



# Heart of Texas Council of Governments Coordinated Transportation Plan

## Final Report

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***Prepared for:***

TxDOT and HOTCOG

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# Section 1: Introduction

The Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) requested a service oriented update to the 2017 Heart of Texas Coordinated Transit Plan. HOTCOG and the Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (RTCC) recognize that an update was needed that focuses on strategies that help eliminate gaps in services.

Planning efforts are directed toward effectively and efficiently increasing service to meet the needs of all riders with an emphasis on:

- Elderly persons
- Persons with disabilities
- Low income residents
- Zero car households
- Youths
- Veterans
- Non-English speaking residents (Title VI)

Potential services can include traditional fixed route, fixed schedule, flex route and paratransit services, while also including coordination strategies, such as mobility management, designed to improve service for customers.

This coordinated plan is the latest phase of the coordination process. Unlike previous years, this effort emphasizes strategies and operational options and focuses less on the process. The goal of this effort is to encourage the implementation of activities that foster improved public and human service transportation.

This plan has been developed over the course of the past eight months, with input from many interested stakeholders through an open planning process with multiple public meetings.

Section 1 discusses background to the study, requirements and purpose of the process. Subsequent sections as required are as follows:

- **Section 2** – Transportation Resources in the Region – A review of existing services.
- **Section 3** – Comprehensive Assessment of Unmet Transportation Needs – Reviews demographics, travel patterns and comments received from stakeholders and the public. It also emphasizes transit dependent populations (elderly, persons with disabilities, low income, and zero-car households), veterans, and Title VI populations including those with a language barrier. This also includes the gap analysis.

- **Section 4** – Planning for Comprehensive Services – Describing how human service and healthcare programs work with transit.
- **Section 5** – Integrated Planning Process – Details the review of other planning processes in the study area.
- **Section 6** – Vision, Mission and Goals
- **Section 7** – Sustainability Planning – Ensuring service can continue into the future.
- **Section 8** – Organizational, Operational and Financial Strategies for the Future – This section puts all of the recommendations and strategies in one section.
- **Section 9** – Performance Measures – This includes measures for the plan as well as for the operation.

## Purpose of the Coordinated Plan

The coordinated transportation planning requirements for the Section 5310 program administered by FTA and initiated in 2006, continue. The purpose of the Section 5310 program is to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services.

This Coordinated Plan is designed to meet the coordinated transportation planning requirements. The plan incorporates the four required elements (listed here) as well as additional requirements from TxDOT:

- 1) An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private and nonprofit).
- 2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service.
- 3) Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, and opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.
- 4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

The purpose of this planning process was twofold. The first was to continue moving forward with implementation of existing coordinated efforts. The RTCC approach to mobility and transportation choices calls for local planning and local decision making based on sound planning activities. The second purpose was to meet the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) rules regarding development of a coordinated transportation plan for any locale to receive funds from the FTA, a very important resource for funding.

## State Coordination Requirements

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) administers the Section 5310, 5311, 5311(f) and Rideshare Programs for the state of Texas. TxDOT's Public Transportation Division (PTN) manages these funding programs that are affected by the coordinated planning process.

## Key Coordination Premise

***Excellent public transportation is the best way to address and coordinate the majority of transit dependent and human service client transportation needs.***

Experience and research across the country in both urban and rural areas tells us that scheduled public transit is the best way to provide coordinated transit service as most transit dependent and human service clients can ride fixed-route/scheduled service or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit. The best way to support the needs of human service agency clients, veterans, the transit dependent and Title VI populations as well as other priority groups of potential riders, is through excellent public transportation rather than expensive one-on-one specialized service (with exceptions).

When public transit systems are able to meet the majority of needs through the existing fixed-route/scheduled public transit network, then human service agency resources can be freed up to focus on the specialized needs of their most difficult to serve clients – true coordination.

## Unique Needs in the HOTCOG Area

Efforts to support or improve public transportation are supported by the RTCC, human service agencies, and public transit systems as an essential element of coordinated transportation.

Continuing with the need to build rural public transit, large portions of the service area are in need of more effective, scheduled transportation options.

***Any coordination effort should start with building the public transit network and maximizing the use of higher productivity services such as on demand, fixed route services and fixed schedule services (in rural areas).***



## Section 2:

# Inventory of Transportation Resources

## Introduction

This section prepared for the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) Updated Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan documents existing transportation services and resources in the region. The review of existing services were used in combination with the completed demographic and land use analysis and the current public and stakeholder input to identify the unmet needs and gaps in service, and to then used to develop potential strategies to improve mobility in the region.

The inventory of transportation resources is organized as follows:

- Public Transportation Services
- Private Transportation Services
- Human Services Transportation

The process to identify the various transportation resources available in the region included:

- Using information from the previous coordinated transportation plan for the region.
- Incorporating information and data available through the Texas Transit Performance Dashboard that is sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation Public Transportation Division (TxDOT PTN) developed by the Transit Mobility Program at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute for TxDOT.
- Reviewing information from recent and current transit and other planning projects in the region.
- Input from committee members and other stakeholders.

## Public Transportation Providers

The following public transportation systems currently provide services in the five-county HOTCOG region:

- Heart of Texas Rural Transit District (HOTRTD)
- McLennan County Rural Transit

## Heart of Texas Rural Transit District (HOTRTD)

HOTRTD provides curb-to-curb demand response transportation service to the general public that includes seniors and people with disabilities. It primarily serves five counties that include Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone. Service is regularly provided from these counties into Waco typically for medical and shopping purposes. According to HOTRTD management, about 35 percent of all trips are intra-county often serving human service locations. Conversely, 65 percent of trips across the system are out-of-county including scheduled dialysis trips and trips into Waco for various purposes. Detailed data for intra- and intercounty trips is not currently available. HOTRTD also provides coordinated out-of-county service to the cities of Waco and Temple for veterans and medical trip purposes. The HOTRTD service area is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

HOTRTD shared-ride origin-to-destination service operates from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Demand response trips within each county are offered in each county, riders are charged \$1 per one-way trip. County-to-county service is provided throughout the service area including into Waco in McLennan County which costs \$2 per one-way trip. Customers can schedule trips no later than 24 hours in advance and can use the service for any trip purpose.

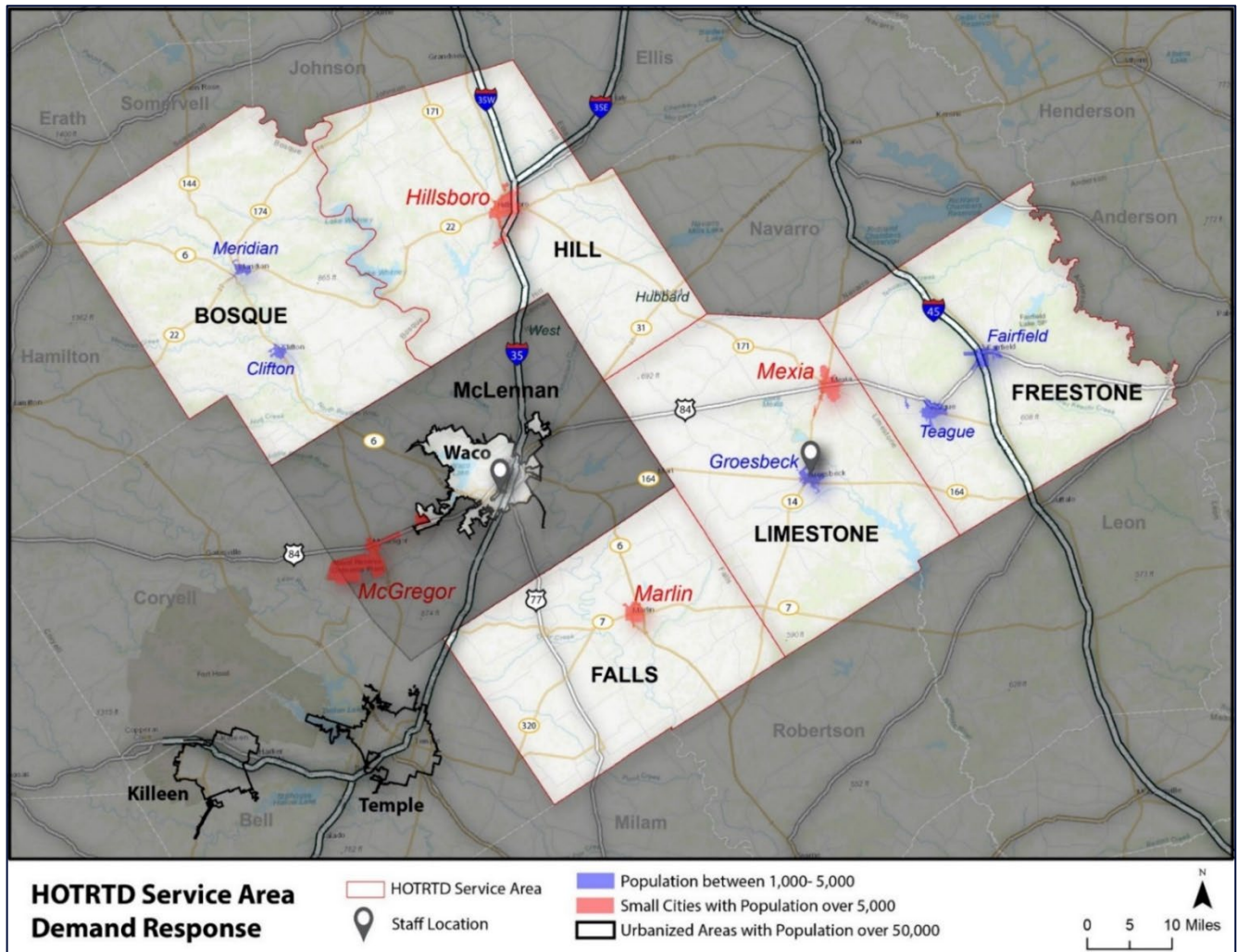
Currently, HOTRTD is based in Waco, Texas, however there is one staff person stationed in Groesbeck, Texas. The dispatching unit in the main office is responsible for service in Bosque, Hill, and Falls counties whereas the other office in Groesbeck provides dispatching services for Freestone and Limestone counties. Each office is responsible for taking trip requests and scheduling rides for their respective service areas.

## Veterans Transportation

Service out of the designated service area is informally coordinated with the Veterans Administration (VA) in Temple, Texas for people trying to reach the large VA medical facilities. Management at HOTRTD recognized that veteran transportation to the major VA medical facility in Temple was an unmet need. Management proceeded to coordinate HOTRTD service with the Veteran Transportation Service (VTS) schedule connecting Waco and the VA center in Temple. HOTRTD marketed a demand response service that would pick up veterans in the service area, connect them to the VTS bus in the morning, and pick them up upon return in the afternoon. In Marlin, if a veteran needs to go to the Temple VA the trip can be scheduled in combination with the dialysis runs Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

## County Services

As noted earlier, the majority of HOTRTD trips are out-of-county (65%) with the majority of those trips being into Waco. Following are standing reservation trips provided by HOTRTD:

**Figure 2-1: HOTRTD Service Area**

- **Dialysis** – These standing reservation trips occur every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday connecting rural residents to various dialysis centers including:
  - Within Falls County
  - Falls County to Temple, Texas
  - Limestone and Falls counties to Waco
  - Limestone to Falls and Navarro Counties
  - Freestone to Navarro County
  - Hill County residents to Hillsboro Texas
  - Bosque County to Hillsboro
- **MHMR (My Health My Resources)** – HOTRTD has standing human service trips Monday through Friday to MHMR facilities in Waco from Falls County and Hill County.

- **Commuter** – HOTRTD has standing reservation trips throughout the service area Monday through Friday, many of which are into the Waco area.

Shopping trips into Waco, Hillsboro and other locations such as Walmart (throughout the service area) are not standing reservations but are available through the normal demand response service five days a week. Vehicles are stored in each county but there is no consistency in which vehicle or driver is used for which locations or routes. Vehicles are rotated through Waco Transit for maintenance and drivers are often asked to complete standing reservation trips, such as a dialysis run on one day and rural demand response service on the next. The typical vehicle availability for each county is as follows:

- Bosque County – 3 peak vehicles and 1 spare stored at the County Courthouse in Meridian.
- Falls County – 2 peak vehicles stored at the Falls County Housing Authority in Marlin.
- Freestone County – 3 peak vehicles stored across from the senior center in Fairfield.
- Hill County – 4 peak vehicles stored at the Sheriff's Department in Hillsboro.
- Limestone County – 3 peak vehicles and 3 spare vehicles stored at the senior centers in Groesbeck and Mexia.

Table 2-1 presents trend data for general operating statistics of HOTRTD demand response service for the past five fiscal years.

**Table 2-1: General Operating Statistics for FY 2016 - FY 2020**

Demand Response Service	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Unlinked One-Way Passenger Trips	47,436	30,845	34,631	30,172	27,944
Revenue Miles	435,843	290,336	388,951	354,493	384,576
Vehicle Miles	515,790	340,371	456,515	410,768	450,851
Revenue Hours	23,083	14,670	18,607	18,302	16,838
Vehicle Hours	27,447	17,444	21,890	21,281	19,879
Deadhead Miles	79,947	50,035	67,564	56,275	66,275
Deadhead Hours	4,364	2,774	3,284	2,979	3,041

\*Source: HOTRTD PTN-128 Report

## McLennan County Rural Transit District

McLennan County Rural Transit District (MCRTD) provides rural demand response public transportation service in the rural areas of McLennan County. Focusing on services in the five-county rural study area, MCRTD provides NEMT transportation in virtually all of HOTRTD's five county service area. MCRTD contracts with regional Medicaid Transportation brokers to provide non-emergency medical transportation to qualified Medicaid customers throughout the HOTCOG region as well as in McLennan County and Waco. McLennan County Rural Transit is operated by Waco Transit. MCRTD also operates additional services with origins in Falls County. The current Waco Transit Route 10 – Marlin/Waco/Sanderson Farms, operates with two morning runs and two afternoon runs, Monday through Friday, between 5:50 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. and on Saturdays between 6:50 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Route 10 is funded through the FTA Section 5311 Program that supports transit services in rural areas. The route is operated by McLennan County Rural Transit District in coordination with Waco Transit. What makes this unusual is that MCRTD operates this route in competition with HOTRTD's service along the same corridor, as discussed below. This route is included in the menu of services that Waco Transit offers on its website. Table 2-2 depicts the operational statistics for Route 10.

**Table 2-2: Waco Transit Route 10 Operating Statistics for FY 2017 - FY 2021**

<b>Route 10 Operating Statistics</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>
Unlinked One-Way Passenger Trips	22,516	20,622	18,107	11,788
Revenue Miles	82,022	80,029	85,810	92,873
Vehicle Miles	86,708	84,644	90,280	97,246
Revenue Hours	4,313	4,103	3,868	3,863
Vehicle Hours	4,603	4,402	4,180	4,163
Deadhead Miles	4,372	4,470	4,615	4,686
Deadhead Hours	290	299	312	300

## Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) Medicaid funding is by far the largest source of non-FTA funding for rural transit. It is potentially a valuable resource to rural transit districts. In addition to the infusion of funds and the ability to coordinate services, Medicaid funds can be used as critical local match for FTA funds in rural areas only, making it even more valuable for rural transit districts and reducing the burden on rural counties. As a result, the funds generated by MCRTD/WT through NEMT in HOTRTD's service area is local match lost to the five-county area it is generated from and is only available to be used as match for McLennan County's rural service.

Recently, Texas Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) changed the non-emergency medical transportation (through the Medicaid Title XIX program), model from a one broker approach to multiple competing managed care organizations (MCO) and their individual transportation brokers. There are a number of (MCO) based non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services operating in all or parts of the service area in an uncoordinated manner.

Transportation providers have to attempt to sign up with each of the MCO's brokers, who are simply looking for the lowest price. NEMT does not adhere to transit safety and training standards, making it difficult for a professional transit system to compete with a minimally experienced and trained person in their own personal car with minimal standards for vehicles. Medicaid transportation is provided for trips originating in the five-county area Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with after-hour service available for return trips.

Entities desiring to provide NEMT service must register to be Medicaid providers in order to contract with brokers for the service area they desire. Providers declare the areas they will serve.

## Duplication of Service

As noted above MCRTD operates considerable service in HOTRTD's service area. This includes Falls County Commuter service, and NEMT service throughout HOTRTD's service area. A rural transit district operating service that originates in another rural transit district, without their permission is highly unusual and is duplicative.

### Falls County Commuter Service

With the Waco Transit Route 10 and HOTRTD service for Falls County, both MCRTD and HOTRTD are operating services between Falls County and Waco. HOTRTD does daily fixed schedule service into Waco primarily for dialysis, education, medical, and trips serving veterans.

Table 2-3 shows the average daily one-way trips and times in which both services operate. As shown the service is not well coordinated. For example, there are three runs to Waco between 6:30 am and 8:30 am. In addition, there is no mid-day round trip, necessary for medical, dialysis and shopping needs. Route 10 has significantly higher ridership as a fixed route where most of the HOTRTD demand response trips are transporting one individual at a time.

**Table 2-3: Falls County to Waco Service Comparison**

	Route 10	HOTRTD
<b>Average Daily Ridership (2020)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Times Leaving Falls County for Waco</b>	6:30 a.m.	
	8:30 a.m.	7:00 – 7:45 a.m.
		10:30 a.m.
		12:00 p.m.
	3:00 p.m.	
	6:00 p.m.	
<b>Times Leaving Waco for Falls County</b>	6:00 a.m.	
	8:00 a.m.	
	2:30 p.m.	
		3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
	5:15 p.m.	

Source: Waco Transit and HOTRTD



## No Coordination: NEMT

There is a significant coordination issue related to this service. First, NEMT funds from Medicaid are considered local matching funds for rural public transit. Rural transit systems often use NEMT funds to match Federal transit funds, allowing the rural system to expand their use of Federal funds – a valuable resource. This use of Medicaid as local match is only available for rural transit systems.

Currently, MCRTD/Waco Transit is operating NEMT service throughout HOTRTD's service area and has access to the NEMT matching funds generated in the HD service area. As HOTRTD re-engages with NEMT brokers, they will be in competition with an outside rural transit system. Having an outside rural transit system operating service in a separate rural transit jurisdiction without permission is virtually unheard of in the transit industry and takes valuable rural match out of the rural counties.

## Other Human Services Transportation

### Section 5310 Program Subrecipients

The FTA Section 5310 Grant Program (49 USC, Section 5310) provides public transportation for the enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities throughout Texas. TxDOT administers the Section 5310 program for the small urbanized (50,000-199,999 population) and rural areas of the state. This program provides assistance to help local private nonprofit organizations, public transportation agencies, and governmental authorities address mobility issues for the target population when other public transportation is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate.

Section 5310 program funds are allocated after state administrative expenses are deducted. There is a formula that distributes funds among the twenty-five TxDOT Districts by area classification (small urbanized and rural), which are then allocated through a local competitive process to eligible projects.

Previous Section 5310 subrecipients in the region were HOTRTD who has received vehicles through the program. There are no current Section 5310 providers in the region based on information provided by TxDOT. Future uses of Section 5310 funds can be for vehicles or preventive maintenance.

## Agency-Provided Transportation

Some residents in the region may be eligible to use transportation services provided or funded through private, non-profit organizations. Most of these organizations offer transportation for their clients, allowing individuals to participate in day programs or employment. Many of these programs also provide transportation for medical appointments.

The following sections provide a preliminary summary of human services transportation providers in the region that were included in the previous coordinated transportation plan for the region or identified through online research. This information will be verified and updated as more information on these services is obtained through ongoing outreach and community engagement efforts.

## Central Texas Senior Ministry

Central Texas Senior Ministry (CTSM) is the primary provider of meals on wheels/nutrition services for the elderly in the City of Waco, Falls, Hill, and McLennan Counties. CTSM notes that, “in partnership with Waco Transit, Meals on Wheels Waco offers curb-to-curb transportation service for seniors 65 years old or older or anyone with a disability, regardless of age, living in McLennan County.”

## Heart of Texas MHMR Center

The Heart of Texas Region MHMR Center provides accessible and responsive support services to individuals and families coping with mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities, developmental delays, and emotional conflict.

# Intercity Bus and Rail Services

## Greyhound Lines Incorporated

Greyhound Lines currently operates 19 routes (tables) in Texas. As the largest carrier in Texas, with its headquarters based in Dallas, Greyhound operates to most corners of the state including two tables that operate in the HOTCOG region.

### Table 484, Dallas – Austin – San Antonio – Laredo – Monterrey

As of August 2021, this table has four roundtrips per day between Dallas and Monterrey, Mexico, with two of these roundtrips serving Waco. Two other roundtrip schedules serve Waco, including a schedule between Dallas and San Antonio and a morning southbound trip between Waxahachie and Austin. Pre-COVID, this was one of the busiest Greyhound tables by far, with eleven roundtrips per day. There was a total of thirteen southbound schedules and eleven northbound schedules. This is one of the three Greyhound tables with stops in Mexico, serving Nuevo Laredo and Monterrey.



## Table 497, Dallas – Fort Worth – Houston

There are seven roundtrips per day between Dallas and Houston, with just one roundtrip serving Waco and local stops between Prairie View and Dallas. Pre-COVID, there were eight roundtrips per day, making it the second busiest route behind Table 485 (Dallas – Austin – Laredo – Monterrey MX).

## Omnibus Express

Omnibus Express has been operating since 2008 when it began under the name Autobuses Ejectivos. It connects millions of people each year through different services including intercity bus travel, charter buses, and school groups. Omnibus provides service to the Texas Triangle and extends east from Dallas and Houston stopping in states on the way to North Carolina and Florida. Waco is served by one roundtrip schedule along the route that operates between Dallas and San Antonio.

## Southwestern Coaches

Southwestern Coaches is owned by Arrow Trailways of Texas, which is part of the Arrow Trailways network, which is (according to their website) the largest network of independently owned bus companies in North America. Trips with Southwestern Coaches originate in Killeen (home to Fort Hood), with routes to Dallas, Austin, and Houston. Other stops include Waco, Georgetown, and Round Rock.

## AMTRAK

The Amtrak passenger rail line operates through the HOTCOG service area with daily access provided by the Texas Eagle. The Texas Eagle line originates in Chicago, and ends in San Antonio with a stop in McGregor, 20 miles west of Waco in McLennan County, outside the HOTRTD service area.

