proficiency Plan* has been prepared to address St. Bernard Transit's responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English languages skills. The plan has been prepared 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 subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.

Executive Order 13166, titled *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, indicates that differing treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write, or understand English is a type of national origin discrimination. It directs each federal agency to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying their obligation to ensure that such discrimination does not take place. This order applies to all state and local agencies which receive federal funds, including St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit (SBURT) which receives federal assistance through the U.S. Department of Transportation.

St. Bernard Transit has developed this *Limited English Proficiency Plan* to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) who wish to access services provided by the transit authority. As defined in Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

This plan outlines how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available.

In determining how to provide effective and meaningful access for LEP persons, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has established the following four guidelines to consider in determining "reasonable steps" to be taken by St. Bernard Transit:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to encounter a St. Bernard Transit program, activity, meeting, or service.
 2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with St. Bernard Transit programs, activities, meetings, or services.
 3. The nature and importance of programs, activities or services provided by St. Bernard Transit to the LEP population.
 4. The resources available to St. Bernard Transit and overall cost to provide assistance.
-

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

St. Bernard Transit provides service along the Arabi to Poydras route in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. The fare is \$1 and the route operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 6:50 PM. Riders may request a deviation to a location that St. Bernard Transit buses can legally traverse within areas designated by a dashed line in the map below. Elderly and disabled riders are eligible for reduced fares with a Medicare or E/D card.

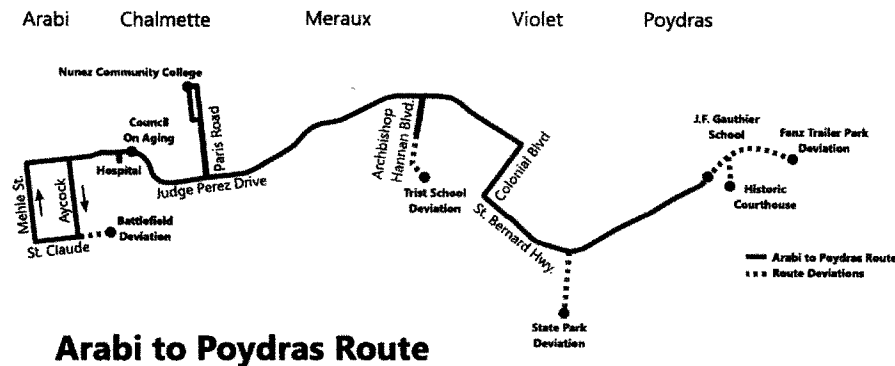


Figure 1: St. Bernard Transit System Map

LEP Analysis

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to encounter a St. Bernard Transit program, activity, meeting, or service.

After suffering a significant reduction and shift in population since Hurricane Katrina slammed into southeast Louisiana eighteen years ago, St. Bernard Parish's population has steadily increased. According to the most recent United States Census Bureau estimated, St. Bernard Parish has a population of 44,038, an increase of approximately 30% over the past decade.

The 2018 and 2022 American Community Surveys (ACS) have data on Limited English Speakers by language and by ability to speak English. The ACS asked respondents to indicate their ability to speak English using four categories: "very well," "well," "not well," or "not at all." FTA guidance states that the total number of LEP persons can be obtained by totaling the persons indicating they speak English "well," "not well," or "not at all." The following table shows ability to speak English by language spoken at home.

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

| St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana (2022) | Number | Percent |
|--|---------------|------------|
| POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH | | |
| Population 5 years and over | 41,120 | 100 |
| Speaks only English | 37,795 | 91.9 |
| Speaks a language other than English | 3,325 | 8.1 |
| | | |
| Spanish | 1,928 | 4.7 |
| Speaks English "less than well" | 743 | 1.8 |
| | | |
| Other Indo-European languages | 453 | 1.1 |
| Speaks English "less than well" | 88 | 0.2 |
| Asian and Pacific Island languages | 691 | 1.7 |
| Speak English "less than well" | 328 | 0.8 |
| | | |
| All other languages | 253 | 0.6 |
| Speak English "less than well" | 84 | 0.2 |