## Taxi Services

Most taxi services in the area are based in Waco outside of the study area, however most of these services will serve destinations in the HOTCOG service area. Taxis serving areas within the study area include:

- Yellow Cab Waco
- Airport Transportation of Waco
- Waco Taxi
- CARE Transportation Services
- Personal Driver Services
- Waco Streak

## Transportation Network Companies

Uber and Lyft provide on-demand, ride-hailing transportation services in certain areas of the region. Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week though the supply of vehicles is limited and varies by time of day. Customers are required to set up an account with Uber or Lyft and link a debit/credit card to their account. No cash is exchanged between drivers and passengers, and two or more passengers can split payments.

To reserve a trip, customers are required to use a smartphone to request a vehicle, indicating their pickup location and destination. The transportation network companies (TNCs) guarantee a vehicle will arrive at a passenger's location within minutes. Passengers are sent the vehicle type, color, and license plate number of the vehicle coming to pick them up. Upon arrival at the requested origin, drivers wait two minutes for passengers. TNCs operate in the Waco area and have been noted to extend to destinations slightly beyond the boundary of McLennan County.

## Summary

The five rural counties have few resources outside of HOTRTD and MCRTD/WTS duplicative service. Most of the other services cited rarely venture outside of the Waco area.

## Section 3:

# Comprehensive Assessment of Unmet Transportation Needs

## Introduction

This section analyzes demographic and land use data to assess the need for transit in the HOTCOG service area. It is the second step in the three-part process of determining needs and most important, unmet needs. The transit needs assessment included the review of all kinds of transit services in the study area including human service agencies; it documents the current level of service and where it operates. This review was completed in Section 2. The next steps in this section are documented as follows:

- 1. Review of Demographics, Land Uses, and Travel Patterns** – Identifies where potential transit users live and where people are going.
- 2. Identification of Unmet Needs (Gap Analysis)** – Compares the areas of need to the level of service provided, to assess how the needs are met and where unmet needs may exist.

The review of demographics and land uses, historical, current and projected population trends, are captured in the following sections along with a description of transit dependent populations that are socio-economic demographic groups that typically show a propensity to use transit services. This review provides a Title VI demographic analysis that examines low income, minority and limited English proficiency populations. Major trip generators in the area are also reviewed, as well as community and regional travel patterns. Data sources include the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019 five-year estimates.

The demographic analysis, along with the review of existing services, will provide a broad transportation needs assessment required for developing service recommendations.

The second part of this section is the review of unmet needs and the gap analysis. This is the culmination of the review of demographics and travel patterns compared to the services in place and results in the gap analysis, through which a quantitative and qualitative process is used to identify unmet needs and service gaps. The information serves as the foundation for the potential strategies that will be developed through the next phase of the planning process.

## Demographics and Land Uses

### Population Profile

The following provides a general population profile for the HOTCOG region, identifies and evaluates underserved population subgroups, and reviews the demographic characteristics pertinent to a Title VI analysis.

### Historical and Recent Population Trends

As of the 2019 Five Year ACS Census, total population in the HOTCOG Region was 114,388 (Table 3-2). This represents negligible change from 2010; growth during the last decade has virtually ceased as compared to six percent increase from 2000 to 2010 (Table 3-1). Hill County has the highest population in the region (pop. 35,689) while Falls County has the lowest (pop. 17,272). The historical population and recent population trends are depicted in Tables 3-1 and 3-2 respectively.

**Table 3-1: Historical Populations for HOTCOG Study Area**

	Bosque County	Falls County	Freestone County	Hill County	Limestone County	HOTCOG Reg. Total	State of Texas
2000	17,204	18,576	17,867	32,321	22,051	108,019	20,851,820
2010	18,212	17,866	19,816	35,089	23,384	114,367	25,145,561
% Change	5.9%	-3.8%	10.9%	8.6%	6.0%	5.9%	20.6%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census and ACS 2019 5 Year Estimates, Table B01003

**Table 3-2: Recent Population Trends for HOTCOG Study Area**

	Bosque County	Falls County	Freestone County	Hill County	Limestone County	HOTCOG Reg. Total	State of Texas
2015	17,971	17,410	19,586	34,923	23,454	113,344	26,538,614
2016	17,953	17,265	19,585	34,901	23,469	113,173	26,956,435
2017	17,955	17,289	19,646	35,098	23,480	113,468	27,419,612
2018	18,122	17,299	19,709	35,399	23,515	114,044	27,885,195
2019	18,296	17,272	19,714	35,689	23,417	114,388	28,260,856
% Change 15-16	-0.1%	-0.8%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.1%	-0.2%	1.6%
% Change 16-17	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.3%	1.7%
% Change 17-18	0.9%	0.1%	0.3%	0.9%	0.1%	0.5%	1.7%
% Change 18-19	1.0%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.8%	-0.4%	0.3%	1.3%
% Change 15-19	1.8%	-0.8%	0.7%	2.2%	-0.2%	0.9%	6.5%

Major population centers in each county are as follows:

- Bosque County:
  - Clifton - 3,500 population
  - Meridian (county seat) - 1,500 population
- Falls County:
  - Marlin (county seat) - 5,600 population
- Freestone County:
  - Teague - 3,500 population
  - Fairfield (county seat) -3,000 population
- Hill County:
  - Hillsboro (county seat) - 8,500 population
- Limestone County:
  - Mexia - 7,400 population
  - Groesbeck (county seat) -4,300 population

The population centers are illustrated in Figure 3-1.

## Population Density

Population density is often an effective indicator of the types of public transit services that are most feasible within a study area. While exceptions always exist, an area with a density of 2,000 persons per square mile will generally be able to sustain frequent, daily fixed route transit service. Conversely, an area with a population density below this threshold but above 1,000 persons per square mile may be better suited for flex route or microtransit services.

Figure 3-2 portrays the HOTCOG region's population density at the census block group level. This map presents a detailed version of the population centers shown in Figure 3-1. Clifton and Hillsboro have a couple of block groups with density greater than 2000 persons per square mile while census block groups with density greater than 1000 persons per square mile are located in Valley Mills in Bosque County; Whitney, Itasca, Hubbard, and Hillsboro in Hill County; Marlin and Rosebud in Falls County; Groesbeck and Mexia in Limestone County and; Teague in Freestone County.

Figure 3-1: HOTCOG Region Population Centers

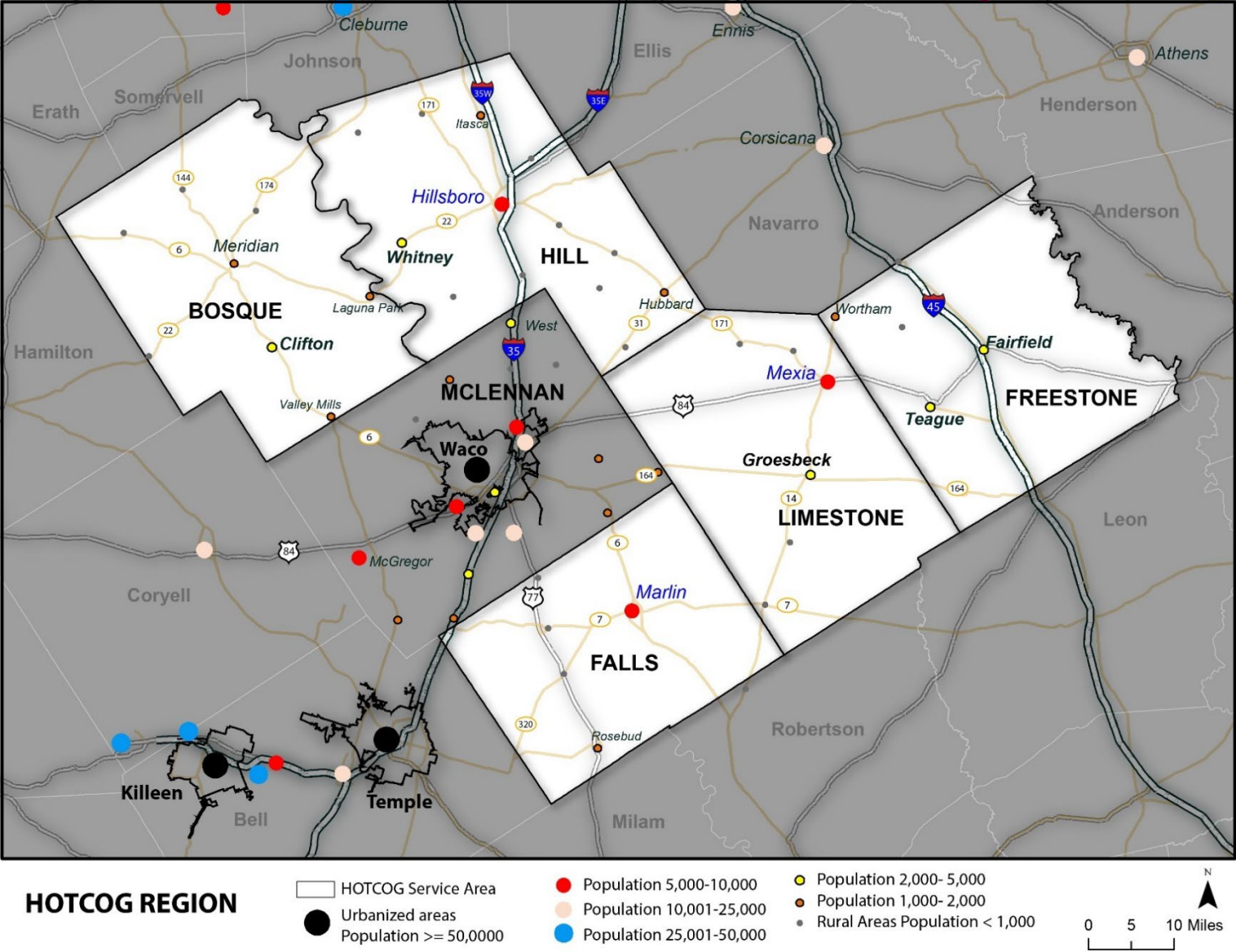
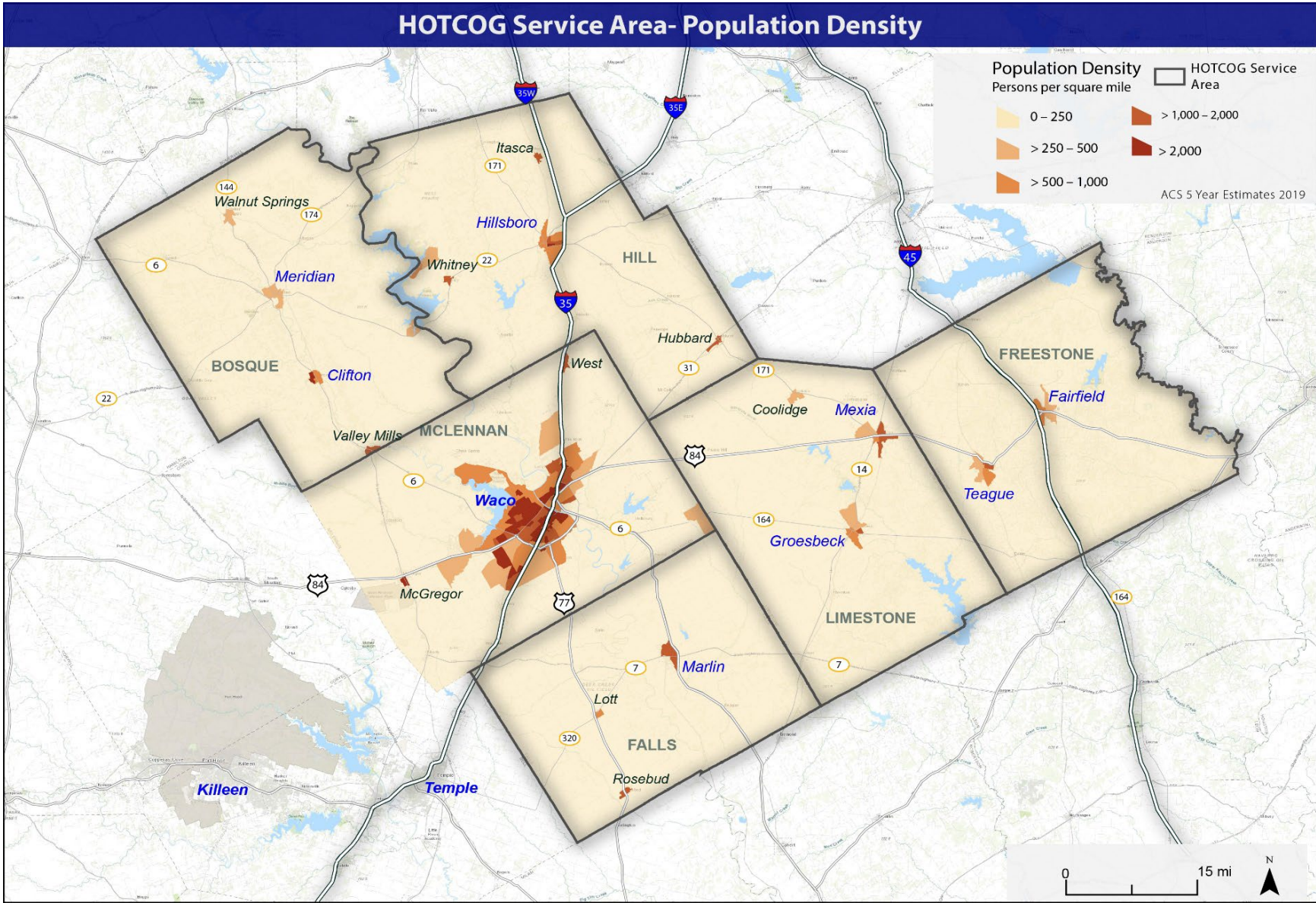




Figure 3-2: Population Density



## Future Population Projections

Projections developed by the Texas Demographics Center, shown in Table 3-3, estimate that the HOTCOG region population will decline by about 13 percent over the next thirty years (to 99,126 in 2050) as opposed to the high population growth rate of the state (60%).

**Table 3-3: Future Population Projections for HOTCOG Study Area**

	Bosque County	Falls County	Freestone County	Hill County	Limestone County	HOTCOG Reg. Total	State of Texas
2020	17,765	16,603	19,860	35,673	23,544	113,445	29,677,668
2030	17,011	15,663	19,618	35,119	23,243	110,654	34,894,452
2040	15,635	14,748	18,715	33,511	22,255	104,864	40,686,496
2050	14,415	13,845	17,817	31,809	21,240	99,126	47,342,105
% Change 2020-2030	-4.2%	-5.7%	-1.2%	-1.6%	-1.3%	-2.5%	17.6%
% Change 2030-2040	-8.1%	-5.8%	-4.6%	-4.6%	-4.3%	-5.2%	16.6%
% Change 2040-2050	-7.8%	-6.1%	-4.8%	-5.1%	-4.6%	-5.5%	16.4%
% Change 2020-2050	-18.9%	-16.6%	-10.3%	-10.8%	-9.8%	-12.6%	59.5%

## Transit Dependent Populations

Public transportation needs are defined in part by identifying the relative size and location of those segments within the general population that are most likely to use transit services. These transit dependent populations include individuals who may not have access to a personal vehicle or are unable to drive themselves due to age or income status. Determining the location of these populations assists in the evaluation of current transit services and the extent to which the services meet community needs.

The Transit Dependence Index (TDI) is an aggregate measure displaying relative concentrations of transit dependent populations. The TDI aggregates census data of people and households per block group that represents specific socioeconomic characteristics from the 2019 American Community Survey's Five-Year Estimates. Five factors make up the TDI calculation:

1. Autoless households
2. Senior population (ages 65 and above)
3. Youth population (ages 10 to 17)
4. Below poverty population
5. Individuals with disabilities

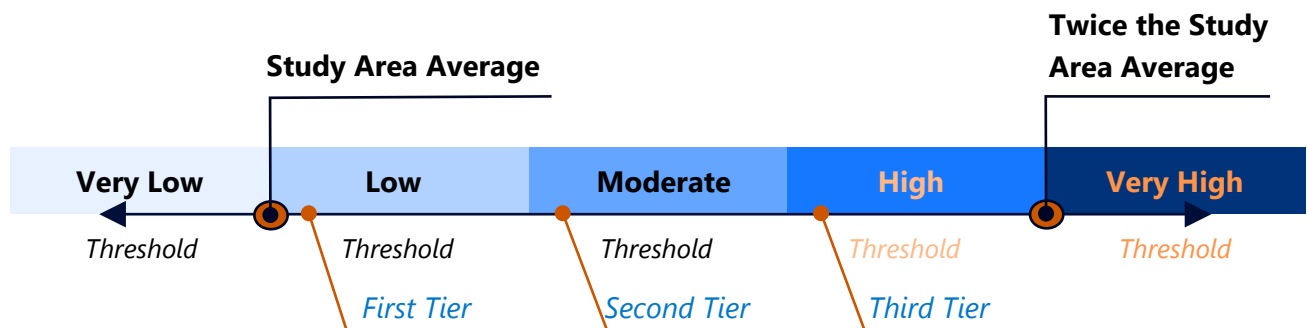


For each factor, individual census block groups were classified according to the prevalence of vulnerable populations relative to the study area average. The factors were then put into the TDI equation to determine the relative transit dependence of each block group. Table 3-4 and Figure 3-3 explain what each TDI score means:

**Table 3-4: TDI Score Definitions**

TDI Score (Needs)	Meaning
Very Low	Less than and equal to the service area's average
Low	Above the average and up to 1.33 times the average
Moderate	Above 1.33 times the average and up to 1.67 times the average
High	Above 1.67 times the average and up to two times the average
Very High	Above two times the average

**Figure 3-3: Transit Dependent Populations Classification System**



As illustrated in Figure 3-3, the relative classification system utilizes averages in ranking populations. For example, areas with less than the average transit dependent population fall into the “very low” classification, where areas that are more than twice the average will be classified as “very high.” The classifications “low, moderate, and high” all fall between the average and twice the average; these classifications are divided into thirds.

Figure 3-4 displays the TDI rankings for the HOTCOG region. Areas with a “very high need” are located in the southern portions of Marlin. Areas with a “high need” are located in the northern portion of Marlin and central part of Groesbeck. Clifton, Hubbard, Laguna Park, Northern part of Whitney and few block groups in Mexia and Teague demonstrate “moderate need.”

The Transit Dependence Index Percent (TDIP) provides a complementary analysis to the TDI measure. It is nearly identical to the TDI measure except for the exclusion of population density. The TDIP for each block group in the study area is calculated based on autoless households, elderly populations, youth populations, individuals with disabilities, and below poverty populations. It is the percentage of population that is transit dependent in each census block group. The advantage of TDIP is that it helps in identifying transit needs in areas with smaller populations. For example, certain areas of the study

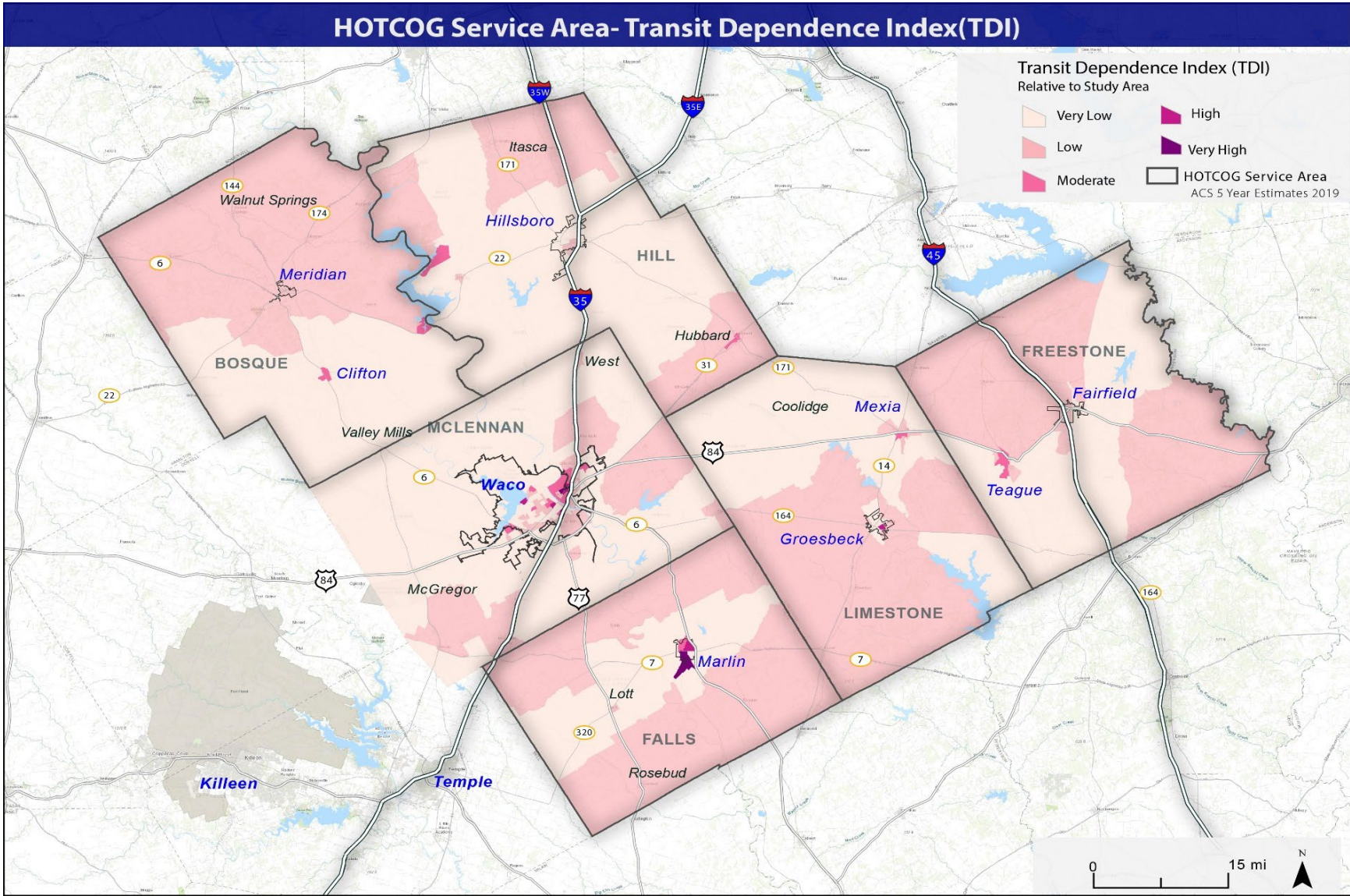
area may have fewer people overall but the percentage of people in that area that belong to one or more of the transit dependency cohorts might be very high.

Figure 3-5 shows transit need based on the percentage. According to the TDIP, there are a few small block groups that have highest percentage of transit dependent population (greater than 90%) located in Marlin, Mexia, Groesbeck, Hubbard and Clifton. There are large census block groups to the east and southwest of Meridian, around Hubbard, southern portion of Limestone County, and northcentral portion of Freestone County as well as places including Teague, Lott, Rosebud, Walnut Springs, and Wortham that have a very high percentage of transit dependent population. Overall, a large chunk of Limestone, Falls and Bosque counties have more than sixty percent of total population dependent on transit.

## **Autoless Households**

Households without at least one personal vehicle are more likely to depend on the mobility offered by public transit than those households with access to a car. Although autoless households are reflected in both the TDI and TDIP measures, displaying this segment of the population separately is important since most land uses in the study area are at distances too far for non-motorized travel. Figure 3-6 displays the relative number of autoless households. The areas of “very high” needs are located in Teague in Freestone County, to the northeast of Hillsboro in Hill County and in the central and eastern portions of Falls County.

Figure 3-4: Transit Dependence Index





### Figure 3-5: Transit Dependence Index Percentage

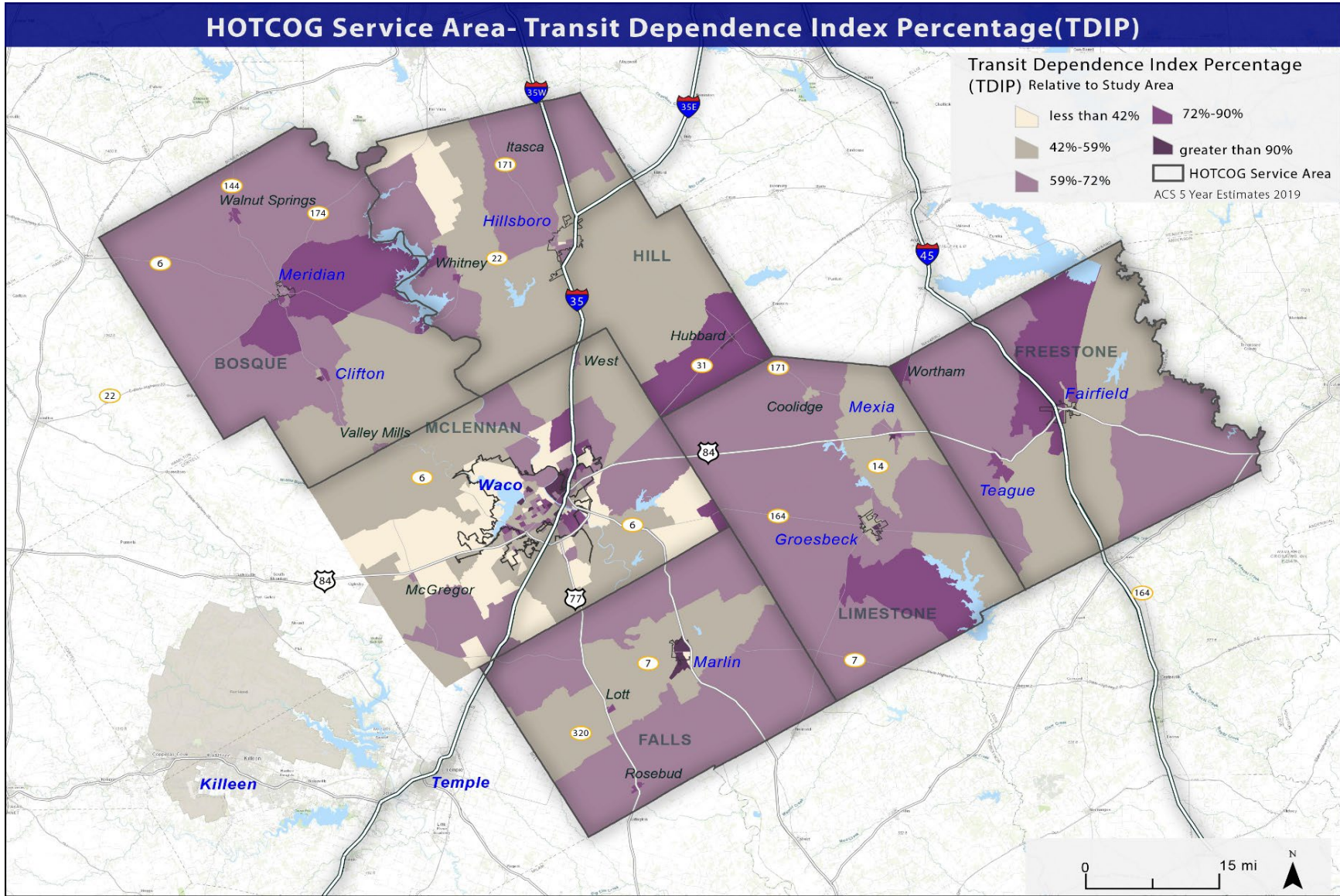
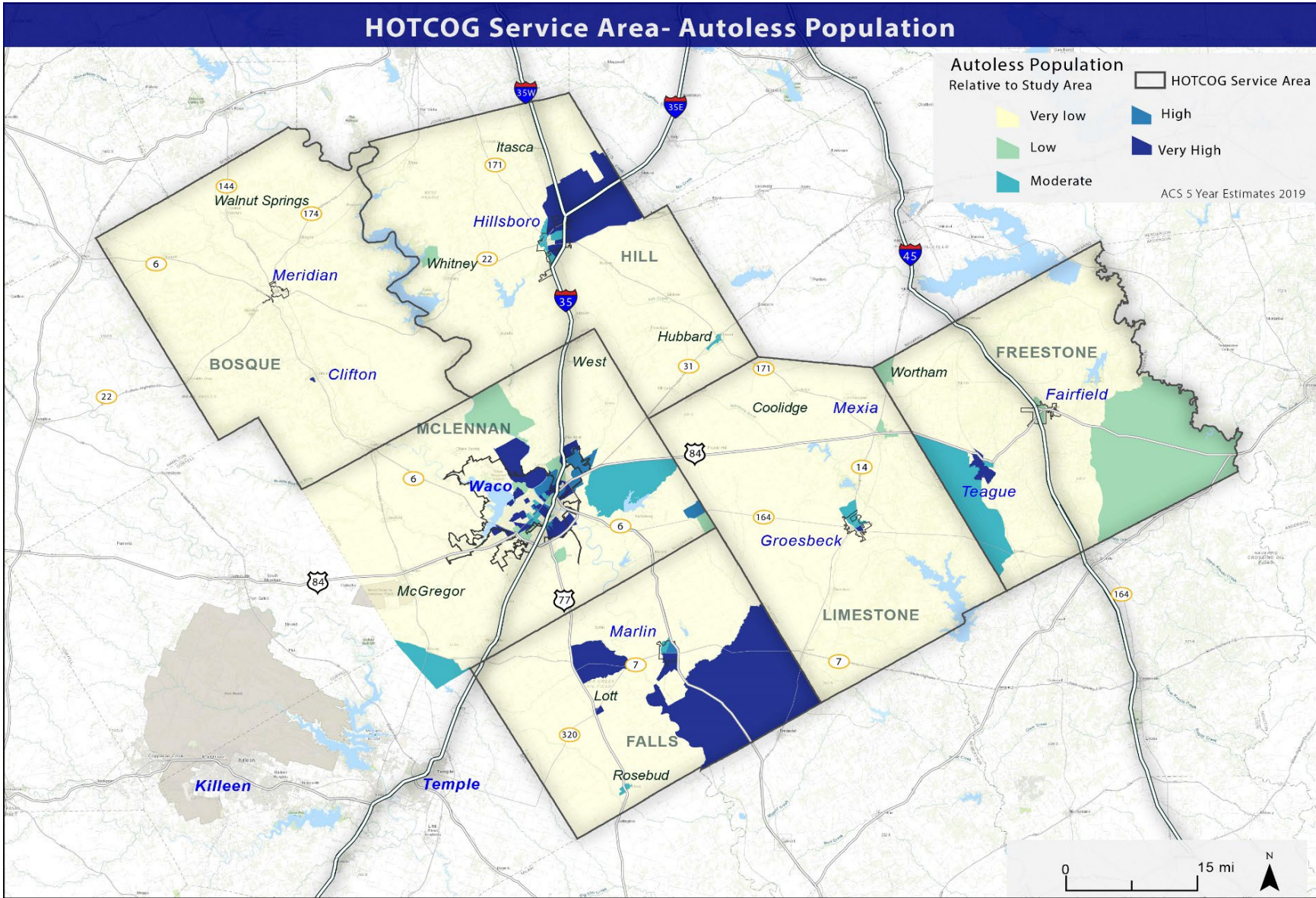




Figure 3-6: Concentration of Autoless Households in the HOTCOG Service Area



## Senior Adult Population

A second socioeconomic group analyzed by the TDI and TDIP indices is the senior population. Individuals ages 65 years and older may scale back their use of personal vehicles as they age, leading to greater reliance on public transportation compared to those in other age brackets. Figure 3-7 displays the relative concentration of seniors in the study area. Bosque County predominantly has a higher concentration of seniors as compared to other counties in the HOTCOG region; this population resides in the rural parts of the county, outside Meridian and Clifton. Areas to the east and southwest of Meridian consist of “very high” senior population block groups. The southeastern portion of Limestone County, Northwest Hill County and the western portion of Freestone County consist of large block groups with a very high senior population density. Block groups classified as “high” are in the northern portion of Hill County, eastern portion of Freestone County and southeastern part of Limestone County.

## Youth Population

Youths and teenagers, ages 10 to 17 years, who cannot drive or are just beginning to drive but do not have an automobile available, appreciate the continued mobility from public transportation. Areas with a “very high” classification of youth include the northwest part of Bosque County and the area north of Whitney in Hill County. Clifton has a “high” concentration of youth population while most of the HOTCOG region has low youth populations. Figure 3-8 illustrates the concentration of the youth population in the study area.

## Individuals with Disabilities

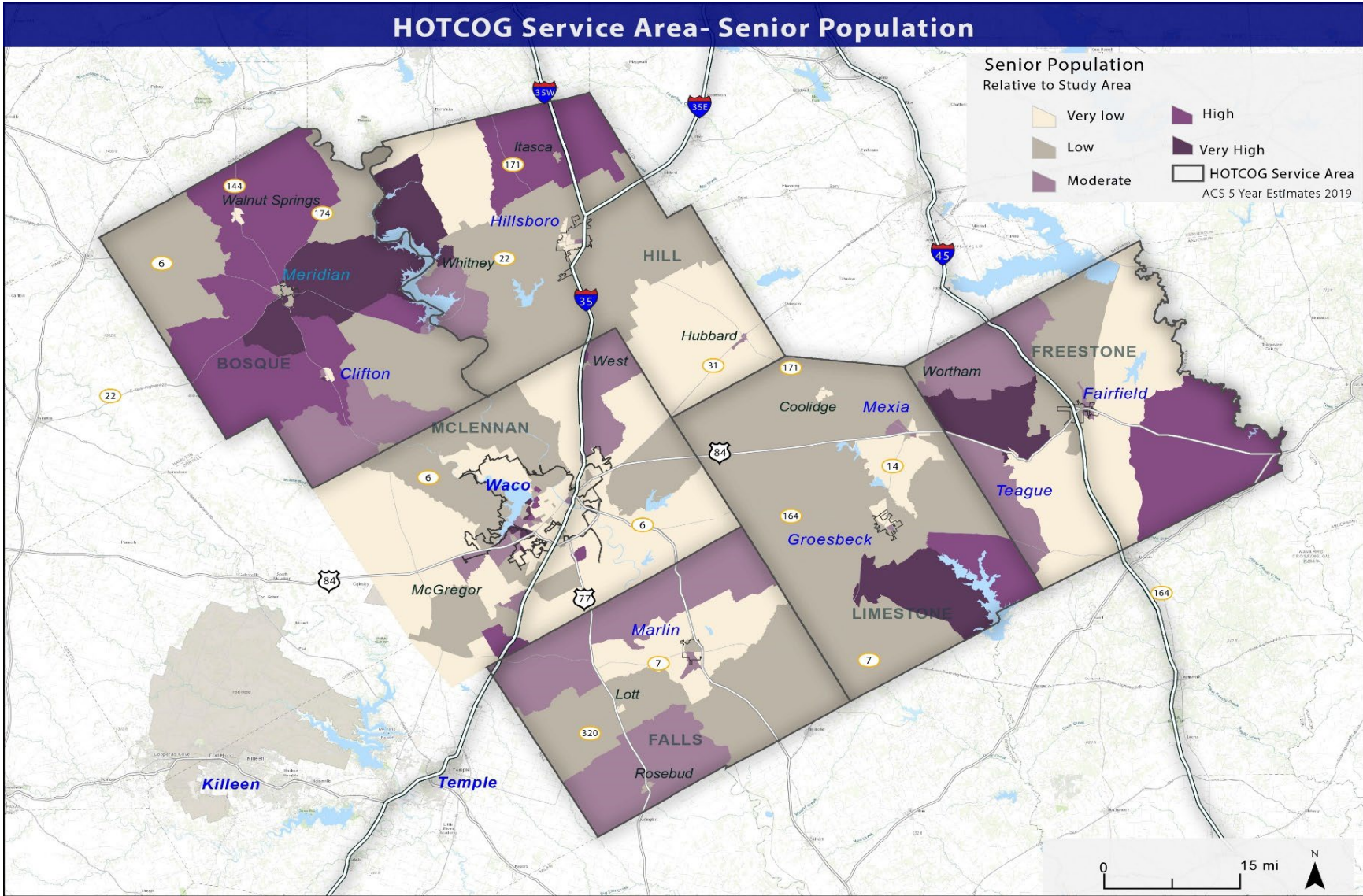
Individuals with disabilities may be unable to operate a personal vehicle and consequently are more likely to rely on public transportation. As shown in Figure 3-9, block groups south of Limestone County and south of Marlin consist of a “very high” concentration of individuals with disabilities.

## Title VI Demographic Analysis

As part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal subsidies. This includes agencies providing federally funded public transportation. The following section examines the minority and below poverty populations within the HOTCOG region. It then summarizes the prevalence of residents with limited-English proficiency (LEP).



Figure 3-7: Concentration of Senior Adults in the HOTCOG Service Area





**Figure 3-8: Concentration of Youths in the HOTCOG Service Area**

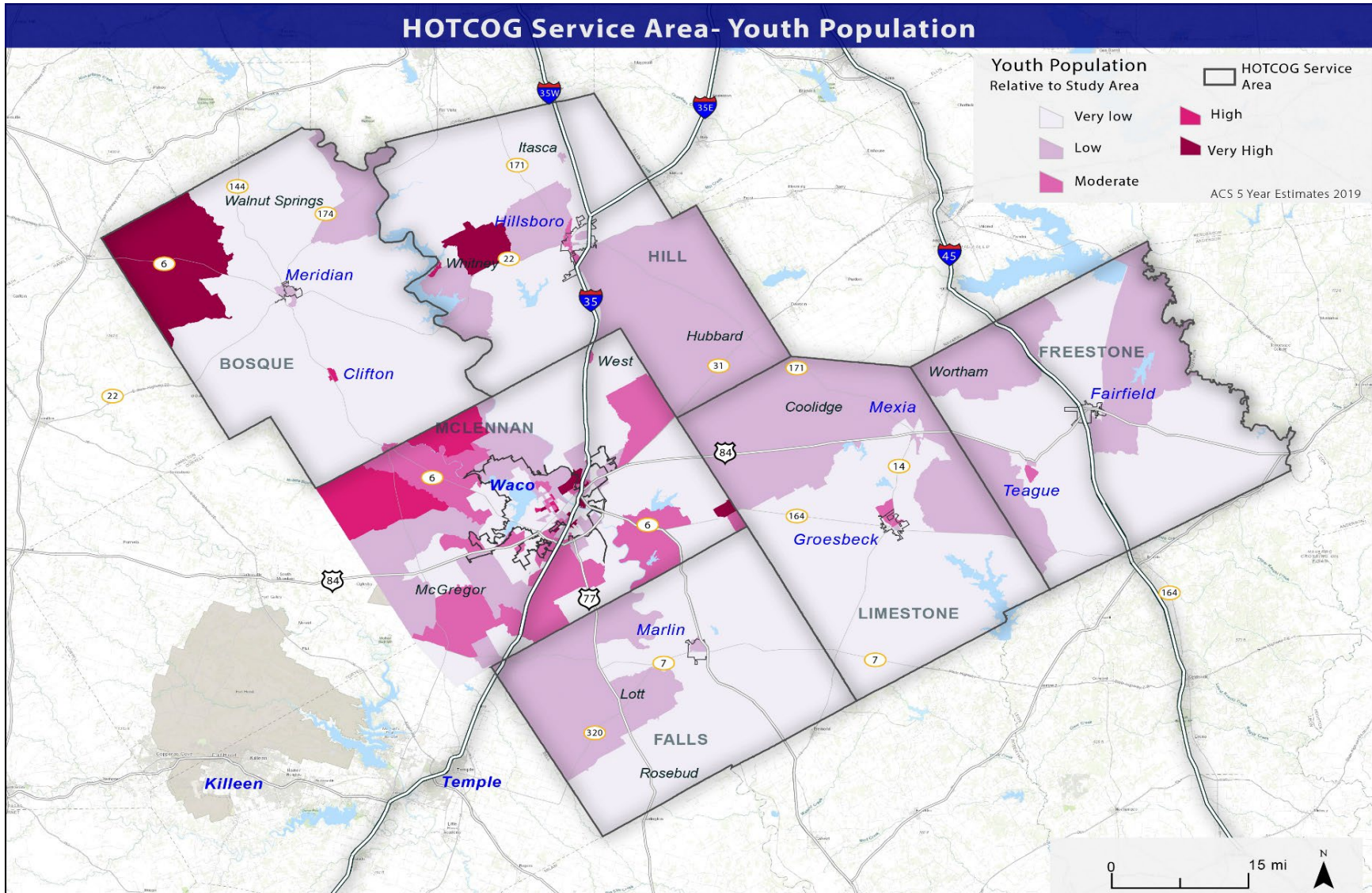
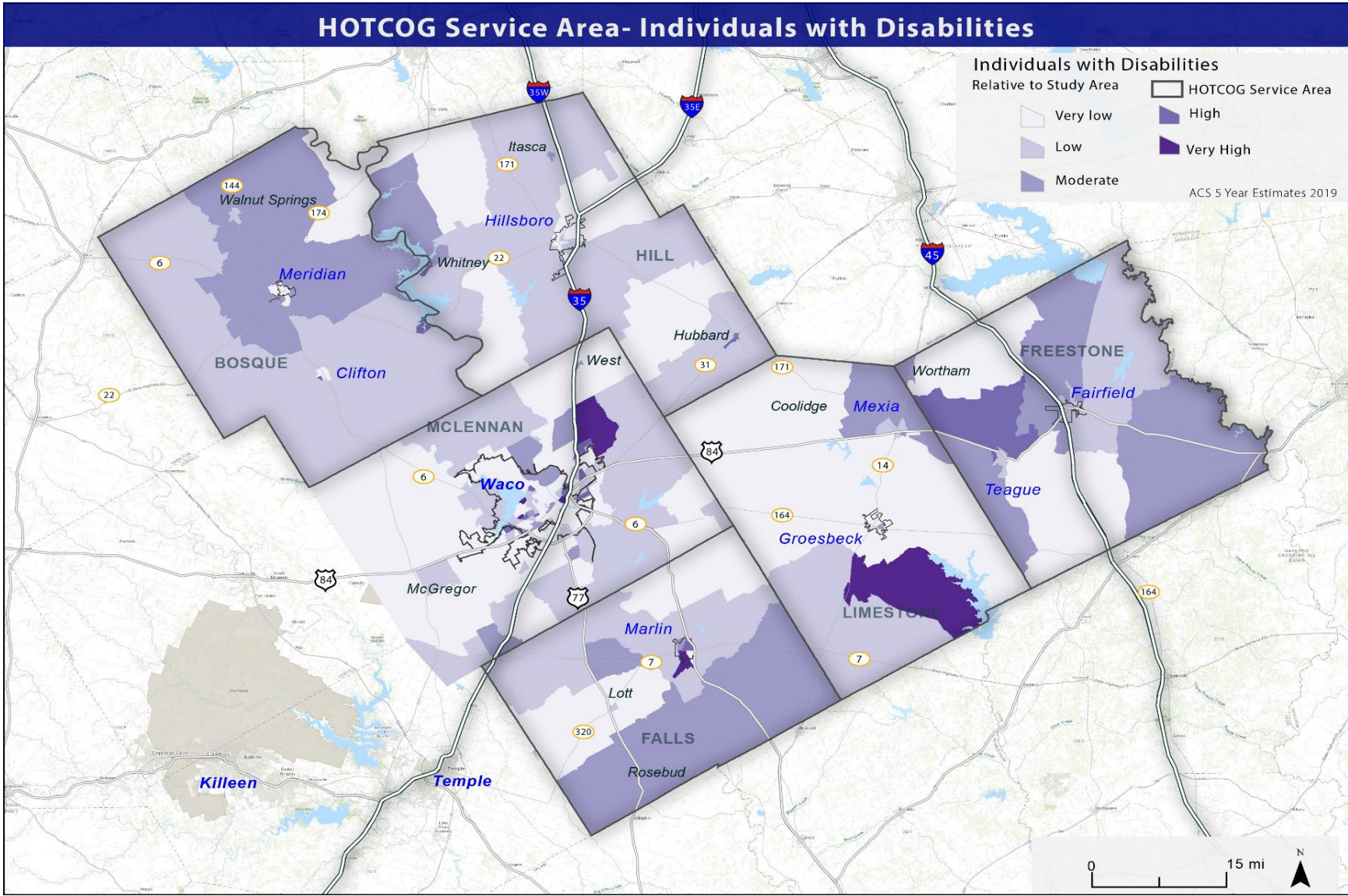




Figure 3-9: Concentration of Individuals with Disabilities in the HOTCOG Service Area



## Minority Population

It is important to ensure that areas with an above average percentage of racial and/or ethnic minorities are not disproportionately impacted by any proposed alterations to existing public transportation services. Figure 3-10 depicts the percentage of minority persons above or below the study area average of 42.7 percent per block group. The above average block groups are mostly located in the major places within the study area and include Clifton, Walnut Springs, Coolidge, Teague, Central Fairfield, southwest Groesbeck, Mexia as well as to the south of Mexia along State Route 14, Hillsboro, Marlin, Rosebud, and central east portion of Falls County.