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

| | | |
|--|---------------|------------|
| ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH (B16001) | | |
| Population 5 years and over (2022) | 41,120 | 100 |
| Speak a language other than English | 3,325 | 8.1 |
| Speaks English "less than well" | 1,238 | 3.0 |
| | | |
| ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH IN HOUSEHOLD (B16002) (2008) | | |
| linguistically isolated households | 332 | 2.5% |
| | | |
| Population 5 years and over in households (B16003) (2008) | 33801 | 100 |
| In linguistically isolated households | 677 | 2.0 |
| 5 to 17 years | 94 | 0.3 |
| 18 and over | 583 | 1.8 |

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates Profile & 2008 ACS 5-Year Estimates Profile

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

The 2022 five year estimates from the American Community Survey show approximately 1,633 persons, or 4.1% of St. Bernard Parish residents, speak English less than "very well." The most common native languages for these LEP persons are Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Portuguese, Chinese, and French. These ACS data have very large degrees of uncertainty because of the sampling variability. Additionally, these data include children ages 5-18, and children are not considered a transit-dependent population. The overall population decline from Katrina is still evident, from over 63,000 people in 2000 to approximately 44,038 in 2022.

| 816001. LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER | St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Data Set: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | Estimate |
| Total: | 39,468 |
| Speak only English | 36,022 |
| Spanish or Spanish Creole: | 2,104 |
| Speak English "very well" | 1,002 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 1,102 |
| French (incl. Patois, Cajun, Creole) | 150 |
| Speak English "very well" | 103 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 47 |
| Tagalog: | 100 |
| Speak English "very well" | 85 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 15 |
| Chinese: | 197 |
| Speak English "very well" | 71 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 126 |
| Vietnamese: | 471 |
| Speak English "very well" | 249 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 222 |
| Portuguese or Portuguese Creole: | 26 |
| Speak English "very well" | 8 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 18 |
| Other Languages: | 328 |
| Speak English "very well" | 225 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 103 |
| Total - Speak English less than "very well" | 1,633 |

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

The US Census's statistics on St. Bernard Parish household languages is somewhat limited in describing the LEP populations, as the data for non-English speakers could include bilingual persons who are classified to speak English "very well" or "well". Of the 3,325 persons speaking Languages Other than English at Home, only 1,633 or 49.1% are classified as LEP persons. In 2022, the ACS showed that both LEP and non-LEP persons speaking languages other than English are more likely to not have a high school diploma, nearly 30.9%, compared to less than 17.1% of the English-speaking population. Despite this, the population has a higher percentage of workers in the labor force – 71.1% compared to 62.1% and a significantly lower percentage of persons living at or below the poverty level. Thus, in St. Bernard Parish, speaking a language other than English at home is not significantly correlated with poverty or unemployment.

| Social & Economic Characteristics by Language Spoken at Home | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|---|----------------|
| St. Bernard Parish | For Comparison: Speaks only English | | Speaks Language Other than English at Home | |
| Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimate (B16010, B16009, B16003) | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| AGE (2022) | | | | |
| Total population (5 years and over) | 37,795 | 100.0 | 3,325 | 100.0 |
| 18 to 64 | 24,789 | 65.6 | 2,352 | 70.7 |
| 65 years and over | 5,127 | 13.6 | 281 | 8.5 |
| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2022) | | | | |
| Population 25 years and over | 28,098 | 100.0 | 2,178 | 100.0 |
| Less than high school graduate | 4,809 | 17.1 | 674 | 30.9 |
| High school graduate or equivalent | 8,091 | 28.8 | 500 | 23.0 |
| Some college or associate degree | 9,574 | 34.1 | 576 | 26.4 |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 4,472 | 15.9 | 428 | 19.7 |
| EMPLOYMENT STATUS (2022) | | | | |
| Population 25 years and over | 26,946 | 100.0 | 2,419 | 100.0 |
| In labor force | 16,724 | 62.1 | 1,652 | 68.3 |
| Not in labor force | 10,222 | 37.9 | 526 | 21.4 |
| POVERTY STATUS IN (2022) | | | | |
| Population over 5 years old | 37,256 | 100.0 | 3,293 | 100.0 |
| Below poverty level | 8,061 | 21.6 | 952 | 28.9 |
| At or above poverty level | 29,460 | 72.1 | 2,341 | 71.1 |

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

2. *The frequency in which LEP persons come in contact with St. Bernard Transit programs, activities, meetings, or services.*

Some information is available from the 2022 American Community Survey Means of Transportation (Table S0802) to identify the percentage of St. Bernard Parish population utilizing public transit for work purposes who speak English less than "very well."