## Low Income Population

The second socioeconomic group included in the Title VI analysis represents those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level. These individuals face financial hardships that may make the ownership and maintenance of a personal vehicle difficult. In such cases, they may be more likely to depend on public transportation. Figure 3-11 depicts block groups with low income individuals that are above or below the study area average of 19 percent. Most major places within the study area contain above average low income individuals such as Meridian, Clifton, Walnut Springs, Central Hillsboro, Hubbard, Coolidge, Mexia, northern part of Groesbeck, few block groups in Fairfield, Teague, Wortham, Marlin, Lott and Rosebud. Additionally, there are large block groups with above average population concentrations located in the northeastern portion of Bosque County, southeast Hill County, areas around Marlin in Falls County, southwestern and eastern portions of Limestone County and northern part of Freestone County.

## Limited-English Proficiency

In addition to providing public transportation for a diversity of socioeconomic groups, it is also important to serve and disseminate information to those of different linguistic backgrounds. The limited English proficiency (LEP) population is a count of people who do not speak English as their primary language and their ability to speak English is less than "very well." The Title VI Safe Harbor Provision stipulates that recipients of federal funding must provide written translations of all vital documents for each language group with an LEP population that makes up 5 percent or 1,000 persons (whichever is less) of the total population of the service area.

As shown in Table 3-5, the population residing inside the HOTCOG service area predominately speak English (84.1%). Spanish is the next most prevalent language in the region. The total number of Spanish speaking LEP persons (7,611) within the HOTCOG service region meets the Safe Harbor threshold which makes it mandatory for HOTCOG to serve the Spanish speaking LEP populace and to provide vital documents in Spanish. A majority of the Spanish speaking LEP population in the region resides in Limestone County.



Figure 3-10: Concentration of Minority Individuals in the HOTCOG Service Area

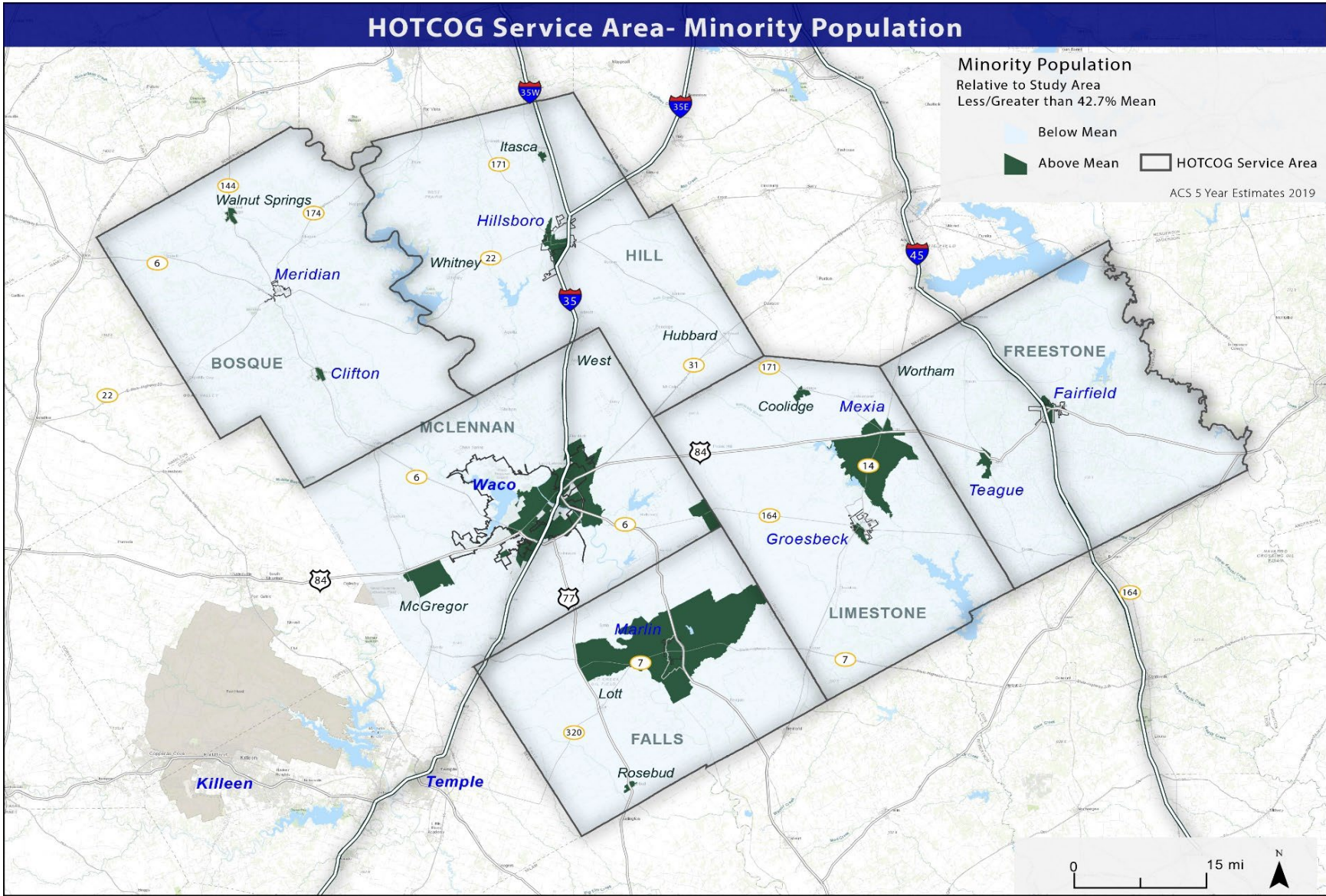
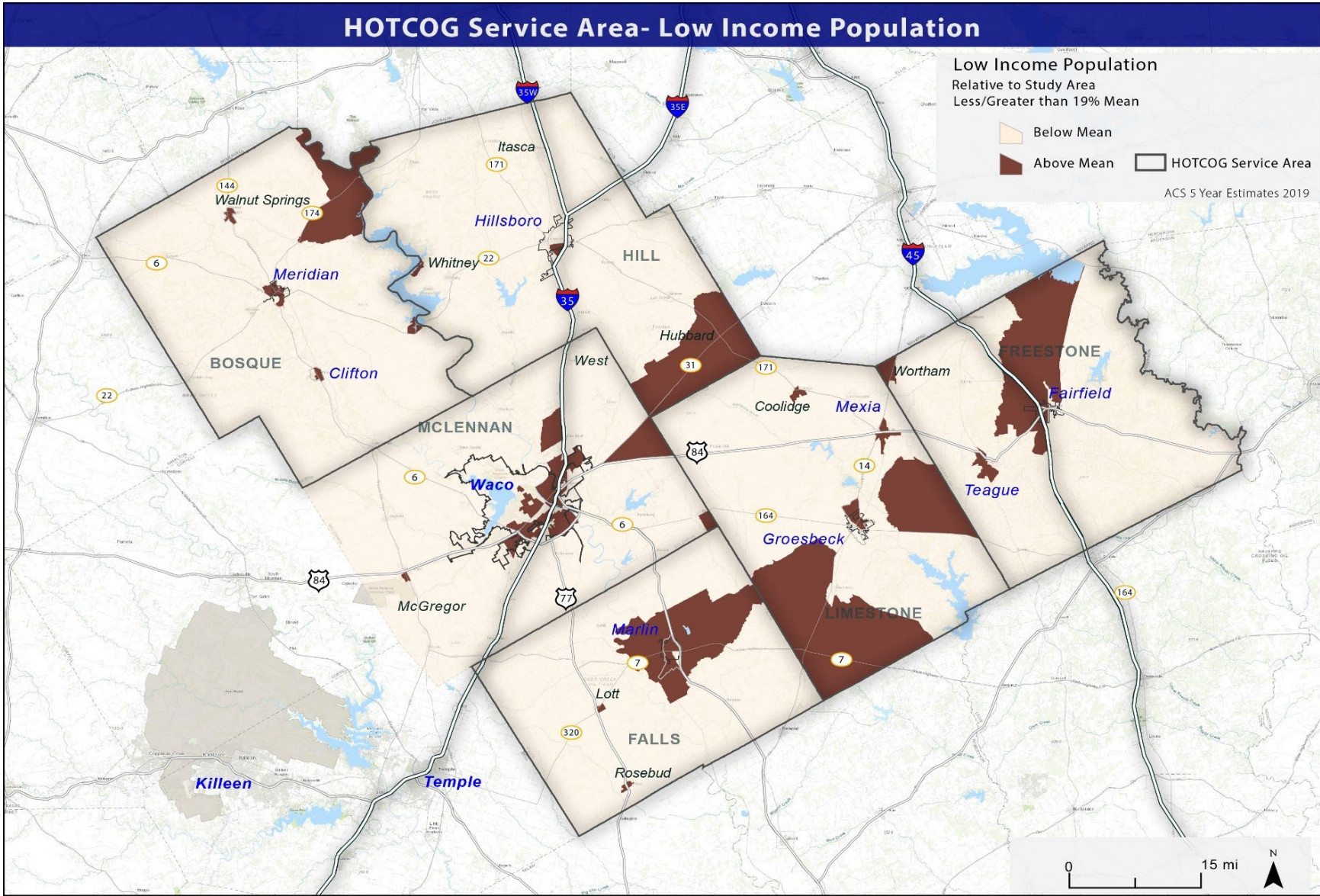




Figure 3-11: Individuals Below Poverty Level in the HOTCOG Service Area



**Table 3-5: Limited English Proficiency for HOTCOG Service Area**

	Bosque County		Falls County		Freestone County		Hill County		Limestone County		Service Area Total	
<b>Total population ages 5 and older</b>	16,996		16,346		18,438		32,800		21,972		106,552	
English Only	14,497	85.3%	13,364	81.8%	16,210	87.9%	27,587	84.1%	18,000	81.9%	89,658	84.1%
<b>LEP Population:</b>	<b>Number Estimated</b>	<b>Percent LEP of County Pop.</b>	<b>Number Estimated</b>	<b>Percent LEP of County Pop.</b>	<b>Number Estimated</b>	<b>Percent LEP of County Pop.</b>	<b>Number Estimated</b>	<b>Percent LEP of County Pop.</b>	<b>Number Estimated</b>	<b>Percent LEP of County Pop.</b>	<b>Number Estimated</b>	<b>Percent LEP of Total Service Area Pop.</b>
<b>Spanish or Spanish Creole</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	869	4.7%	<b>1,941</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>2,573</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>7,611</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	8	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	0.0%
German	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	0.0%	49	0.2%	62	0.1%
Russian	0	0.0%	15	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	15	0.0%
Other Slavic languages	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	0.0%
Other Indo-European languages	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	21	0.1%	24	0.0%
Chinese	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	0.0%	7	0.0%	18	0.0%
Japanese	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	0.0%
Korean	8	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	9	0.0%
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	18	0.1%	0	0.0%	16	0.1%	36	0.0%
Vietnamese	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	26	0.1%	67	0.3%	93	0.1%
Tagalog	9	0.1%	4	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	0.0%
Hungarian	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Arabic	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	32	0.2%	5	0.0%	0	0.0%	37	0.0%
African languages	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	62	0.3%	62	0.1%

Source: American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2011-2015), Table B16001.

## Land Use Profile

### Major Trip Generators

Identifying land uses and major trip generators in the HOTCOG region complements the demographic analysis by indicating where transit services may be most needed. Trip generators attract transit demand and include common origins and destinations, like multi-unit housing, major employers, medical facilities, educational facilities, non-profit and governmental agencies, and shopping centers.

Waco is one of the major cities in central Texas, located just outside the study area. It has a concentration of trip generators and therefore is a major trip destination for the HOTCOG region. Hillsboro, Mexia, Groesbeck and Marlin also contain most of the major trip generators such as: regional hospitals, major employers, higher educational facilities, big box grocery stores, human service agencies and multi-unit housing apartments. A comprehensive list of the major trip generators within the HOTCOG region is provided in Appendix A; a summarized version of trip generator categories by place are illustrated in Figure 3-12. Key observations derived from the land use analysis by trip generator categories are as follows:

- **Medical:** Goodall Witcher Hospital in Clifton, Parkview Regional Hospital in Mexia and Hill Regional Hospital in Hillsboro are the major regional hospitals within the study area as well as the major employers. Other general medical facilities identified are community hospitals, primary care agencies, and dialysis centers. Note that dialysis centers are located in Hillsboro, Marlin and Waco and they may be the most used destinations in their areas.
- **Shopping:** The only big box stores within the HOTCOG region are grocery stores that include Walmart (often the largest trip generator), HEB, and Brookshire's. Hillsboro is a prime shopping location in the study area with a Walmart Supercenter, and outlets stores in Hillsboro (the only major retail shopping destination within the HOTCOG region).
- **Education:** Hill College in Hillsboro and Navarro College in Mexia are the major regional colleges in the study area. Other educational institutions include Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Groesbeck, and Marlin Area Vocational School in Marlin. High schools and adult education centers in each county are provided in Appendix A.
- **Human Services:** There are many human service agencies in the HOTCOG region. Human service agencies include libraries, community centers, senior centers, homeless shelters, food pantries, civic buildings, correction facilities, nursing and assisted living facilities, and mental health and rehabilitation centers. Most of these agencies are located in the cities of each county.
- **Major Employers:** According to HOTCOG data, major employers that are located in a single building or campus include regional hospitals/medical centers, assisted living, rehabilitation facilities and nursing homes, higher education facilities, detention centers and big box grocery stores. A few additional major employers include engineering and manufacturing industries, and

suppliers and consultants in the energy and construction sector. A detailed list of major employers is provided in Appendix A.

- **Multi-family Housing:** Residential land uses are considered one of the important local trip generators. Multi-family housing communities with five or more units, including affordable housing units, are identified as major trip generators. Hillsboro in Hills County has a number of multi-unit housing apartments followed by Mexia in Limestone County. A few apartment buildings are also identified in Marlin, Fairfield, Whitney and Groesbeck. No multi-family housing was found in Bosque County.

## Employment Travel Patterns

In addition to considering the locations of major employers, it is also important to account for the commuting patterns of residents working inside and outside of the counties in the HOTCOG region.

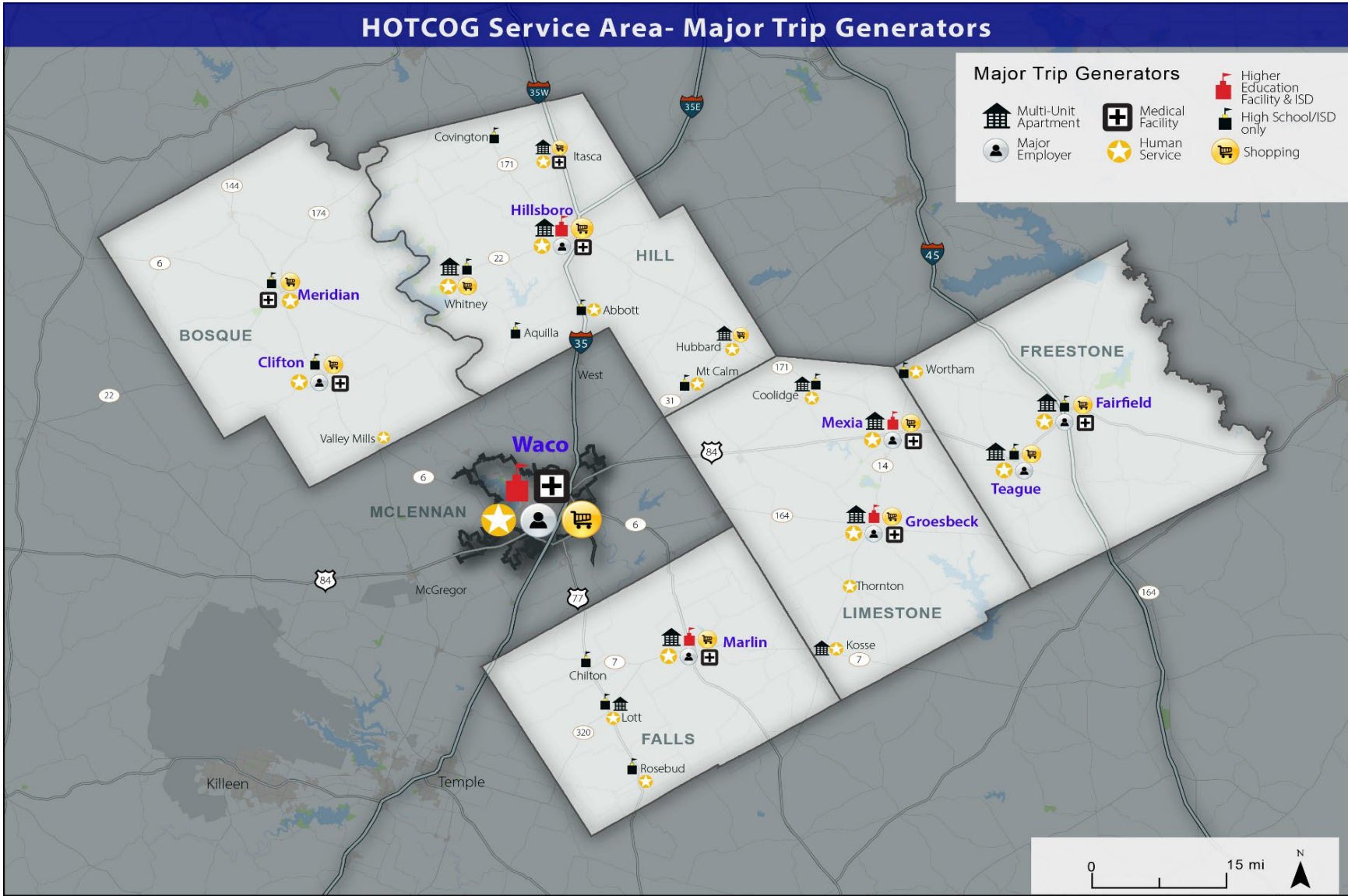
According to 2019 ACS five-year estimates, over half of both Bosque County (51.8%) and Falls County (59.3%) employees work at locations outside the county while in Freestone and Hill counties this number is just below fifty percent. That said, the number of employees working outside their county of residence in the HOTCOG region, except Limestone County, is much higher than the Texas state average of 22.4 percent. A majority of HOTCOG region residents (above 80%) drive alone to work, similar to the state average of 80.5 percent. Journey to work patterns are provided in Table 3-6.

Another source of data that provides an understanding of employee travel patterns is the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) dataset. As of 2018, the top six employment destinations for primary jobs<sup>1</sup> for each of the county's residents in the HOTCOG region are provided in Table 3-7. McLennan, Tarrant, and Dallas counties are the most common employment destinations, in addition to the county of residence. Over one-fourth of the workers in Falls County are employed in McLennan County.

<sup>1</sup>According to US Census LEHD OnTheMap application, a primary job is the highest paying job for an individual worker for the year.



Figure 3-12: Heat Map of Major Trip Generators in the HOTCOG Service Area





**Table 3-6: Journey to Work Patterns in the HOTCOG Region**

	Texas		Bosque County		Falls County		Freestone County		Hill County		Limestone County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total 16 years or older	13,115,511		7,586		5,955		6,911		15,008		8,960	
<b>Location of Employment</b>												
Worked in state of residence	12,986,844	99.0%	7,511	99.0%	5,942	99.8%	6,894	99.8%	14,889	99.2%	8,883	99.1%
In county of residence	10,077,404	77.6%	3,622	48.2%	2,421	40.7%	3,881	56.3%	8,624	57.9%	6,221	70.0%
Outside county of residence	2,909,440	22.4%	3,889	51.8%	3,521	59.3%	3,013	43.7%	6,265	42.1%	2,662	30.0%
Worked outside state of residence	128,667	1.0%	75	1.0%	13	0.2%	17	0.2%	119	0.8%	77	0.9%
<b>Means of Transportation to Work</b>												
Car, truck, or van - drove alone	10,560,476	80.5%	6,189	81.6%	4,754	79.8%	5,937	85.9%	12,237	81.5%	7,712	86.1%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	1,308,229	10.0%	643	8.5%	672	11.3%	630	9.1%	1,849	12.3%	851	9.5%
Public transportation (excluding taxi)	181,273	1.4%	2	0.0%	55	0.9%	4	0.1%	4	0.0%	22	0.2%
Walked	200,955	1.5%	315	4.2%	145	2.4%	59	0.9%	181	1.2%	86	1.0%
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means	203,366	1.6%	93	1.2%	126	2.1%	34	0.5%	192	1.3%	65	0.7%
Worked from home	661,212	5.0%	344	4.5%	203	3.4%	247	3.6%	545	3.6%	224	2.5%

Source: ACS, Five-Year Estimates (2015 - 2019), Table B0813

**Table 3-7: Top 6 Places of Work for the Residents of Each County in the HOTCOG Region**

Bosque County	
Location	Percent
Bosque County	24.1%
McLennan County	18.3%
Tarrant County	11.1%
Dallas County	7.3%
Johnson County	3.6%
Taylor County	3.4%
Others	32.2%

Hill County	
Location	Percent
Hill County	26.8%
Dallas County	13.1%
McLennan County	11.3%
Tarrant County	10.4%
Johnson County	6.6%
Harris County	3.4%
Others	28.4%

Falls County	
Location	Percent
McLennan County	25.0%
Falls County	15.5%
Bell County	10.9%
Dallas County	8.3%
Tarrant County	6.1%
Harris County	3.3%
Others	30.9%

Limestone County	
Location	Percent
Limestone County	27.2%
Dallas County	12.3%
McLennan County	12.1%
Tarrant County	6.8%
Freestone County	4.2%
Harris County	3.4%
Others	34.0%

Freestone County	
Location	Percent
Freestone County	26.6%
Dallas County	12.7%
Tarrant County	7.9%
Limestone County	6.3%
McLennan County	4.9%
Navarro County	4.4%
Others	37.2%

Source: Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2018.

## Summary of Overall Needs

When combining the demographic, land use, and commuter trends contained within this section, the following needs and themes emerge:

- The population growth in the HOTCOG region has been slow in the past five years and the future population is expected to decline considerably in the next three decades according to the latest population projections.

- The TDIP analysis shows that a high percentage of the population (nearly 60%) is transit dependent in most parts of the HOTCOG region (especially in Limestone, Falls and Bosque counties). Even though these areas are mostly rural, a high percentage of people residing there belong to one or more of the transit dependency cohorts. Additionally, a large portion of Bosque County has a high number of seniors that live outside the cities.
- While Waco is the major trip destination for the HOTCOG region; Hillsboro followed by Mexia, Groesbeck, and Marlin also qualify as important trip origins and destinations due to the concentration of a variety of trip generators such as regional hospitals, dialysis clinics, major employers, higher educational facilities, big box grocery stores, human service agencies and multi-unit housing apartments.
- The journey to work data postulates that on average, nearly half of HOTCOG region workers commute to neighboring counties for employment with an exception to Limestone County. The largest employment locations for primary jobs are in McLennan, Tarrant, and Dallas counties which make up roughly one-third of the top work destinations.

## Gap Analysis

This section is the culmination of the review of demographics and travel patterns compared to the services in place. This results in the gap analysis, through which a qualitative process is used to identify unmet needs and service gaps based on community and stakeholder input. The information serves as the foundation for the potential strategies that will be developed through the next phase of the planning process.

This document includes the following:

- **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** identified in the region through the planning process.
- **Summary of Existing Conditions** that discusses demographics, land uses, and existing service.
- **Outreach Efforts** that provides a review of the results from public outreach and stakeholder engagement efforts.
- **Gap Analysis** which summarizes the gaps and needs identified through this process.

Similar to previous project deliverables this section should be treated as a draft document, and revisions will be incorporated into a version that will ultimately be included as a chapter in the updated regionally coordinated transportation plan.

## Overarching Theme

It is well documented that public transit is critical to the need for transportation to health care and human services. This is true in urban areas, but it is essential in rural areas with the lack of transportation resources and as a result, high needs.

The overarching theme of the gap analysis is:

***Excellent public transportation is the best way to coordinate human service and health care access. This coordination can increase transportation for these needs and lower the cost per trip. It is incumbent on health care and human service providers to support public transit.***

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The HOTCOG service area consists of two public transit systems serving the same area, with little in the way of human service agency operated transportation. HOTRTD's service area, services, and ridership have been shrinking in recent years for a variety of reasons that are now in the past. McLennan County Rural Transit District (MCRTD) has been operating service in the region in duplication of what HOTRTD is doing to some extent.

The focus at this time is on making some basic changes to the services available, eliminating duplication in the service area, developing a brand, and introducing a new, more productive, and attractive service.

This section summarizes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats across the region at this time. There are significant challenges facing the region in order to move forward, but on a positive note, it has the capability to effect the changes needed to grow and become relevant to a wider range of residents.

### Strengths

HOTRTD has been in existence for over forty years, first as a coordinated human service transportation program and later as a human service/public transit system. Its strengths include:

- **Attached to HOTCOG** – The Council of Governments provides the most support services and political support.
- **Professional management** – Management is knowledgeable and skilled in transportation issues. They have the ability to adapt and change.
- **Tenured, veteran vehicle operators** – Experienced vehicle operators will go a long way toward ensuring a safe, quality service.

## Weaknesses

HOTRTD, the primary public transit service in the region, has lost service and a county over the past ten years. There is significant duplication in the rural areas from a neighboring rural public transit district.

- **There is no brand for public transit** – The service has no marketing name; plain white vehicles with a generic Rural Transit Bus printed on the sides.
- **There is a lack of local funding** – Rural transit depends on matching funds. The counties and cities are not supporting the service.
- **There is significant duplication of services** – Waco Transit operates non-emergency Medicaid transportation (NEMT) service throughout HOTRTD's service area. It is unusual that an urban/rural transit system would operate service in another transit district's area without permission – competing with HOTRTD. This is a particular problem for HOTRTD as these federal funds are taken out of the rural region and are applied to rural McLennan County. Further, these federal funds can be used as local match.
- **Service design** – HOTRTD uses the least productive and most expensive form of public transit – demand response service.

## Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities for HOTRTD to initiate at low or no cost that will have a significant positive impact on service. This review will show that with the exception of Limestone County, the service is not generating the potential ridership in the region. There are numerous activities that can be undertaken to improve ridership.

- **NEMT Funds** – HOTRTD should engage in NEMT services. Unfortunately, there are multiple brokers that HOTRTD should sign up with.
- **Branding** – At this time, the public transit service has no brand and very little recognition. Grassroots branding can make a difference. It must look and sound professional.
- **Introducing new services** – New more attractive services can be implemented at virtually no operating cost as the vehicles are re-purposed from one-on-one demand response to microtransit and scheduled service with door-to-door capabilities.
- **Sponsorships** – It is possible to generate private sector funding through sponsorships. Walmart, HEB, and United have all contributed/funded transportation in a significant way.
- **Continue coordination** – HOTRTD should seek out new opportunities in human services and health care services. At the same time HOTRTD and MCRTD/ WTS are now seeking out opportunities to work together.

## Threats

The biggest threat is that services will remain duplicative and service will never be built up to the levels seen in other parts of the state and in Limestone County.

- **Competition and uncoordinated services in rural areas** – Having another transit system operating in the HOTRTD service area causes a fragmented service area that should be coordinated. Typically, urban systems contract with the affected rural service to operate the service at a lower cost. Having multiple operators in rural areas could lead to confusion among customers.
- **Image in the community** – Similar to a number of systems, HOTRTD is seen as the bus for seniors. There is a need for supporters of transit in each community. HOTRTD needs to build a brand and become visible in each community and subsequently build support.
- **Local funding** – The lack of local funding severely limits growth. Competing for funds (in their own service area) with McLennan County Transit District and WTS makes this even more difficult.

## Summary of Existing Conditions

The review of conditions compares the demographics and land uses to the current services. Then the extensive outreach is reviewed to determine specific gaps in service. The study team has also made multiple site visits to the rural service area.

## Demographics and Land Uses

The results of the demographic and land use analysis indicate that there are many common features when discussing public transit needs. Each county has similar:

- Population densities
- Seniors, youths, low income individuals, and other transit dependent populations
- Similar destinations intra-county: shopping, health care, and senior centers, for example
- Similar destinations inter-county: at this time, the bulk of the service is oriented to Waco, with some service from Falls County to Temple and from Freestone County to Corsicana (typically for dialysis). Needs include health care, dialysis, and employment.

## Transit Services

There are two issues related to the gap analysis: duplication of service and transit usage by the county.



## Duplication of Service

In rural areas with few resources, the duplication of services is wasting precious resources. For every minute the MCRTD buses are serving Falls County, they are not serving their own service area. The first issue involves the duplication of service in the rural area. The region has one rural transit system, but McLennan County Rural Transit District also operates service in HOTRTD's region. This includes Falls County Commuter service and NEMT service throughout the HOTRTD service area. A rural transit district operating service that originates in another rural transit district without their permission is highly unusual and is duplicative.

## Transit Usage by County

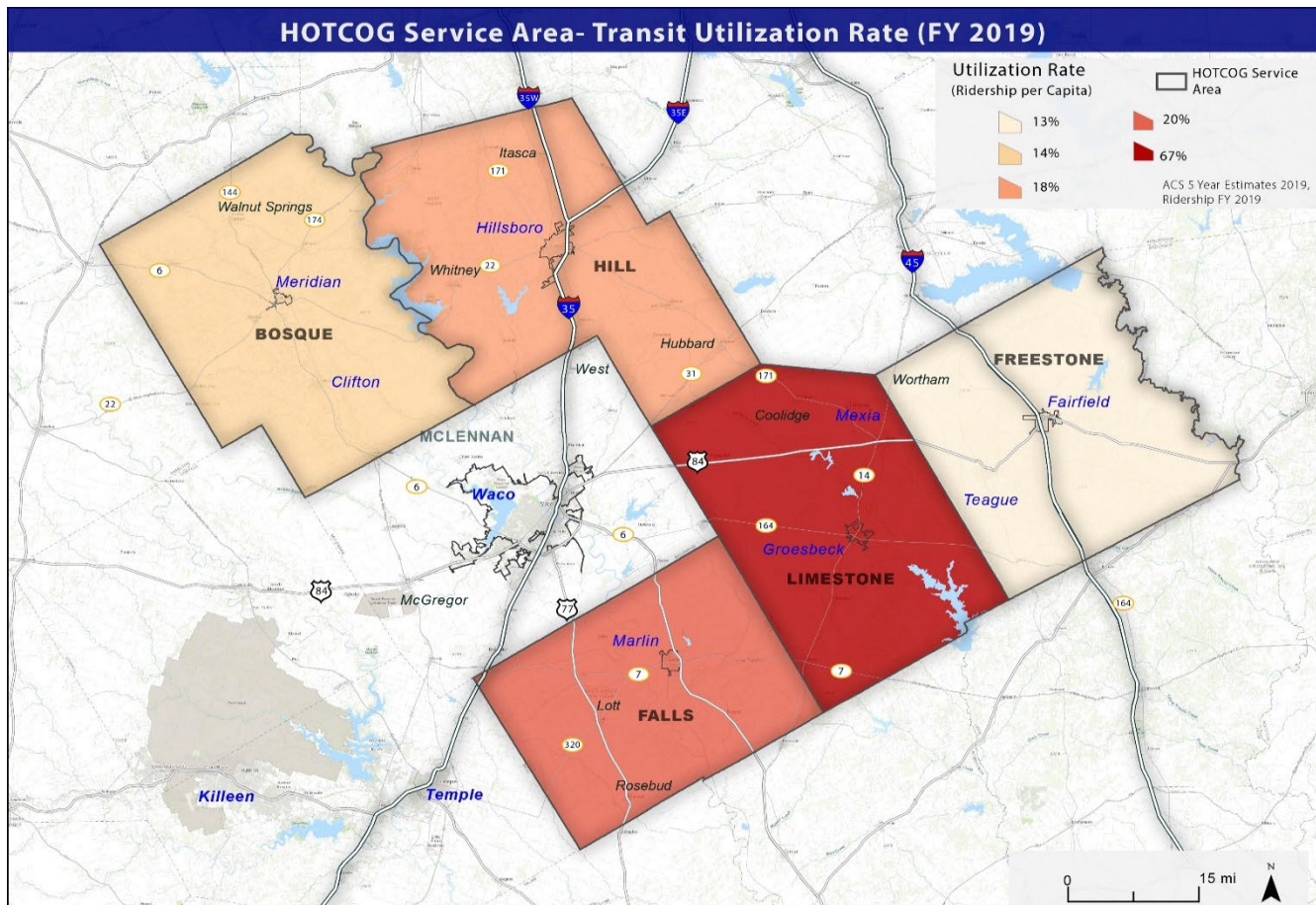
The second issue revolves around the very skewed ridership reported by HOTRTD in the five-county service area. Limestone County stands out in that in 2019 there was more ridership in Limestone County than all of the other counties combined (Figure 3-13). Ridership reports indicate that four counties are well below the norm when it comes to ridership per capita, while Limestone County was five to six times higher than any other county (Table 3-8). The utilization rate of the service varies significantly by county. Limestone County is the only county to exceed the state average of 40 percent ridership per capita.

This issue is a focal point for the gap analysis. Limestone County is similar to each of the other counties in population, density demographics, number of seniors, and other factors. If Limestone County can achieve this level of ridership, then the other counties should have very similar transit needs.

Based on the utilization rates in Table 3-8, each of the low performers indicates that for whatever reason, the need for service is probably about double the 2019 ridership. It also indicates that these counties could absorb considerably more riders within their existing service levels.

**Table 3-8 Transit Usage by County – Annual Ridership Per Capita**

County	Population	Number of In-Service Vehicles	Residents per Vehicle	FY 2019 Annual Ridership	Utilization Rate - Ridership per Capita
Bosque	18,212	3	6071	2500	14%
Falls	17,292	2	8646	3515	20%
Freestone	19,714	3	6571	2623	13%
Hill	35,689	4	8922	6377	18%
Limestone	23,417	3	7806	15617	67%

**Figure 3-13: HOTRTD Transit Usage by County (Ridership per Capita)**

## Stakeholder, Health and Human Service Agencies Engagement and Public Outreach Efforts

As part of this coordinated planning effort, a variety of public, community, and stakeholder outreach activities were held to ascertain the overall attitudes toward passenger transportation, mobility needs, and potential strategies to meet those needs in the HOTCOG region. Due to the current pandemic, a variety of web-based interactions were implemented as well as some in-person public meetings and stakeholder interviews using COVID protocols outlined by the Center for Disease Control. The major activities held included:

- Community Open House Meetings throughout the region
- Meeting with the Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (RTCC)
- Stakeholder Interviews – Transportation and Health and Human Service Agencies

The following section details the findings of each outreach effort including those in attendance, needs identified, and potential strategies discussed.

## Community Open House Meetings

Six open houses were held throughout the region as part of a Community Health Fair organized by HOTCOG in the region. The open houses that were held are listed in Table 3-9.

**Table 3-9: Open House Schedule**

Date	Time	Venue	County
August 3, 2021	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Coolidge Civic Center	Limestone
August 3, 2021	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Hubbard First Baptist Church	Hill
August 10, 2021	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Clifton Civic Center	Bosque
	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Meridian Senior Center	
August 19, 2021	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Streetman Community and Health Education Building	Freestone
	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Teague Community Center	

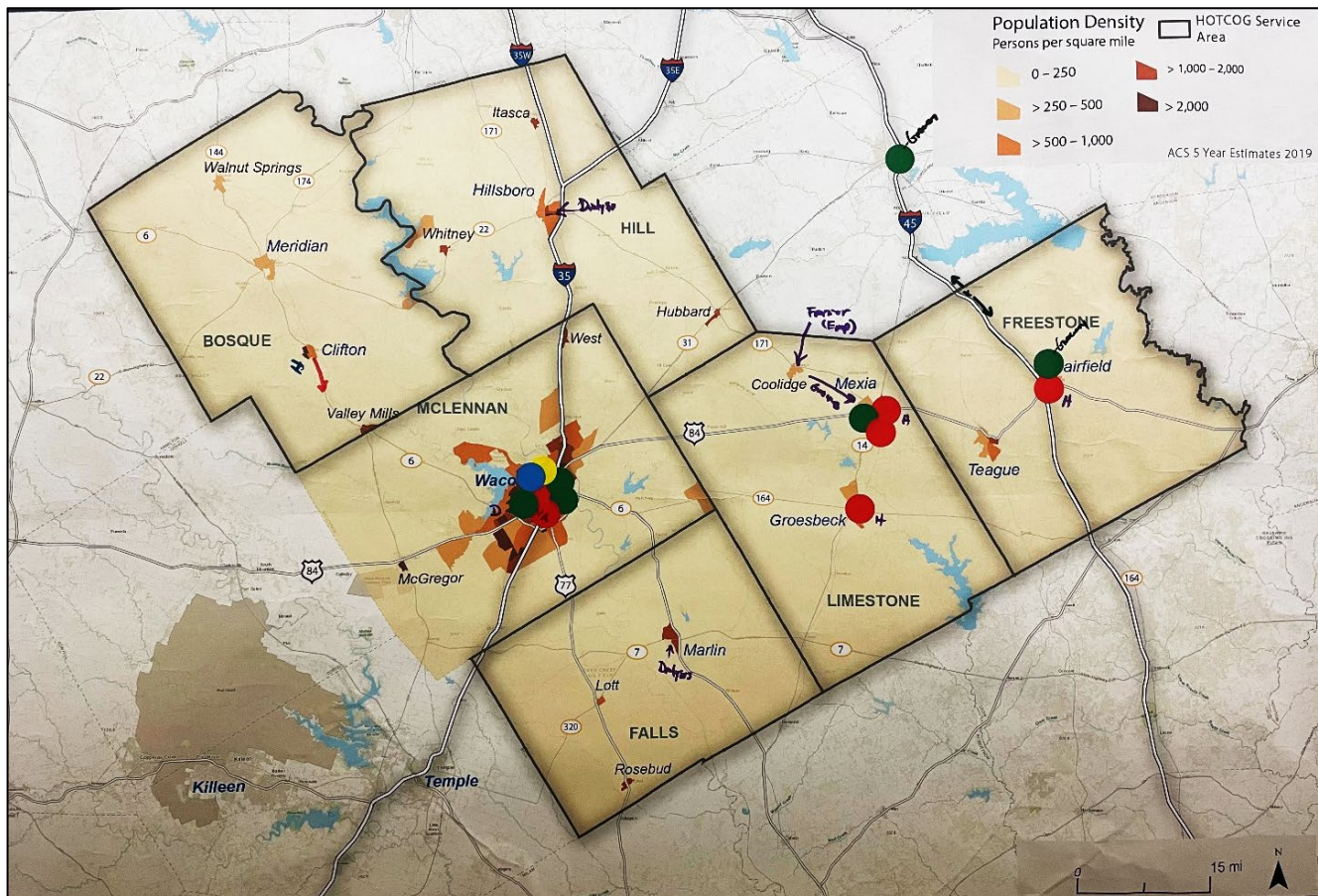
The open house meetings consisted of a table at the Community Health Fairs with a mapping exercise where participants could place stickers on desired destinations (Figure 3-14) and talk to the project team about attitudes toward public transit and regional mobility needs. It should be noted that HOTRTD does not have any marketing materials for this type of meeting such as how to ride guides, schedules, service area maps, informational brochures, or other handouts with numbers to call or information regarding their services.

Approximately 33 people were engaged directly by the transportation coordination team which included members of:

- General public
- Area Agency on Aging
- Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Community Development Department
- Regional emergency services
- Limestone Medical Center
- Goodall-Witcher Healthcare
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- United States Army Reserve
- Hubbard First Baptist Church
- Workforce Development

Participants gave a variety of information pertinent to this planning effort. On the following pages, the input is organized by theme. Several participants gave similar input therefore some topics and themes are consolidated.



**Figure 3-14: Participant Mapping of Important/Desired Destinations**

### Service Area and Locations

- The vast majority of trip needs are into Waco. Most participants noted that Waco is where their regional hospitals are as well as the best shopping opportunities.
- Dialysis centers in Hillsboro, Marlin, and Waco are major trip generators for HOTRTD.
- Many rural residents have to travel to the major town in a rural county to grocery shop at a Brookshires or go into larger cities for a Walmart or other retailers. For example, grocery shopping is available in places such as Mexia, Groesbeck, Marlin, Fairfield, West, Hillsboro, and Whitney.
- For communities on the border of McLennan County, it is often difficult for individuals to know which agency to call to schedule their trip. These communities include Valley Mills, Watt, Mart, Perry, Golinda, and Oglesby.
- Veterans have the need to travel outside of the region, particularly to Temple and Fort Worth.

- Participants in Hill and Bosque County noted that they have trip needs to the Fort Worth area. Rural residents in the northeastern portion of the region often go to Corsicana (out of the region) for their shopping.

## Service Parameters

- Many people that work second or third shift jobs or work in service industry jobs have limited mobility options and would like to see service hours expanded or potentially a vanpool program for major regional employers that have late shifts. Frazier and Frazier Industries was one employer noted for a potential vanpool program.
- Many public participants noted that weekend service for shopping or service industry jobs was desired.
- Some of the human service agencies and medical professionals that participated noted that people who use rural transit service to go to medical appointments arrive on time but often have to wait long periods of time (an hour or more) for their return trip.

## Coordination

- Improved coordination between HOTRTD, McLennan County Rural Transit, and Waco Transit is desired, particularly for inter-jurisdictional trips. Being able to schedule a rural and urban paratransit trip with one call was a strategy brought up, as well as through fares and transferring among the providers.
- It was noted that it can be difficult for rural transit customers using HOTRTD services to Waco who may take multiple trips once in Waco. For example, a person coming into Waco from Falls County for a medical appointment can have difficulty also picking up a prescription and shopping while in town. If customers can use a fixed route, it is less of a problem but having to schedule and coordinate multiple demand response trips is too difficult with both the rural demand response and the urban paratransit pick-up windows. The customer will also have to go through eligibility certification to use Waco Transit (WT) paratransit services. In this area, HOTRTD and Waco Transit can work together to identify those that need paratransit services and assist them in getting approved for WT's ADA paratransit program.

## Service Type

- Many participants showed enthusiasm at the prospect of zone based, same day dial-a-ride, or app based microtransit in the larger communities in the region.
- Some participants suggested that shopper shuttles be scheduled from rural areas into towns with a Walmart or Brookshire Bros. grocery store.

## Meeting with the RTCC

As part of this process, the KFH Group presented the finding from the demographic analysis and transportation resource inventory work to the Regional Transportation Coordination Committee for the region. The meeting took place on August 12, 2021, and had 17 attendees. Of those attendees the following organizations were represented:

- HOTCOG
- HOTRTD
- Falls County
- TxDOT
- MHMR
- Waco Transit/MCRTD
- Waco MPO
- Texas Workforce Solutions
- Bosque County Senior Center
- Head Start
- Bosque County
- Meals on Wheels
- Childcare Services Program
- McLennan County

The conversation regarding needs and strategies revolved around continuing to improve services in the region for those that need it most, in particular low income residents and seniors. The biggest issue that most RTCC members articulated is that there is a major marketing and information dissemination gap regarding public transit services in the region. Many human service clients are unaware of additional transportation options for them beyond a personal automobile and many that are aware that HOTRTD and McLennan County Rural Transit exist are not sure how to use their service. The consensus was that the transit agencies in the region need to engage the public more through community events and other marketing efforts to ensure that the public is aware of their services.

## Transportation and Health and Human Service Interviews

As part of this outreach process, RTCC members gave input on regional transportation needs in individual interviews. Three interviews were conducted with HOTRTD, Waco and McLennan County Rural Transit, and the Director of the Health and Human Services Department.

### HOTRTD Interview

The HOTRTD interview included the Director of the Transportation Program and the Business Development Manager for HOTRTD. The interview lasted for one hour and revolved around three major topics:

**Local Funding:** HOTRTD receives no direct local support for the counties or municipalities in the region. The lack of local support makes it increasingly difficult to expand services. Expansion of local services such as microtransit in a larger town or a shopper shuttle would likely need support from the local municipality or a public/private partnership. HOTRTD feels that it is meeting the regional demand for rural residents but believes that some of the other service designs outlined in the recently completed Comprehensive Operational Analysis would be of benefit to the transportation program and local residents. It was also noted that HOTRTD gets virtually no human service transportation funding. They



do not participate in Medicaid transportation nor do they have any agreements with the Area Agency on Aging or workforce agencies to supply trips for human service clients.

**Marketing:** HOTRTD recognizes that they need to improve on communicating with the community. The transportation program participates in events organized by HOTCOG but they need more and better dissemination of information to the public. Potential strategies discussed were how-to-ride guides, informational brochures, an improved website with scheduling capability, and travel training particularly for potential elderly customers in the region. A branding effort is also seen as a viable way to increase visibility.

**Service Types:** HOTRTD is interested in potential new services including scheduled intercounty service, on-demand service, and fixed schedule service. Shopper shuttles partnering with local grocers were not only seen as a potential way to expand service but also to leverage new funding sources.