St. Bernard Transit bus operators have rarely encountered LEP riders, further corroborating this analysis. St. Bernard Transit operators have been trained on LEP policies in addition to a full-time employee who is fluent in Spanish.

| | St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| | Total | | Public transportation (excluding taxicab) | |
| Label | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error |
| Workers 16 years and over | 18,507 | ±649 | 116 | ±70 |
| LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH | | | | |
| Speak language other than English | 9.4% | ±1.6 | 25.9% | ±28.1 |
| Speak English "very well" | 5.2% | ±1.3 | 13.8% | ±23.8 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 4.2% | ±1.0 | 12.1% | ±14.2 |
| VEHICLES AVAILABLE | | | | |
| No vehicle available | 2.1% | ±0.9 | 40.5% | ±30.3 |
| 1 vehicle available | 28.4% | ±3.8 | 31.9% | ±27.3 |
| 2 vehicles available | 41.9% | ±3.1 | 27.6% | ±31.3 |
| 3 or more vehicles available | 27.6% | ±3.7 | 0.0% | ±31.0 |
| PERCENT ALLOCATED | | | | |
| Means of transportation to work | 17.3% | (X) | (X) | (X) |

Source: 2022 American Community Survey Means of Transportation

3. *The nature and importance of programs, activities, meetings, or services provided by St. Bernard Transit to the LEP population.*

St. Bernard Transit believes that reliable public transportation is crucial to a thriving community. Public transportation gives people access to work, health care, child care, and other programs and services - everything from legal aid to grocery shopping. Without access to public transportation, many of these individuals would not be able to take advantage of these and other services that could potentially be life changing or life sustaining. In this light, lack of public transportation services could have an adverse effect on LEP individuals.

Additionally, St. Bernard Transit is a critical piece of the St. Bernard Parish disaster response and hurricane evacuation plans. Hurricane Katrina proved that St. Bernard is vulnerable to catastrophic flooding, and mandatory evacuations are critical for the parish. All evacuation information is posted in Spanish on the St. Bernard Transit website, www.sbp.net/transit.

4. *The resources available to SBURT and the overall costs to provide LEP assistance.*

To increase service to the LEP population without greatly impacting the budget, St. Bernard Transit conducts translation work in-house utilizing any available bilingual employee. Additionally, St. Bernard Transit website uses Google to translate the site into Spanish and other languages.

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

St. Bernard Transit holds public meetings when there is a route or fare change. These meetings are advertised in the St. Bernard Voice, the official newspaper for the St. Bernard Parish Government. Translators are available for these meetings on request.

Most residents of St. Bernard Parish and public transportation users within St. Bernard Parish are English speakers, and many ride RTA buses- an agency with considerably more resources than St. Bernard Transit. St. Bernard Transit has provided an interpreter and translations when possible, and has not received any additional requests for translation services. Therefore, meaningful access is being currently provided to the LEP population in St. Bernard Parish.

Identifying LEP Individuals Who Need Language Assistance

Using the results of the four-factor analysis, it is possible to approximate the LEP population in St. Bernard Parish: approximately one thousand people ages 5 and above. Some of them are children. If they speak a language other than English at home, they are less likely to be out of the labor force or living in poverty. They are mostly Spanish. They are also unlikely to use public transportation.

This analysis shows that there is not an immediate need for measures to assist the LEP population in St. Bernard Parish. Because many transit users in St. Bernard use the RTA system, the translation services and LEP outreach conducted by RTA would likely reach any St. Bernard LEP persons using public transit. Thus, while St. Bernard Transit can quantify a population that *might* need assistance, there has been no need for measures above and beyond those currently undertaken by the agency.

Even though there is no current need for additional language assistance measures, it is certainly possible that LEP persons would be more likely to use St. Bernard Transit if there were more materials in Spanish, or if they had more knowledge of the system. Outreach activities may attract riders, some of whom might be LEP persons. Regular evaluations of the need for language assistance will be necessary if ridership among this population increases or if more LEP persons move to St. Bernard Parish.

Language Assistance Measures

St. Bernard Transit translates as many materials as possible within the current budget. Below is a summary of current translations.

| | English | Spanish |
|------------------------|---------|---------|
| SBURT Website | X | X |
| Route Map & Schedule | X | X |
| Public Hearing Notices | X | X |
| Evacuation Information | X | X |

Additionally, an interpreter is present at all public hearings - this is advertised in the notices.

St. Bernard Transit has utilized its full-time bilingual employee for phone translation service on the rare occasions an interpreter was needed to handle a service inquiry in Spanish.

Implementing any additional measures would not be cost-effective given the small LEP population in St. Bernard Parish and the limited resources of St. Bernard Transit.

St. Bernard Transit Limited English Proficiency Plan

Staff Training

This LEP plan will be discussed and incorporated into the new staff training. All staff receive instruction on DOT guidance regarding providing meaningful access for LEP persons. Further training opportunities will be provided as they become available.

Providing Notice to LEP Persons

St. Bernard Transit provides notice of translator availability for public meetings when they are held. SBURT also provides materials in Spanish. St. Bernard Transit would be able to use its bilingual St. Bernard Transit employee as a translator if an LEP person were to call for assistance. Given the small population of LEP persons and the limited resources of St. Bernard Transit, this notice and mix of services is appropriate and provides meaningful access for LEP persons in St. Bernard Parish.

Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating Plan

St. Bernard Transit will review and update this plan yearly, or in the event of a marked increase of LEP persons to the area. The review and update will consist of the following:

1. The number and nature of requests received from LEP persons annually.
2. Determination of LEP population in the service areas using American Community Survey one-year data sets.
3. Review any complaints that have been received concerning the agency's failure to meet the needs of LEP persons.
4. Determine whether St. Bernard Transit has fully complied with the goals of the LEP plan.
5. Assess the sufficiency of staff training and budget for language assistance.

St. Bernard Transit will also continue to monitor the future availability of grant funding for improvements in services to LEP persons, such as the Language Assistance Demonstration Projects Grants Program portion of the Transportation Equity Research Project. This grant program was part of SAFETEA-LU and could be renewed in a surface transportation reauthorization bill. SBURT pursues all funding opportunities through FTA as resources permit.

Dissemination of the SBURT LEP Plan

The language assistance plan will be available on our website.

Alternatively, any person may request a copy of the plan via telephone, fax, mail, or in person, and shall be provided a copy of the plan at no cost. LEP individuals may request copies of the plan in translation which St. Bernard Transit will provide.

Questions or comments regarding the LEP Plan may be submitted to St. Bernard Transit as follows:

Attention: Andrew Becker, Manager
St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit
120 Agriculture St
Chalmette, LA 70043
Phone: 504-277-1907

St. Bernard Transit Service Change Public Notification and Meetings Policies and Procedures

The following outlines the procedures to be followed for any adjustment to the St. Bernard Transit Service Route and Bus Schedule.

1. Route/Schedule Evaluation

An analysis will be performed of the proposed route/schedule change to determine if the adjustments will lead to an increase in passengers and expand transit service to neighborhoods and communities that are not adequately served by the existing route.

A significant route change is defined as the removal of any segment of the existing route where an existing bus stop is no longer served by a transit bus.

Additions of new stops or route segments to the existing route that do not result in a stop being taken out of service do not require public meetings and may be established at the recommendation of the transit director with the approval of the parish president.

A recommendation will be made by the transit manager and forwarded to the parish president.

The final determination will be made by the parish president as to whether the transit system will explore raising fares and the amount the fares are to be raised.

2. Public Notification and Awareness

If a determination has been made by the parish president to explore a significant change to either the transit route or schedule, two public hearings will be scheduled to present the reasons for the proposed changes. The public hearings will be held at least ten days apart from each other, with one meeting being held in the afternoon and the other in the evening to ensure maximum opportunities for public participation.

The public will be notified at least 21 days in advance of the first public hearing via press release to the local newspapers, postings on parish government social media, flyers posted on transit buses, and a notice on the transit website. The notice will be in English and Spanish.

The notices will include 1) the existing route and/or bus schedule along with the proposed route and/or bus schedule, 2) the dates, times, and locations of the public meetings, 3) the mailing address to send written communications on the matter in addition to an e-mail address, and a phone number for the public to share their views on the matter.

A record of all emailed and comments conveyed via the telephone will be compiled in addition to all media press clippings and flyers produced by the transit department regarding the public meeting notifications.