## Health and Human Services Interview

An interview was conducted with the director of the HOTCOG Health and Human Services Department. Several regional programs fall under the Health and Human Services Department including regional transportation, Area Agency on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Center, 2-1-1, and the Community Health Department. The discussion took about an hour and a half and focused largely on the history of the transportation program at HOTCOG. Several other topics were discussed and are listed below.

- **Consolidation** of the rural transit programs in the region would be a benefit to transit customers in McLennan County and the five counties served by HOTRTD. Additionally, full consolidation of all transit programs, urban and rural, under a regional transit authority was stated by one person as being the best option for transit customers. This is not seen as something that is politically feasible at this time and may not be the best option for customers.
- **Reorganization** of the transportation program at the COG would be appropriate. Currently, the transportation program is under Health and Human Services but it might make more sense for the program to be under the Regional Services Department.
- **Coordination** between HOTRTD and McLennan County Rural Transit/Waco Transit is an on-going process and all entities are engaged in operational coordination discussions at this time. For example, most of the HOTRTD customers are low income and/or elderly and it can be difficult for them to schedule multiple trips in the same day using multiple services. It is widely known that many rural residents of McLennan County call HOTRTD to schedule trips as do residents in the HOTRTD service area call Waco Transit or McLennan County Rural Transit.
- **New Service Types** were discussed. On-demand services for the larger communities was an idea that was met with significant excitement. Additionally scheduled services, particularly for intercounty trips was seen as a way to improve productivity.

## Waco Transit/McLennan County Rural Transit Interview

An hour-long interview was conducted with the current Director of Waco Transit. The interview focused almost entirely on how Waco Transit/McLennan County Rural Transit District and HOTRTD could improve coordination and inter-jurisdictional services. The director was also able to explain all of the services provided by the program including Medicaid transportation which operates throughout the HOTCOG region and beyond to places like Temple and Fort Worth and the McLennan County Rural Transit services which also operates throughout the HOTCOG service area for trips originating in McLennan County. Waco Transit additionally operates a regional fixed route that connects Marlin to Waco. Coordination topics discussed include:

- **Reducing Duplication with HOTRTD:** A large part of HOTRTD service is bringing rural residents into Waco. It has been noticed that rural trips coming into Waco from McLennan County and rural trips coming into Waco from the surrounding counties are often going to the same or similar places at the same time. Coordinating with HOTRTD particularly on any scheduled service can reduce this duplication.
- **Coordination with HOTRTD:** It was noted that the County Commissioners would like to see these two agencies work together to coordinate services. The director mention that a token or transfer system could help people transfer from one system to another seamlessly. For HOTCOG customers needing to make multiple stops in Waco, the director stated that Waco Transit is amenable to strategies to schedule these trips on paratransit and would work to ensure that the proper rural residents could become eligible for paratransit. Numerous local and regional stakeholders have a vital role in the coordinated transportation planning process, so a variety of public and community outreach activities were held to ascertain the overall attitudes towards passenger transportation, mobility needs, and potential strategies to meet those needs in the HOTCOG region.

## Health and Human Service Agencies

There are over one-hundred health and human service agencies in the five county service area. These are documented in Appendix A. Many of the larger agencies have been actively engaged in this effort and the study team made contact with many others through the public meeting process. The focus of this effort is to document the active participants and those organizations with special needs.

1. Dialysis clinics – HOTRTD is in regular contact with each clinic in the region as well as those in Corsicana and Waco.
2. Medical centers – HOTRTD works closely with major facilities in Waco and Temple, as well as all local facilities in the five counties.
3. Aging services – All aging services are coordinated and in part funded by HOTCOG. Meals on Wheels is closely coordinated with all three transit systems.

4. Community health – Coordinated through HOTCOG.
5. Workforce Board – The six county Workforce Board is on the Advisory Committee and has been an active participant in coordinating services with Waco Transit and HOTCOG.
6. MHMR client needs are coordinated with HOTRTD.

## Gap Analysis

By coupling the demographic analysis, inventory of current services, and outreach efforts, service gaps and unmet needs are revealed. Table 3-3 summarizes these service gaps and unmet needs by:

- Geographic Location
- Time Related
- Population and Ridership
- Transportation Service Type
- Marketing and Outreach
- Technology
- Funding
- Coordination of Services

**Table 3-3: Gap Analysis and Need Assessment Summary**



### *Gaps and Needs:* Geographic Location

#### **Inter-Regional Services**

Most of the out of area needs continue to be in Waco – employment, medical, dialysis, shopping. Temple draws some residents of Falls County and there is a VA Hospital that is a major destination. Hill and Bosque Counties have a need to travel to Ft. Worth for major medical and other specialized needs.

Freestone County residents have travel needs to Corsicana for a variety of needs.

#### **Intra-County Service**

Improved in-county and in-town services were stated numerous times.



### *Gaps and Needs:* Time Related

Service industry workers and people who work second and third shift jobs have mobility needs outside hours public transit operates in the region.



### *Gaps and Needs:* **Population and Ridership**

All of the counties with the exception of Limestone County have very low ridership, while Limestone has very high ridership.

This indicates that transit dependent population needs are not being met in Bosque, Falls, Freestone and Hill Counties. It is estimated that these counties are meeting about one-half of the area needs.



### *Gaps and Needs:* **Transportation Service Type**

There is a need to explore the use of mobility on-demand and microtransit services in the larger towns and cities in the region.

Guidance is needed with the steps and the process for implementing on-demand services in the region.

There is a need to assess current routes and to determine if modifications are needed to address service needs.

There is an opportunity to implement a vanpool pilot project that would help serve workers with shifts or locations not served by public transportation. Minivans have proven effective in this role.

Fixed schedule rural service has potential in remote rural areas.



### *Gaps and Needs:* **Marketing and Outreach**

Branding of the service should be a first step in implementing a marketing program. A system name and color scheme are, like any other business an essential element to marketing the service – a prudent business consideration.

There is a need for expanded outreach/marketing of transportation services and options for human service agency staff and the people they serve, and who may be unaware of the transportation services available to them.

Many residents of the region are unaware of the transportation services available to them, and increased marketing and education are needed. Specific events and marketing efforts should be planned to raise awareness of mobility options.

There is an opportunity for improved agency coordination on a variety of efforts, including travel training that will assist customers in using existing transit services.

There is a need to address the regional one-call center that has been discussed but never implemented through previous planning efforts.





### *Gaps and Needs:* **Technology**

Technology can be used more extensively to communicate options for demand response customers and to provide them with real-time arrival information.

Improved service and technology integration is needed between transportation providers, and that would allow expanded use of mobile applications across agencies and be a component of regional fare integration.



### *Gaps and Needs:* **Funding**

Local funding support is needed to increase transportation services in the region. This could include private sector funding.

There can be greater use of FTA Section 5310 grant program funds administered by TxDOT to expand service for seniors and persons with disabilities in the region.



### *Gaps and Needs:* **Coordination of Services**

Currently, there are two rural transit districts operating in the HOTCOG region. This duplication of services takes funds away from the rural areas. HOTRTD should operate NEMT and rural public transit in their region and MCRTD should operate solely in their region.

Service within Waco can be a problem for rural residents who may need ADA paratransit or fixed route bus services. WT and HOTRTD should work together to register those that need ADA paratransit and help train those that can use fixed route.

## Section 4:

# Planning for Comprehensive Services

### Introduction

Heart of Texas Council of Governments, representing five rural counties has been operating human service transportation since the mid-1970s. It has been operating public transit since the start of the rural transit program in the early 1980s, through its Heart of Texas Rural Transit District (HOTRTD). Without question, HOTCOG and HOTRTD have demonstrated, time and again, their capacity to not only plan comprehensively, but to also provide comprehensive transit service.

### Comprehensive Planning

As the region's council of governments, HOTCOG conducts a wide range of activities that require a comprehensive planning effort. As stated above, HOTCOG has been operating transit since the 1970s when they operated a coordinated system that included: aging programs, persons with disabilities, Medicaid transportation and a variety of other programs.

This five year plan includes the wide variety of human services managed by HOTCOG, including, but not limited to: Aging programs; Disability Services and Workforce. These programs and the transportation aspects are all planned through HOTCOG and HOTRTD as part of their mission. In addition, HOTRTD works closely with the state MHMR to ensure transportation for their clients. HOTRTD coordinates and provides connections for veterans to the VA hospital in Temple. There is no Section 5310 funding in the service area.

The final piece of the puzzle is the coordination with non-emergency Medicaid transportation (NEMT). This activity is recommended in a subsequent section. NEMT has far more funding and transportation need than all of the other programs combined. Further NEMT funds are treated as local match for rural areas, increasing their value to a rural transit system.

Currently, Waco Transit is serving the HOTRTD service area and has vowed to continue. The matching funds from the rural counties benefit rural McLennan County and not the counties served. It is recommended that HOTRTD provide this service in their five counties and in rural McLennan County to ensure better coordination with human services, and also to keep the NEMT funds local.

## Summary

HOTCOG conducts much of the planning for comprehensive services in house, as part of their overall responsibility for most of the programs engaged in transportation. In addition, HOTRTD works closely with the workforce board and is initiating service, again, with NEMT brokers as appropriate. HOTCOG and HOTRTD will continue to work closely with human service and healthcare providers.

## Section 5:

# Integrated Planning Process

## Introduction

The five rural counties that comprise the HOTCOG study area have had little in the way of planning beyond the coordinated planning process, until recently. The planning that was conducted was usually in-house at HOTCOG. The biggest issue was the splintering of the service with McLennan County separating from HOTRTD. These plans are reviewed as follows.

## Planning Activities

The recent transit planning activities conducted in the HOTCOG region include:

1. **The 2017 Coordinated Plan for HOTCOG** – When it was a six county system focused primarily on Waco. Unfortunately, when McLennan County left the transit system to form their own system through Waco Transit System (WTS), the plan was rendered obsolete for the purposes of the five county rural area. Section 6 – reviews the pertinent goals. Section 8 reviews progress toward projects. Many of these goals and projects in the rural area pertained to coordinating or consolidating parts of the service with WTS. Those projects, for reasons stated above, are no longer feasible (if they ever were). Where appropriate, goals and projects were carried forward.

This planning process included a variety of human service agencies including Aging services, MHMR, Workforce and other local organizations and governments. WTS led the effort.

2. **HOTRTD Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)** – This analysis conducted for HOTRTD reviewed all aspects of the service, including improving efficiency and effectiveness, internal organization changes as well as a full range of activities that HOTRTD can use to improve service. This COA was developed with the understanding that it will be coordinated with the 2022 HOTCOG Coordinated Transportation Plan. The COA is referenced in Sections 8 – Strategies for the Future and Section 9 Performance Measures.

Overall, planning has been minimal in the region, common in rural areas. Future opportunities to improve coordination and cooperation will include the McLennan County/Waco Coordinated Plan.



Beyond the borders of the service area:

**3. The McLennan County Transit Need Study, 2018** – This study focused on McLennan County and then mostly Waco Transit System (WTS). There were a number of strategies focused at least tangentially on rural service (Mostly McLennan County). The rural recommendations included a number of the strategies developed in the 2017 plan, which have been rejected in this study (discussed in detail in Section 8 of this plan):

- Consolidate fleets
- Centralize dispatch
- Expand Service from Falls County (in HOTCOGs service area)
- Rural to urban transfer – this strategy is supported in this plan

## Section 6:

# HOTCOG Coordination Goals and Objectives

## Introduction

One of elements of the updated five-year regionally coordinated transportation plan is the development of clearly articulated goals for meeting unmet needs, expanding mobility, and improving the efficiency of service delivery in the region – and objectives for achieving these goals.

These goals and objectives were fully developed through a deliberative process actively involving the advisory committee and other key stakeholders. This section presents the goals and objectives designed to help guide the coordinated transportation planning process. It begins with a review of 2017 goals, the overarching goal is introduced next, followed by the 2022 Coordination Goals and Objectives.



## Review of 2017 Goals

### 2017 Goal No. 1 – Regional Approach

Encourage coordination and collaboration by seeking innovative models in planning and delivery of transportation services.

**Objective A:** Ensure that the public transportation network is planned, designed, constructed, and operated in a coordinated, cost-effective, and innovative manner.

**Objective B:** Ensure that regional transportation planning and investments are coordinated with future land uses and economic development initiatives.

**Objective C:** Plan and implement a public transit network, in coordination with planning for other transportation modes, that encourages the creation of less auto dependent modes of development.

**Objective D:** Identify transportation investments requiring additional study.

**Objective E:** Identify and utilize marketing strategies for public transit to ensure public awareness regarding available transportation choices.

**Status:** Currently this goal has not been met. First, a seamless regional network is not in place as McLennan County left the coordinated system. Second, after leaving HOTRTD, there was duplication of services in the region as MCRTD through Waco Transit, operates in HOTRTD's service area.

## 2017 Goal No. 2 – Effective Partnerships

Maximize connectivity and use of resources between various transportation agencies, public service agencies, and stakeholders within and adjacent to the Heart of Texas Region.

**Objective A:** Maximize communication between transportation providers and other public transportation stakeholders.

**Objective B:** To the extent permissible by federal and state law, maximize and leverage the use of available resources from existing service providers, stakeholders, municipal and county governments, and public service agencies to create a cost-effective and affordable public transportation network.

**Objective C:** Maintain and sustain the regional vehicle maintenance and group procurement program.

**Objective D:** Coordinate with local emergency management agencies and first responders to ensure the continued safety and security of the users of public transportation.

**Status:** Partially achieved due to coordination of maintenance services. As stated in Goal 1 most of these objectives have not been achieved.

## 2017 Goal No. 3 – System Efficiency

Expand the public transit network utilizing both fixed route and demand response services, maximize network efficiency through the use of intelligent transportation systems and travel demand management strategies.

**Objective A:** Identify and prioritize unmet needs and future transportation demands; expand the public transportation network to address these needs as funds and resources become available.

**Objective B:** Maximize network efficiency through the use of intelligent transportation systems and travel demand management strategies.

**Objective C:** Maximize the cost-effectiveness of public transportation investments.

**Objective D:** Increase vehicle occupancy rates.

**Objective E:** Increase service frequency.

**Status:** Most of this goal relates to urban services. Intelligent transportation systems should be utilized.

## 2017 Goal No. 4 – Environmental Quality

Utilize fuel, vehicle systems, and operating policies to reduce emissions; eliminate duplication of services.

**Objective A:** Utilize fuel, vehicle systems, and operating practices to reduce emissions.

**Objective B:** Eliminate the duplication of services.

**Objective C:** Coordinate with the Heart of Texas Air Quality Advisory Committee to promote the environmental and public health benefits of public transportation.

**Status:** HOTRTD operates gasoline engine vehicles at this time.

## 2017 Goal No. 5 – Network Safety and Security

Enhancement of safety and security measures that impact the public transportation network.

**Objective A:** Continue to develop and implement safety enhancements to the existing and future public transportation systems.

**Objective B:** Coordinated with local agencies to ensure contingency plans for energy shortages, natural or human-made disasters, and other emergencies are in place to decrease a negative impact on the transportation network.

**Status:** This has not been accomplished in rural areas.

## Overarching Goal

For each of our projects we have one overarching goal which we believe is shared by all of our clients:

*Help provide for more trips for more people while providing **cost effective, high quality, and safe transportation for our community.***



## Coordination Project Goals and Objectives

These are the study goals that directed the planning effort.

### Goal No. 1: Improve the effectiveness of the advisory committee

This goal seeks to strengthen the advisory process through changes to the advisory committee. Currently the advisory process requires a quorum of members (ten are required) in order to function. Unfortunately, a quorum of ten members is a very high bar when one considers that some members do not come to meetings and other member slots may be vacant.

Requirements for an advisory committee have been relaxed by TxDOT. The objective is to generate dialogue and to advise HOTCOG. Rigid by-laws are not needed or desired.

#### Objectives

- a. Revise the by-laws to ensure a properly functioning committee. TxDOT does not require any formal process other than to assure that all stakeholders are heard. Bylaws should be simple and should facilitate and encourage dialogue.
- b. Implement efforts to improve attendance at advisory committee meetings:
  - i. Ensure each meeting is meaningful.
  - ii. Members will be organizations and advocates rather than individual people.
  - iii. No quorum will be needed.
  - iv. Video link and designated backup for representatives.

### Goal No. 2: Continue to Identify unmet needs in the region

Outreach and a review of demographics and land uses tell us the overall need. When this is compared to the existing services – gap analysis – the unmet needs come out. This is an ongoing process to ensure that needs are examined more than once every five years.

#### Objectives

- a. Regularly conduct extensive outreach among stakeholders and the public using surveys and meetings.
- b. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing transportation services and resources annually.

- c. Review and analyze demographics and land use data for changes and potential changes to the service area.
- d. Conduct annual gap analysis to be able to rapidly respond to a need:
  - i. Identify specific public need
  - ii. Identify transit program needs

## Goal No. 3: Deploy strategies to improve service, coordination and generate higher ridership

This critical goal seeks to ensure that the most appropriate services are deployed using the right tools for the assignment. Strategies include addressing unmet needs, improving service performance and seeking coordination opportunities.

### Objectives

- a. Develop strategies to serve the unmet needs:
  - i. Introduce new service designs and strategies to serve the existing riders as well as those with unmet needs.
  - ii. Address regional service issues – Waco/Temple.
  - iii. Address local service issues.
- b. Develop strategies to improve transportation performance and efficiency of service delivery:
  - i. Continue to improve internal operations:
    - 1. Ensure internal staffing to meet the needs
    - 2. Continue to ensure low vehicle operator turnover
  - ii. Improve service for HOTCOG and other local human service and health care transportation services through coordinated training and maintenance.
  - iii. Invest in the latest technologies as needed and appropriate.
  - iv. Seek improvements in operating efficiencies as appropriate.
- c. Coordinate services by reducing siloed services:
  - i. Seek economies of scale. Transit services can virtually always gain through economies of scale.
  - ii. Set guidelines for public transit system service areas:
    - 1. Services initiated in rural areas should be operated through the rural transit system.
    - 2. Services initiated in the urban area should be operated by the urban system.
  - iii. Develop strategies to improve coordination and reduce costs:
    - 1. NEMT service should be coordinated with each public transit system.
    - 2. Continue to coordinate with Veterans Transportation services.

## Goal No. 4: Sustainability and Growth

Sustainability is one of the key elements of success. Sustainability includes ensuring that services are operating efficiently (doing things right) and effectively (doing the right things). Those aspects of sustainability are addressed in Goal 3 above. Sustainability requires secure and steady funding sources which allow for greater independence to operate the most appropriate services and levels of services. Sustainability also addresses growth and the need to sustain growth as appropriate.

### Objectives

- a. Develop partnerships and sponsorships with private and public sectors.
  - i. There are a number of sponsorship and partnership opportunities
  - ii. Available for all sized businesses
- b. Secure additional vehicles to meet the needs, as necessary.
- c. Secure Section 5310 funds to enhance services for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- d. Seek COVID and other funding for expanded service.
- e. Now is the time to plan. HOTCOG should have grant applications ready to go when the plan is complete.

## Section 7:

# Sustainability and Implementation Planning: Strategies

## Introduction

This section reviews the region's ability to sustain its coordinated planning efforts. At the same time, it examines HOTCOG's efforts to implement the services in the region.

These activities focus on the process of sustaining the planning effort which had become unsustainable.

## Organizational Infrastructure - Capacity

Heart of Texas Council of Governments, representing five rural counties, has been operating human service transportation since the mid-1970s. It has been operating public transit since the start of the rural transit program in the early 1980s. Without question, HOTCOG has demonstrated time and again its capacity to sustain planning efforts and to implement transit programs.

## Re-Organize Advisory Committee

HOTCOG's advisory committee has proven to be ineffective. This has been a historical problem with by-laws going back to the first coordinated plan in 2006-2007. HOTCOG has the ability to change these by-laws to make them compatible with the current environment. The objective is to engage in meaningful dialogue with the community.

- The committee as currently structured, is mired in excessive by-laws and restrictions
  - The requirement for a quorum are virtually impossible to meet and in fact, haven't been met in years.
  - As a result, nothing gets done through the committee.
- TxDOT is very flexible – Their interest is in making sure all appropriate parties have a chance for outreach.

## Strategy: Reform the Advisory Committee

The study team submitted a less restrictive set of by-laws for HOTCOG to consider. These by-laws include the following critical elements:



- A less formal structure with greater flexibility.
- Entities based or having a stake in the region can be eligible to vote. This would include representatives of organizations: persons with disabilities, seniors, children, persons with low incomes, veterans and other members of the public.
- Non-voting members can include organizations outside the service area including Waco MPO and transit systems in Waco and McLennan County.
- Eliminate quorum requirements – an incentive to show up at the meeting knowing a vote will be taken.
- Meet quarterly and more frequently if there is an important issue.

The committee should consider these changes in order to move forward with a number of future changes.

## Urban/Rural Mobility Manager

The 2017 Coordinated plan calls for an Urban Mobility Manager. This strategy takes that a step further by adding the rural area to the mobility management functions. An excellent model of mobility management coordination is found at CARTS and Capital Metro in Austin and the surrounding counties.

A recent national research project conducted through the Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences<sup>1</sup> highlighted this mobility management collaboration. This is summarized in this section, the detailed case study is presented in Appendix B.

There are two potential alternatives to support the mobility manager position, the first is the all-inclusive model where all three transit entities could form a mobility manager. The second would have HOTCOG form its own mobility manager to support the five-county rural service area.

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<sup>1</sup> Transit Cooperative Research Program - TCRP Report No. 223 *Guidebook for Communities to Improve Transportation to Health Care*.

## Capital Area Office of Mobility Management

Two transit agencies in central Texas—the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) and the Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS)—partnered to develop a regional mobility manager charged with expanding transit for those in need in the nine-county Capital Region surrounding Austin. The resulting Office of Mobility Management (OMM) has coordinated funding and services with numerous health care providers in:

- Capital Metro’s service area of Austin and some close in suburbs.
- Rural parts of nine counties surrounding Austin; six of those counties are entirely rural.

Additionally, the OMM helped build a number of transportation services in the geographic area between the two transit agencies' service areas that previously had no service (including Georgetown).

The coordinated efforts of Capital Metro, an urban transit agency, and CARTS a rural transit agency, now provide access to almost 30 community partners through the OMM, which is dedicated to meeting the transportation needs of seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and others in need. This collaborative effort has increased fixed route and specialized transportation, improving access to health care through the expansion of public transit service in formerly under and unserved areas.

### Funding options can include:

- Transit system funding
- Infrastructure funding
- Grant funding for a mobility manager
- Securing sponsor funding (health care providers, big box and grocery retailers, and others)
- Local government
- Any number of combinations

### **Strategy: All-Inclusive Mobility Management**

Mobility management among the three local transit systems is potentially a valuable resource. In the example above, the whole is clearly greater than the sum of its parts. The key will be to develop by-laws and procedures that ensure each entity is getting its fair share. Staffing could include existing staff from each entity splitting responsibilities or all can contribute. The mobility manager in Waco is already using Section 5310 funds to support a mobility manager position. This could be supplemented by HOTRTD applying for Section 5310 funds to support the rural portion of the mobility manager.

### **Alternative Strategy: Conduct Mobility Management Functions in Five Counties**

A second mobility management alternative would be for HOTCOG to form its own mobility management function, either with existing staff, through the Regional Planning Organization (RPO), or if grant funding is secured, a full or part-time mobility manager position. If this approach is used, HOTRTD should apply for Section 5310 funding as soon as possible.

## Section 8:

# Strategies for the Future

### Introduction

This section presents a wide range of organizational, operational, financial/sustainable, and coordination strategies to move the HOTCOG region forward. The Regional Transportation Coordination Committee (RTCC), serving as the project advisory committee, selected the most appropriate strategies for inclusion in this plan. We will first set the stage for the introduction of strategies by reviewing previous strategies and progress toward the goals. The focus will be on the following:

- Progress toward projects from the previous plan
- Organizational and coordination strategies
- Operating strategies for the future
- Sustainability and financial strategies
- Implementation activities

### Coordination Doesn't Just Happen

Coordination does not simply happen because it may be a good idea. Coordination requires:

- Trust between the coordinating entities
- Leadership
- An appropriate political environment
- A business arrangement/plan that works for all

When these requirements are aligned, coordination can happen. Without trust, however, coordination may be minimal.



### 2017 Projects – A Review

There were 27 projects, ten of which were related to the HOTCOG study area. The urban oriented projects in the 2017 plan were not addressed as the study area has changed to rural only. Projects identified within this section are not necessarily listed in order of priority.



## **2017 PROJECT 1: Plan for and Sustain the Coordination Planning Process**

Nothing had been done to strengthen the coordination planning process and in fact, there is duplication of service in the rural areas – a waste of precious resources. Further, McLennan County has left the study area and has developed its own coordinated plan. HOTCOG now must redouble efforts to make the Advisory Committee functional.

## **2017 PROJECT 2: Vehicle Maintenance Program**

HOTCOG and Waco Transit (WTS) have re-instituted the coordinated maintenance program where WTS maintains HOTRTD vehicles. HOTRTD is satisfied with this arrangement.

## **2017 PROJECT 3: Regional Consolidation of Rolling-Stock**

This project calls for the consolidation of fleets. This project has not been implemented as it reduces the independence of HOTRTD and the five counties. While the coordination of maintenance is a good idea, coordinated vehicle procurements can be implemented if HOTRTD can procure vehicles of their choice.

## **2017 PROJECT 4: Sustain the Rural Community-to-Waco Connectivity**

Commuter service has merit in various areas; however, this should be the domain of the transit district that serves the round trips of the origin community. Each transit system should serve all-round trips originating in their service area. Any revenue or NEMT matching funds derived from these trips should go to the system serving the origin city.

## **2017 PROJECT 5: Design Service Routes Serving Multiple Counties**

HOTRTD will be designing fixed schedule routes (service routes is a misnomer), where all runs are on set schedules, while still allowing for door-to-door service. These routes will be published in advance and promoted system-wide.

## **2017 PROJECT 6: Centralized Dispatching and Scheduling for Regional Trips**

The HOTCOG study area and all regional trips are the domain of HOTRTD. HOTRTD currently dispatches and schedules all of these trips. In the case of the Heart of Texas Region, the consultants recommend that these regional trips including those of MCRTD be centralized at HOTRTD. However, procurement of compatible technology should be considered.

## 2017 PROJECT 11: Integrated Sustainability Planning

Sustainability planning is best accomplished by each individual system. The current planning structure includes sustainability. HOTRTD should embark on its own planning efforts.

## 2017 PROJECT 12: Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities– HOTCOG and The McLennan County Rural Transit Districts –Purchase of Service

Since this plan was written, HOTRTD has moved away from contracting/purchase of service and consolidated service in-house. This was addressed in the recent Comprehensive Operations Analysis and is supported by the consultants. This goal should NOT be met.

## 2017 PROJECT 16: GPS Tracking - Remote Monitoring of Public Vehicles

This has not been done in rural areas, however, HOTRTD could benefit from an overall technology assessment to determine the most appropriate technologies for rural areas.

## 2017 PROJECT 17: Mobility Management Program

It is possible to have a joint mobility management program if HOTRTD has a role as a full partner.

# Introducing the Strategies for the Future




The RTCC has reviewed the development of alternative strategies and in a January meeting, agreed on the following strategies for the future. These strategies are summarized in Table 8-1.

1. Organizational and Coordination Strategies
2. Operating Strategies for the Future
3. Sustainability and Financial Strategies

## Setting Priorities

All of the strategies are important and therefore the priorities are based on which activities need to be conducted first and which should be conducted later. Following the strategies is the section - Priorities: Implementation Activities. It is here that the priorities are set.

**Table 8-1: A Summary of Strategies by Categories**

Categories	Strategies	Application
 <b>Organizational and Coordination Strategies</b>	1. Designate the service area boundaries for each public transit provider serving Medicaid transportation	a) HOTRTD should operate in six counties - open service area
	2. Re-organize Advisory Committee	a) Reform the Advisory Committee
	3. Urban/rural mobility manager	a) All-inclusive mobility management (first option – if feasible) b) Conduct mobility management functions in five counties
 <b>Operating Strategies for the Future</b>	1. In-town on-demand service - microtransit	a) Microtransit in the larger cities b) Microtransit in smaller communities
	2. Fixed schedule service	a) Fixed schedule rural service
	3. Intercounty service	a) Scheduled intercounty service b) Vanpools
 <b>Sustainability and Financial Strategies</b>	1. Securing additional federal funding	a) Aggressively seeking funding for new and innovative projects b) Securing NEMT funds
	2. Securing local funding	a) Initiate a private sector sponsorship program b) Work with human service and healthcare organizations c) Allocating service

## Organizational and Coordination Strategies

Organizational issues revolve around operational coordination which continues to be elusive in the study area. The analysis shows that in the five-county service area, HOTRTD operates 5311 rural service.

1. In particular HOTRTD operates service between Falls County/Marlin and Waco. At the same time, the McLennan County Rural Transit District (MCRTD) also operates commuter service in the HOTRTD service area from Marlin to Waco. These services are not coordinated at this time.
2. The second coordination issue identified is Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) brokerages. NEMT has by far the highest level of funding for human service or health access transportation. Since the last study NEMT brokerages have become uncoordinated with multiple transportation brokers in each service area. This causes significant duplication and often a “race to the bottom” as the requirements for safety and operation of the service is minimal and well below the standards set by public transit.
3. At the same time, continue coordinating maintenance – perhaps share training.
4. Coordinated Planning Committee – The RTCC should be flexible with by-laws conducive to moving forward.
5. Mobility Management – Called for in the previous coordinated plan, there are a number of models, coordinated and not coordinated.

## Organizational and Coordination – Strategies

The following strategies look at coordination and organizational change.

### 1.1 Designate the Service Area Boundaries for Each Public Transit Provider Serving Medicaid Transportation

Normally, the rural transit district in the area in question provides this service for the brokers (if desired). Currently, MCRTD operates NEMT service in the HOTRTD service area. Again, this is highly unusual and the antithesis of coordination. The system in the originating community has precedence over any other rural or urban system.

Medicaid funds can be used as a local match for FTA funds in rural areas only. As a result, the funds generated by MCRTD/WT through NEMT in HOTRTD’s service area is a local match lost to the area it is generated from and is only used as a match for rural McLennan County.

With limited rural funding available, coordination is an imperative and a crucial element of effective rural service. This duplication of service is a significant threat to HOTRTD’s future growth. Waco Transit and McLennan County Rural Transit have stated their intention of continuing to operate in HOTRTD’s service area.



## Each Transit Provider to Serve their Own Service Area

This is the norm in transit – rural transit districts should not be operating in the region of another without permission. Under this strategy, HOTRTD would serve all trips with an origin in the HOTRTD service area, including return trips back to HOTRTD’s service area. MCRTD and WTS would not operate service in HOTRTD’s five-county service area and inform their brokers of this. Unfortunately, as stated above, these systems have stated their intention to continue to duplicate HOTRTD service.

Under this strategy, HOTRTD would register with the brokers and provide NEMT transportation for trips originating in the five counties. MCRTD and WTS would handle NEMT in McLennan County.

### Strategy 1.1.1 – Status Quo Modified – Open Service Area

Unfortunately, the coordination strategy to have each operator serve persons with initial trip origins in their service area, was rejected by MCRTD/WTS.

The study committee recommended this strategy in light of WTS’s position. Under this strategy, if MCRTD/WTS maintains its NEMT operating status in HOTRTD’s region, then HOTRTD, once eligible to provide NEMT service should serve the entire six-county region as well, including the City of Waco (with non-rural vehicles). This would protect HOTRTD’s potential share of NEMT funds for matching purposes.

### Strategy 1.1.2 – Coordinate Schedules – Falls County

As with NEMT service, MCRTD and Waco Transit operates service from Falls County to Waco. This route is also in HOTRTD’s service area and is a duplication of service provided by HOTRTD. However, if WTS continues to operate in HOTRTD’s service area, they can still coordinate schedules to ensure that each service is maximized. This should include:

1. Revise each system’s schedules to eliminate duplication and boost the options to customers.
2. Publish online and on buses the coordinated schedules and the fares, ensuring riders that they can take either or both services.

## 1.2 Re-Organize Advisory Committee

HOTCOG’s Advisory Committee has proven to be ineffective. This has been a historical problem with by-laws going back to the first coordinated plan in 2006-7. Due to changes at TxDOT, HOTCOG has the ability to change these by-laws to make them compatible with the current environment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> TxDOT, according to staff, in a policy change, there are no specific rules regarding advisory committees and local entities are free to develop their own approach to outreach and decision-making that ensures that all interested parties have the opportunity to be heard.

- The committee as currently structured, is mired in excessive by-laws and restrictions
  - The requirement for a quorum is virtually impossible to meet and in fact, hasn't been met in years.
  - As a result, nothing gets done through the committee.
- TxDOT is very flexible – Their interest is in making sure all appropriate parties have a chance for outreach.

### **Strategy 1.2.1: Reform the Advisory Committee**

The study team submitted a less restrictive set of by-laws for HOTCOG to consider. These by-laws include the following critical elements:

- A less formal structure with greater flexibility.
- Entities based or having a stake in the region can be eligible to vote.
- Non-voting members can include organizations outside the service area including Waco MPO and transit systems in Waco and McLennan County.
- Eliminate quorum requirements – an incentive to show up at the meeting knowing a vote will be taken.
- Meet quarterly and more frequently if there is an important issue.

The committee should move forward with a number of future changes immediately.

## **1.3 Urban/Rural Mobility Manager**

The 2017 Coordinated plan calls for an urban mobility manager. This strategy takes that a step further by adding the rural area to the mobility management functions. An excellent model of mobility management coordination, discussed in Section 7, is found at CARTS and Capital Metro in Austin and the surrounding counties.

There are two potential strategies to support the mobility manager position, the first is the all-inclusive model where all three transit entities could form a mobility manager. The second would have HOTCOG form its own mobility manager to support the five-county rural service area.

In each strategy, there are a number of potential funding options, including:

- Transit system funding
- Infrastructure funding
- Grant funding for a mobility manager
- Securing sponsor funding (health care providers, big box and grocery retailers, and others)
- Local government
- Any number of combinations

### Strategy 1.3.1: All-Inclusive Mobility Management

Mobility management among the three local transit systems is potentially a valuable resource. In the example above, the whole is clearly greater than the sum of its parts. The key will be to develop by-laws and procedures that ensure each entity is getting its fair share. Staffing and funding could include existing staff from each entity splitting responsibilities or all can contribute, or secure grant funding to support a mobility manager position and office space for that person.

### Strategy 1.3.2: Conduct Mobility Management Functions in Five Counties

A second mobility management strategy would be for HOTCOG to form its own mobility management function, either with existing staff, through the Regional Planning Organization (RPO), through HOTRTD or if grant funding is secured, a full or part-time mobility manager position.

## Operational Strategies

The operational strategies are focused on service initiated in the five counties – much of this is based on the recent comprehensive operations analysis conducted for HOTRTD.

- Service area needs
- Service designs and productivity
- Specific operating strategies

## The Key Element

***The best way to coordinate service is to have excellent public transportation that most human service clients and health care patients can use.***

***Specialized service should be available for those with special needs.***

## Service Area Needs

Different parts of the service area call for different services. The four basic service area needs to include:

1. **Local in-county service** – Shopping, basic health care, dialysis, senior nutrition, necessities usually to the county's largest city. This service is currently operated in county-wide paratransit mode – the most expensive and least productive approach that can be used.

- 2. Cities and towns of over 1,500 population** – On-demand with 15–30-minute response would greatly enhance the quality of the service, without the need for additional operating revenue. Currently, a day in advance required.
- 3. Out of county service** – Currently 65 percent of the HOTCOG region public ridership has Waco as a destination. The majority of these needs are for dialysis and health care services. There are also some trips to Temple and Corsicana. Most passengers would be taken to their destination. Where feasible, seamless transfers will be sought out.
- 4. Travel within Waco** – Based on public comments, there is a need for better coordination of paratransit service between HOTRTD and WTS. These two entities have begun to work together to address this issue and to register all those that qualify for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit. At the same time, they should work together to encourage and train customers to use the fixed route bus while in Waco. Timed meets at the transit center will be important.

## Service Designs in HOTCOG Region

The service design is critical to quality service and operating costs. Service designs that are unproductive will never be cost-effective. Proper service design is essential to the success of any transit system. Improper service typologies and designs often result in lower ridership, lower productivity (measured as one-way trips per vehicle hour) and higher per trip costs, while applying the right service design can improve performance often at no extra cost.

Countywide paratransit, with unscheduled service to Waco and other out-of-county destinations, restricts the ability to group trips and serves a limited number of people. As a result, countywide paratransit is the least productive and most expensive service that HOTRTD could operate. This section reviews the concepts of grouping trips, increasing productivity, and reducing per trip costs.



Productivity measured as the number of one-way trips per vehicle hour, is essential to enhancing ridership and lowering costs. The service design used will dictate the productivity and the cost of the service. Currently, all service is a day in advance demand response, the costliest and least effective service design. New services are being utilized across the country – some require technology, while others do not. All can be implemented in the HOTRTD region at no additional operating costs – simply a change of service design.

## Grouping Trips: Essential for Success

Productivity drives the cost per trip and ultimately system costs. Productivity is measured as one-way trips per vehicle service hour. Productivity must be balanced with providing a safe, timely and comfortable service.

### Why is productivity important?

One of the best ways to lower transportation costs is through productivity improvements. The end result will depend on different modes or types of service, which will yield different productivities (and costs per trip); see Table 8-2.

**Productivity:** One-way passenger trips per vehicle hour

- In this example, it costs a transit system \$50 per hour to provide service:
  - Productivity of 1.5 trips per hour will yield a cost of **\$33.33** per trip
  - 3 one-way trips per hour bring the cost to **\$16.67** per trip
  - 10 trips per hour - **\$5**
  - 25 trips per hour - **\$2**

**Table 8-2: Typical Productivity for Rural Service Types**

Service Type	Productivity
Countywide Paratransit	1-2 trips per hour
Urban Paratransit	1-6 trips per hour
On-Demand: Towns and Small Cities	2-6 trips per hour
Fixed Schedule: Rural and Out-of-County	4-8 trips per hour

*Source: Rural Transit Service Design - Matching Service to Meet Needs: An Introduction, Rural, and Intercity Bus Conference, October 2018, KFH Group*

## Potential Service Designs

The past five years have seen an explosion of new service designs, some driven in part by technology and others just good ideas that are catching on. In this section, the study team will introduce the concepts and in the next section, strategies will be introduced for future consideration.



## Providing Greater Ridership - Doing More with Less

Each of the following service designs can be implemented with **no additional operating expenses**. They are all capable of doubling and tripling ridership and productivity and reducing per trip costs by the same margins. These service designs are also illustrated in Figure 8-1.

- **On-demand** in major towns/cities – It takes seconds to schedule a trip, not 24 hours. With 1 – 3 buses in town at any time, this may be able to be accomplished through the existing Shah Software in real time. This will generate higher ridership.
- Consideration should be given to **fixed schedule service** in rural areas of each county. This is where the vehicle will be scheduled for different parts of the service area on different days and times. These schedules should be well marketed and posted throughout each community and online. It is important to get the cooperation of health care organizations.
- **Intercounty service should be on a scheduled basis** - It can be based on the current needs, with schedules posted across each community as well as dialysis clinics, and other medical facilities.

## The Operating Strategies

The operating strategies will be based on all of the research and analysis conducted in the first part of the study. It is here that using the most appropriate service design HOTRTD can:

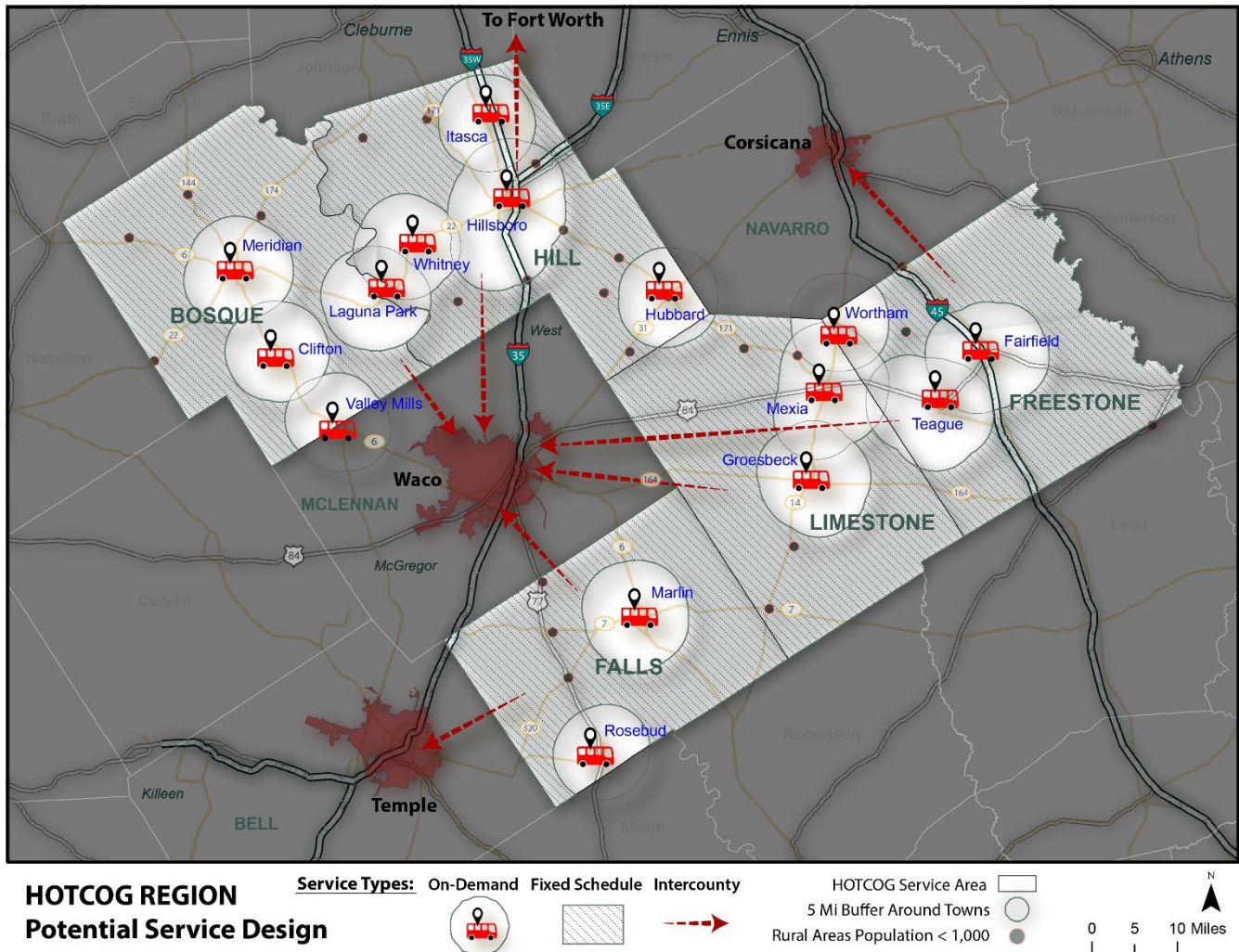
- Increase ridership
- Improve service quality, make it easy to ride
- With virtually no additional operating cost

All are dependent on appropriate marketing and branding which will be discussed at the end of this section.

### 2.1 In-Town On-Demand Service - Microtransit

This strategy is designed to make local service easier and give customers reason to shop locally. On-Demand service is now becoming the norm in smaller rural communities. Instead of having to call the day before the trip, customers can access the service in as little as one hour or less.

Using the existing vehicles and level of funding in all of the cities and towns in the service area, in town service can become real time on demand. That is, the vehicle will arrive within 15 minutes to an hour of the call or using the app. Service can be door to door, curb to curb or corner to corner. This service is generically called microtransit and before the development of the automated apps, was called "Dial a Ride."

**Figure 8-1: Potential Service Designs- HOTCOG Region**

**Microtransit** – This app-based service (or telephone) is a general public shared ride service designed for the population densities typically found in small towns and cities up to 20-30,000 population as well as suburban areas, where fixed route may be ineffective and calling a day in advance is not necessary. Further, these apps (if marketed properly) often require almost no interaction with the dispatcher, reducing the demands on that position.

Using capital grant funding, HOTRTD should procure a microtransit app and deploy a pilot in the two or three largest cities in the service area. Please note that this type of service is quite compatible with senior runs to the meals sites or any other in-town service currently provided.

### Strategy 2.1.1: Microtransit in the Larger Cities

The largest cities in each county have the capability of initiating full time microtransit in their communities. As this service is designed to help people remain in their county for shopping and goods and services. It may be possible to secure sponsors in these communities. This will be discussed in the section on Sustainability and Financial Strategies.

Following are the most likely initial candidates for microtransit in each county (shown in Figure 8-2).