3. Public Meetings Regarding Route and Schedule Changes

The public meetings will be conducted by the transit manager and the justification for the route change and/or bus schedule change will be explained. Attendees will be invited to verbally convey their thoughts on the matter and will have the opportunity to submit their comments in writing as well on note cards provided by the transit department. It will be stressed that no definitive decision has been made and that public input will heavily weigh in the final decision on the matter. Participants will be encouraged to fill out an attendance sheet to note their presence.

4. Evaluation of Public Input

All comments submitted via the public meetings and through direct communication with the transit office will be compiled into a public comment report and kept on file in the transit office for public inspection.

The public input received will be considered by the transit manager along with a post-public meeting recommendation. The report and recommendation will be forwarded to the parish president for his/her consideration.

After reviewing the information compiled in the route/bus schedule evaluation, the transit manager's recommendation, and the public comment sessions and direct communications, the parish president will make a decision as to whether to go forward with the proposed route/bus schedule change.

5. Implementation of Bus Route/Schedule Change

The transit department will promulgate through the same means utilized for the public comment solicitation the adjustments to the bus route and/or bus schedule. The changes will not be implemented for a period of at least 60 days after the final determination has been made to allow for the publication of new schedules and maps.

Signs will be posted at the new bus stops stating when they will go into effect at least 30 days in advance. Bus stops that are being removed from the system will also have signage announcing when they will be taken offline at least 30 days in advance.

6. Access to Information for Stakeholders with Limited English Proficiency

All materials presented at the meeting will be available in Spanish and we will have a bilingual staff member from the St. Bernard Transit Department on site to provide translation services if needed. In the event that it is necessary to provide information in a language other than English or Spanish, the St. Bernard Transit Department will work to accommodate this request through utilizing available translation resources.

7. Public Transit and Meeting Access

In the event there is a public meeting conducted by the St. Bernard Transit Department that takes place either after bus service hours have ended or in the event the meeting extends beyond the scheduled end of bus service, bus service will be extended until the conclusion of the meeting to ensure that stakeholders will be able to attend and fully participate in the meeting.

Formulario de quejas de derechos civiles de St. Bernard Transit

Creo que yo (y / o alguien) hemos sido discriminados en base a (Por favor circule todos los que correspondan):

Raza/color/origen nacional Discapacidad No aplicable

Otro: _____

Creo que un proveedor de transporte público no ha cumplido con los siguientes requisitos del programa (Marque con un círculo todos los que correspondan):

Empresa comercial en desventaja Oportunidad externa de empleo igual

No aplicable Otro: _____

Información del contacto

Nombre: _____ Teléfono: _____

Dirección: _____

Email: _____

Si está completando el formulario en nombre de alguien, proporcione la siguiente información:

Nombre: _____ Teléfono: _____

Dirección: _____

Email: _____

Relación de la persona por quien usted se queja:

¿Ha recibido el permiso del individuo para presentar una queja en su nombre? _____

¿Ha presentado anteriormente una demanda de derechos civiles con St. Bernard Transit o el FTA? _____

Si es así, proporcione la fecha de la queja _____

¿Ha presentado esta queja con alguna de las siguientes agencias?

(Marque con un círculo todos los que correspondan)

Departamento de Transporte St. Bernard Transit Departamento de Justicia

Comisión de Igualdad de Oportunidades de Empleo Otro _____

Si es así, adjunte una copia de cualquier respuesta que haya recibido a su queja anterior.

¿Ha presentado una demanda en relación con esta queja? _____

Si es así, proporcione el número de caso y adjunte cualquier material relacionado

Si tiene problemas con este formulario, indique su formato de queja preferido (marque con un círculo):

Grabacion de Audio TTY/Relé Letra Grande Otros _____

Fecha del incidente: _____ Hora del incidente: _____

Conductor involucrado (si se desconoce, descripción): _____

Descripción de la queja: _____

¿Podemos contactar con usted para más información? Sí No En caso afirmativo, Método preferido: _____

¿Podemos divulgar su identidad y una copia de su queja al FTA? _____

Nota: Es posible que no podamos investigar sus denuncias sin permiso para divulgar su identidad y queja.

Por favor firme aquí _____

Nota: Es posible que no podamos investigar sus denuncias sin permiso para divulgar su identidad y queja.

Por favor envíe este formulario completado a:

Tránsito de San Bernardo
Atención: Reclamaciones de derechos civiles
8201 West Judge Perez Drive
Chalmette, LA 70043

St. Bernard Transit Civil Rights Complaint Form

I believe that I (and/or someone) have been discriminated against on the basis of (Please Circle all that Apply):

Race/Color/National Origin Disability Non-Applicable Other: _____

I believe that a public transit provider has failed to comply with the following program requirements (Please Circle all that Apply):

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise External Equal Employment Opportunity Not Applicable

Other: _____

Contact Information

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

If you are filling out the form on behalf of someone, please provide the following information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Relationship of Person for Whom You Are Complaining:

Have You Received the Individual's Permission to File a Complaint on His/Her Behalf? _____

Have You Previously Filed a Civil Rights Complaint with either St. Bernard Transit or the FTA?

If Yes, Please Provide the Date of the Complaint _____

Have You Filed This Complaint with Any of the Following Agencies?

(Please Circle All That Apply) St. Bernard Transit Department of Transportation

Department of Justice Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Other _____

If Yes, Please Attach a Copy of Any Response You Received to Your Previous Complaint.

Have You Filed a Lawsuit Regarding This Complaint? _____

If Yes, Please Provide the Case Number and Attach Any Related Material

If You Have Trouble With This Form, Please Indicate Your Preferred Complaint Format (Please Circle):

Large Print TTY/Relay Audio Recording Other _____

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Driver Involved (If Unknown, Description): _____

Description of Complaint: _____

May We Contact You for More Info? Yes No If Yes, Preferred Method: _____

May We Release Your Identity and a Copy of Your Complaint to the FTA? _____

Note: We may be unable to investigate your allegations without permission to release your identity and complaint.

Please Sign Here: _____

Note: We may be unable to investigate your allegations without permission to release your identity and complaint.

Please mail this completed form to:

St. Bernard Transit
Attention: Civil Rights Complaints
8201 West Judge Perez Drive
Chalmette, LA 70043

St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit (SBURT) – Public Participation Plan

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan (PPP) is to establish procedures that allow for, encourage, and monitor participation of all citizens of St. Bernard Parish, including but not limited to low income and minority individuals, and those with limited English proficiency. While traditional means of soliciting public involvement may not reach such individuals, or might not allow for meaningful avenues of input, the intent of this effort is to take reasonable actions throughout the planning process to provide opportunities for historically under-served populations to participate.

This document will outline procedures to provide opportunities for all area citizens to participate in the improvement of the SBURT system.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: The goal of the PPP is to offer real opportunities for the engagement of all citizens of St. Bernard Parish to participate in the improvement of the SBURT system.

Objectives:

- To determine what non-English languages and other cultural barriers exist to public participation within St. Bernard Parish
- To provide a general notification of meetings, particularly forums for public input, in a manner that is understandable to all populations in the area
- To hold meetings in locations which are accessible and reasonably welcoming to all area residents, including but not limited to low-income and minority members of the public.
- To provide avenues for two-way flow of information and input from populations which are not likely to attend meetings.
- To provide a framework of actions appropriate to various types of plans and programs, as well as amendments or alterations to any such plan or program.
- To use various illustrative visualization techniques to convey the information including but not limited to charts, graphs, photos, maps, and the internet.

Identification of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who are either directly or indirectly affected by a plan or the recommendations of that plan. Those who may be adversely affected or who may be denied benefit of a plan's recommendation(s) are of particular interest in the identification of specific stakeholders.

General citizens. The 2022 Census count of persons in St. Bernard Parish was 44,038. Nearly 70% of people in St. Bernard consider themselves to be white. Nearly 38,000 people speak only English at home.

Minorities. Minority populations make up over 30% of the St. Bernard population, including 10,499 African Americans (23.84%) and 4,667 Hispanics (10.60%).

| St. Bernard Population | 2018 Census | | 2022 Census | |
|------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | Total | % | Total | % |
| Total Population | 45,697 | | 44,038 | |
| White | 31,838 | 69.67% | 28,618 | 64.98% |
| African American | 10,445 | 22.86% | 10,499 | 23.84% |
| Native American | 172 | 0.38% | 327 | 0.74% |
| Asian | 1,076 | 2.35% | 1,076 | 2.44% |
| Pacific Islander | 37 | 0.08% | - | 0.00% |
| Other | 862 | 1.89% | 563 | 1.28% |
| Hispanic | 4,575 | 10.01% | 4,667 | 10.60% |
| Non-Hispanic | 41,119 | 89.98% | 39,371 | 89.40% |

Source: 2018 and 2022 American Community Survey Estimates

Engaging minority and low-English proficiency populations can be challenging. Language and cultural differences may not be compatible with the more traditional means of engaging the public in the planning process. SBURT will make reasonable efforts to engage minority populations using techniques, such as including notations in public notices in appropriate non-English languages that will provide a contact where the individual can be informed of the process/project, and will have the opportunity to give input. Focus groups may also be established for the purpose of gaining input from a particularly defined portion of the community. Also, advocacy groups can be a good resource for contacts and dissemination of information to minority and low-English proficiency populations. Such advocacy groups or agencies can have insight into the needs of the under-represented populations, as well as providing valuable contacts or arenas for input. Contacts with local translators should also be maintained, and used as requested and needed.

Low income. The 2022 American Community Survey estimates (population over 5 years old) that 21.6% (English speaking only) and 28.9% (speaks language other than English) of St. Bernard families live below the poverty level. Median household income in St. Bernard is \$55,857, compared to a US average of \$74,580. The low income population of St. Bernard should be given every reasonable opportunity to provide input on transportation plans and programs to avoid disproportionate harm or lack of benefit.

While low-income individuals may have access to all the traditional means of public involvement, they may be less likely to become involved or offer input. One method of gaining input directly or indirectly from this portion of the population is outreach to community groups that work with this population every day, such as the St. Bernard Community Center.

Public agencies. Public agencies can provide valuable input to the planning process, in addition to assisting in gaining participation from traditionally under-represented populations. Pertinent public agencies include those that have clients who belong to under-represented populations, such as minority, low-income, and limited English proficient households. These agencies have great insight into the transportation needs of their clients and are useful partners in overcoming difficult barriers that may not be understood by professionals dealing more directly with the provision of transportation services.

Private organizations and businesses. Private organizations and businesses offer a number of perspectives that are valuable to the planning process. Often, transportation for employees is of critical concern to private sector employers. For that reason, representation of private business interests will be welcomed in the planning process.

Public Participation Plan

This document, upon its adoption, is to serve as the PPP for the St. Bernard Parish Urban Rapid Transit (SBURT) system. Availability of the policy for review will be advertised in a manner reasonably expected to reach the general public, as well as minority populations, low-income persons, and other traditionally under-served populations. This could occur through notification of community partners as well as traditional public notices in newspapers.

Public involvement is important to continued operation of the SBURT system. Opportunities for participation for both users and non-users of the SBURT system will be available.

St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit
120 Agriculture St
Chalmette, LA 70043
Phone: 504-277-1907
Andrew Becker, Manager – abecker@sbsp.net

Any documents created out of this participation plan will be available for review by the public at the SBURT office on Agriculture Street in Chalmette. If materials are requested in Spanish, SBURT staff will make a reasonable attempt to accommodate those needs.

Outreach Efforts

In addition to the outreach efforts mentioned earlier in this policy, staff will conduct outreach in St. Bernard Parish using one or more of the following techniques:

- Development of a comprehensive list of community organizations that work directly with disadvantaged populations in St. Bernard
- Presentations to professional, citizen, and student organizations
- Articles in community newsletters
- Press releases and meetings with local media representatives
- Informal conversations with individuals and small groups
- Interviews with people who are or could be affected by any transit studies, products, or processes
- Presentations by experts on various transit-related subjects
- User and non-user surveys
- Use various illustrative visualization techniques to convey the information including but not limited to charts, graphs, photos, maps, and the internet.

Other techniques will be examined to determine the best methods of involving all segments of the service area population in the planning process.

Comments

Comments will be documented, presented to decision-making bodies, modified in the contents of the document as necessary, and will be included in the appendices of planning products after they are approved and published. Comments received after any studies conducted and other planning products/processes are completed and approved will be documented and referenced when amending or updating the planning products/processes in the future.

Information can be requested from staff in person and by phone, fax, email, and postal mail.