- Bosque County - Clifton
- Falls County – Marlin
- Freestone County – Teague
- Hill County – Hillsboro
- Limestone County – Mexia



#### Implementation

The first step is to secure the technology through a grant and then select 2 - 3 cities as pilot projects to determine exactly how to implement service. These should be the larger communities that have the greatest chance for success – Hillsboro, Marlin and Mexia. When this service is implemented all other local in-town service should be eliminated in order to ensure that the system isn't competing against itself. It should be noted that this consultant will be developing a microtransit "How To" for microtransit in the next few months for TxDOT.

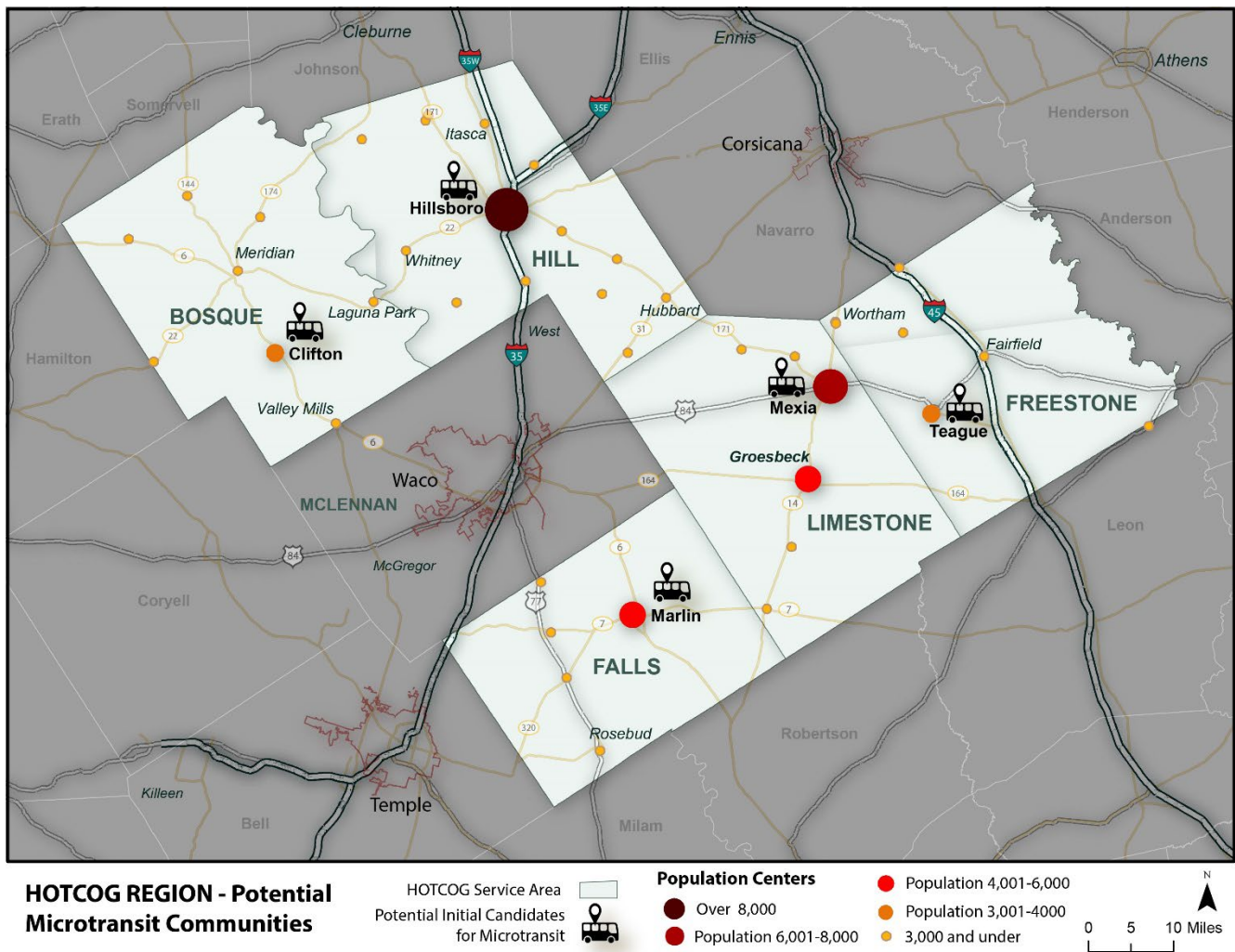
### Strategy 2.1.2: Microtransit in Smaller Communities

It is possible to include smaller communities perhaps down to 1,000 population to support some level of local on-demand service, perhaps 4 hours a day, or 2 days a week. These smaller communities may not even need an app. In Plano, DART previously operated this type of service and the customers called the driver directly – the point is that on-demand service can be successful under a number of environments. As with the larger microtransit, this service will have minimal additional operating costs.

#### Implementation

Once success has occurred in the pilot projects, the second tier of small cities should be implemented, two at a time.





- Works well in **larger/remote rural areas** when there are not enough resources to cover all parts of the service area at all times.
- Serves different areas according to a schedule that is clearly posted and well marketed.
- Can be one or more days per week.
- Experience indicates that passengers accept this approach, and doctors and hospitals will cooperate.

- ## HOTCOG Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan

### Strategy 2.2.1: Fixed Schedule Rural Service

Fixed schedule service has proven to be far more productive and less expensive than one on one paratransit. By scheduling a time, those interested in traveling within the county (or adjacent county) will ride together instead of a constant one on one set of trips that is very expensive. The grouping of trips can reduce costs. This type of service also encourages in county shopping, healthcare and other local needs.

#### Implementation

The schedules can be set up based on the current or historical travel patterns. Dialysis trips will often determine the schedule in a particular area. Each county can consist of 4 -5 quadrants of the county, based on typical ridership patterns. These quadrants will all be scheduled for different times and perhaps different days. The frequency of the service will be determined by existing and potential ridership.

1. Initiate a re-branding of HOTRTD's services (see a subsequent marketing strategy below).
2. Conduct a two county pilot – select two counties to implement scheduled service within each county.
3. Secure sponsors who may serve to gain by this service.
4. Using the existing service needs, set a schedule that to some extent mirrors the current needs. For example, if there are dialysis customers that use the service at 6 am, Monday, Wednesday and Friday with a return at noon, then the published schedule should reflect those needs.
5. Promote and advertise the service. The best marketing tool is a good looking and professionally painted bus that is seen all over the county.

As with most of the services presented in this section, there is no additional operating expenses associated with this approach as it does not require additional vehicles and/or service hours.

## 2.3 Intercounty Service

Intercounty service is the core of HOTRTD's services at the present time, with over 60 percent of the service to Waco, Corsicana, and Temple. Intercounty service however should include other options as well. Vanpool services will be addressed as they are often the best approach for late shift needs.

### Strategy 2.3.1 – Scheduled Intercounty Service

Like the fixed schedule service, intercounty service should be on a schedule based on current and future ridership. Dialysis trips will at times determine the schedule of at least one set of trips, but schedules will vary based on need. For example, one county might warrant five days per week service to Waco with two round trips each day, while another may need service just three days per week.



This service is also depicted in Exhibit 8-1 where all out of county service is scheduled on specific days and times. This allows HOTRTD to provide more trips for the same level of service. Experience in Texas and across the country tells that customers get comfortable with the schedules very quickly and health care facilities are willing to work with the schedules.

There is also potential for service to Dallas/Ft. Worth on a limited basis – for example one day per month.

## Implementation

As with implementation of fixed schedule services, this service would be implemented in a similar manner. The schedules can be set up based on the current or historical travel patterns. Dialysis trips will often determine the schedule in a particular area. Each county can consist of 4 -5 quadrants of the county, based on typical ridership patterns. These quadrants will all be scheduled for different times and perhaps different days. The frequency of the service will be determined by existing and potential ridership. To a great extent service will not change, but the marketing of the service will.

1. Initiate a re-branding of HOTRTD's services (see a subsequent marketing strategy below).
2. Conduct a two county pilot – select two counties to implement scheduled intercounty service within each county.
3. Secure sponsors who may serve to gain by this service.
4. Using the existing service needs, set a schedule that to some extent mirrors the current needs. For example, if there are dialysis customers that use the service at 6 am, Monday, Wednesday and Friday with a return at noon, then the published schedule should reflect those needs.
5. Promote and advertise the service. The best marketing tool is a good looking and professionally painted bus that is seen all over the county.

## Strategy 2.3.2 – Vanpools

Vanpool programs are typically used for commuter service and can be operated out of a mobility management office. Where groups of five or more are willing to share costs and have one of the riders serve as driver (and a second as a backup). These programs are common across Texas and the country and are a very low-cost way to meet commuter demand. Minivans and/or vans can be used depending on the demand. USAA with one of the largest vanpool programs in the country has had success with minivans. For groups going to same or nearby facilities to work. These are low-cost options for any shift. The vehicles and operating expenses are often funded in part or wholly through monthly fares.

## Exhibit 8-1: Example of Fixed Schedule Service

Effective date January 4, 2016

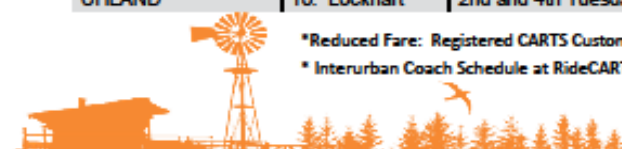
# CARTS

**CARTS RIDE LINE 1-512-456-RIDE (7433)**

**CALDWELL COUNTY**

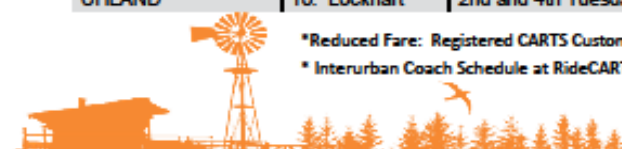
RIDES ARE SCHEDULED MONDAY-FRIDAY FROM 8:00 AM TO 4:00 PM / 24 HOURS ADVANCE NOTICE RECOMMENDED LOCAL VEHICLES SERVE NEIGHBORING TOWNS SO LOCAL RIDE TIMES MAY VARY


Community Served	Destination	Route Day	Departure	Return	One-Way Fare	Reduced Fare*
DALE	To: San Marcos	Monday & Friday	7:30a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Lockhart	Monday & Friday	7:30a	12:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
FENTRESS	To: San Marcos	Thursday	9:00a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Lockhart	Monday	9:00a	1:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
	To: Luling	Friday	9:00a	12:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
LOCKHART	Local Service	Monday thru Friday	8:00a to 4:30p		\$2.00	\$1.00
	To: Austin	On the Interurban Coach *	Mon, Wed. and Fri.		\$6.00 All Day Pass	
	To: San Marcos	Monday, Wednesday & Friday	8:00a & 2:00p	12:00a & 3:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Luling	Tuesday & Thursday	9:00a	1:00p	\$4.00	\$3.00
LULING	Local Service	Monday thru Friday	8:00a to 4:30p		\$2.00	\$1.00
	To: Austin	On the Interurban Coach *	Mon, Wed. and Fri.		\$6.00 All Day Pass	
	To: Lockhart	Tuesday & Thursday	8:00a	2:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
	To: San Marcos	Thursday	9:00a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Seguin	Wednesday	9:00a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
LYTTON SPRINGS	To: Lockhart	2nd & 4th Thursday	8:45a	1:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
MARTINDALE	To: Austin	Monday & Wednesday	8:15a	2:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: San Marcos	Monday, Wednesday & Friday	9:15a	3:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Lockhart	Wednesday	11:30a	2:00a	\$4.00	\$2.00
MAXWELL	To: Austin	Tuesday & Thursday	8:30a	2:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: San Marcos	Monday, Wednesday & Friday	9:30a	3:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Lockhart	Wednesday	11:30a	2:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
McMAHAN	To: Lockhart	1st and 3rd Monday	8:45a	12:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
McNEIL	To: Lockhart	Monday	9:00a	12:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
	To: Lulling	Friday	9:00a	12:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
MENDOZA	To: Lockhart	2nd & 4th Thursday	8:30a	1:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
NEIDERLAND	To: San Marcos	Tuesday & Thursday	9:00a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Lockhart	2nd & 4th Thursday	8:30a	1:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
PRAIRIE LEA	To: Lulling	Friday	9:00a	12:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
	To: San Marcos	Thursday	9:00a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
REEDVILLE	To: San Marcos	Monday, Wednesday & Friday	8:30a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
	To: Austin	Monday & Wednesday	8:00a	2:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
STAIRTOWN	To: Luling	Friday	9:00a	12:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00
	To: San Marcos	Thursday	9:00a	12:00p	\$6.00	\$3.00
UHLAND	To: Lockhart	2nd and 4th Tuesday	8:30a	1:00p	\$4.00	\$2.00



\*Reduced Fare: Registered CARTS Customers, Seniors 65 and older, Persons with Disabilities, and Children Under 12

\* Interurban Coach Schedule at RideCARTS.com





**RideCARTS.com**

## Branding and Marketing

An essential element in any service-related business is appropriate branding and marketing of the service. This effort was described in detail in the recent Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA). Much of the recommendations made in that document are repeated here.

### Recommendations - Marketing

Most effective rural transit marketing is grassroots or low cost in nature. HOTRTD is clearly in need of a full branding effort to develop an image as public transit and not just the senior bus in the community. The branding and marketing effort should be treated as a business decision, designed to help promote the system and ultimately encourage and increase ridership and service levels.

### Developing the Brand

In parallel with the development of the new services, a branding effort should begin. It is here that the brand should be determined. This can be done professionally or in-house but must look and sound professional in every way. It may be possible to take advantage of local resources such as colleges and high schools for naming or branding ideas. The following steps should be taken:

- **System name or nickname** – This is the name most will use. Perhaps a contest among students, combined with a full rebrand celebration.
  - **Recognizable** - Like VIA in San Antonio, the HOP, CARTS, Santa Fe Trails or any number of different systems that are recognized by their names. Sometimes a simple name like Paris Metro says it all.



- **Identifies with the area** – Heart of Texas is a theme. The color and nickname should be symbolic of the service area. For example: Heart Transit.
- **Catchy** – The Blue Bus is the system's nickname and is an instant identifier as all of their vehicles are bright blue.
- **Avoid acronyms in most cases** – Names like SCAT (the absolute worst), CUATS, and ETHRA, for example, have little to no meaning and sound terrible. HOTRTD also has no meaning and can't be pronounced.
- **Vehicle colors and paint scheme** – This requires eye-catching vehicles that will be noticed and can instill pride. Is there a local color that symbolizes the area (green for example)? This scheme should be developed.
- **Bring in system sponsors** – Having sponsor names on the sides of the vehicles perhaps in a corner, can lend credibility to the system.
- **Establish a website and Facebook/social media presence** – HOTRTD should establish a presence with a website that can stand alone or be accessed on the HOTCOG website with a click.



## Implementation

Initiation of the rebranding campaign should begin at the same time as the planning for the new services. The rebranding campaign should be initiated one month prior to implementation of new service.

1. Determine the number of brands:
  - a. One brand for all.
  - b. Separate brands for in-town, county and intercounty service. Perhaps service names and different color scheme for example.

## Sustainability and Financial Strategies

Sustainability is critical to all transit systems. There is a need for funding stability because if services come and go for lack of funding, ridership will be very quickly lost and they won't come back. At the present time, there is a significant amount of funding available for capital and operations. What is not in abundance however is local funding and match. NEMT service can reduce that need for local funding. Local governments can provide support in a number of ways, and the private sector is a valuable resource as well.

One of the greatest threats to rural transit systems is the lack of local funding for service. Lack of local funding can severely limit a system's ability to grow and meet more needs. That is the case for HOTRTD. Local funding is needed to match FTA grants and in this time of COVID-19, it is still to be determined how funds will be allocated for recovery and if local match will be required.

The following strategies are designed to ensure sustainability and growth:

- Efficiency and effectiveness - Having the organizational staffing to sustain and grow the service.
- Securing federal transit funding and infrastructure funding.
- Securing funding from human service, health care providers, local counties, and the private sector.

### Efficiency and Effectiveness

The first step in sustainability is operating efficiently (doing things right) and economizing where needed. With that, is operating effectively (doing the right things). Using the operating cost per revenue hour as an indicator, HOTRTD is clearly a lean organization. This low level of staff, where the manager routinely has to handle daily operational issues will not be able to grow without additional staff support. Management should focus on growth and funding, not day to day operations

Strategies designed to improve efficiency and effectiveness are detailed in the operational strategies. Further, the approach toward management alignment is detailed in the recently completed COA.

### Securing Federal, State, Local, and Other Funding

With the CARES Act and the new infrastructure bill's passage, there is and will be an abundance of FTA funding for operations and capital. The key is to seek it out, develop a solid plan and write a winning grant.

#### 3.1 Securing Additional Federal Funding

HOTRTD should be actively writing grants to secure FTA funding for capital and operating services. This plan will help guide HOTRTD planners in directing proposed services and seeking funding.



### **Strategy 3.1.1: Aggressively Seeking Funding for New and Innovative Projects**

HOTRTD should embark on an effort to secure grants for service and additional planning. Mobility management activities can also be considered a good investment as the mobility manager role includes securing funding for transit. Section 5310 funds should be sought for vehicle preventive maintenance or new vehicles to serve persons with disabilities and seniors.

### **Strategy 3.1.2: Securing NEMT Funds**

As discussed previously, NEMT funding is valuable as a revenue source and can be used as local match in rural areas only. Unfortunately, the new structure developed for Texas is uncoordinated and will require HOTRTD to enlist with multiple brokers.

HOTRTD should immediately apply for Medicaid Provider status and initiate service in coordination with 5311 service. The most appropriate approach would be for HOTRTD, WTS, and MCRTD to each provide transportation solely for round trips that originate in their service areas this will avoid duplication and the transfer of NEMT funds out of the rural area.

## **Implementation**

These two activities should be initiated early in the process. With assistance from HOTCOG, HOTRTD should begin writing grants now, based on the strategies selected for inclusion in this plan.

## **Securing Local Funding**

Local funding has always been an issue for rural transit systems. Now however HOTRTD should turn to the private sector for sponsorships. Rural transit systems have had success generating revenue from the private for-profit sector.

### **Strategy 3.2.1: Initiate a Private Sector Sponsorship Program**

Transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue. Many systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, HOTRTD should sell sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program can help expand the service. Large corporations have been known to participate in sponsorship programs and typically these companies (such as Walmart) have far more money than all the cities and counties in the service area combined.

This activity should be implemented at the end of the rebranding with new vehicles in the new paint scheme and the new name. Potential sponsors want to be associated with a first-class service that the community can take pride in.

## Implementation

Funding must be a major propriety. These two strategies should be implemented as soon as possible. As with Federal funding, these activities should be supported by HOTCOG as well as HOTRTD.

### Strategy 3.2.2: Work with Human Service and Healthcare Organizations

The vast majority of human service and healthcare funding comes from NEMT service. Human service funding for transit has dried up for the most part. Healthcare organizations more frequently support transit. An excellent example was presented above in Georgetown. For example, the first place to start would be Baylor Scott and White, based in the region. This could also be an excellent opportunity to collaborate on a grant to support expanded healthcare access.

## Implementation

NEMT service is a very significant source of funding, much of which can be considered as rural match when used by a rural public transit system. HOTRTD should secure an arrangement appropriate to the level of work. As a funding strategy, NEMT should initiate service as soon as possible.

### Strategy 3.2.3: Allocating Service

Without local funding for the match, adding service as ridership grows will be problematic. Utilizing the above strategies will help, but at some point, local funding may be necessary for the expansion of service.

Equity is important for a multijurisdictional transit system. This is especially true when seeking funding for service. This equity should be tied to local county funding. Allocation of additional service should be based on population and ridership trends (Table 8-3), but unfortunately, rural transit systems need local support in order to survive. Local funding allows for priorities in the expansion of service. This strategy states that any future expansion of service in any county will require matching funds dedicated to that county.

## Implementation

This strategy used to expand service can be initiated in years two to three. The first steps will be to reorganize existing service. Expansion should come after all elements of the new service are in place.

**Table 8-3: Allocation of In-Service Vehicles**

County	Population	Number of In-service Vehicles	Residents per Vehicle	FY 2019 Annual Ridership	Utilization Rate - Ridership per Capita
Bosque	18,212	3	6071	2500	14%
Falls	17,292	2	8646	3515	20%
Freestone	19,714	3	6571	2623	13%
Hill	35,689	4	8922	6377	18%
Limestone	23,417	3	7806	15617	67%

## Priorities: Implementation Activities

The service area priorities are directly reflected in the implementation Activities. As all of these strategies should be implemented, some simultaneously, the best way to prioritize is to put the strategies in place in order of implementation activities. HOTRTD will need to be working on multiple activities over the next five years. This effort will require support from HOTCOG in a number of areas until HOTRTD is able to build up the service and hire additional staff, most importantly a mobility manager who has as part of their job description securing government and private sector funding. The list of activities are prioritized in order of importance and timing.

### Immediate Needs

The following activities should all be conducted immediately with support from HOTCOG:

- 1. Secure funding and replace aging vehicles** – Due to the international delays in vehicle delivery, it is now taking two years at a minimum to receive vehicles from the date they are ordered. Currently HOTRTD is at a critical juncture in that nine of its vehicles are beyond their useful life at this time. HOTRTD recently ordered seven vehicles, but it may be well over a year before they arrive. If properly maintained and upgraded the older vehicles may be able to last longer. The consultant team believes this world-wide problem may be getting worse.
  - a. Initiate branding color scheme for the vehicles to be procured
  - b. Secure funding/procure additional vehicles immediately using the new color scheme(s).
  - c. Initiate an assessment of the existing nine vehicles beyond their useful life, to determine if they are suitable for upgrade.
  - d. Maximize the use of the MV-1 vehicles – these are all low mileage vehicles that have been proven to work in rural areas, especially low ridership routes and areas.
- 2. Properly align staff** – As discussed in the COA, HOTRTD only needs one dispatcher at a time. The second person could free up the Transit Manager from daily operations so that he can conduct planning, manage staff, secure funding and vehicles and build coalitions. This can be easily implemented, quickly.

3. **Secure NEMT provider status** – This requires signing up with the state to receive a provider number in preparation for implementing service.
4. **Secure funding for technology and mobility management** – Hiring a mobility manager for HOTRTD to help secure funding, conduct a wide range of coordination activities and other business development strategies. This position is critical to funding and should be a top priority.

## Second Level of Activities/Priorities

The immediate needs are significant and will take time. Once those activities have been initiated and funding is being sought from all quarters, then the second level of activities can take place. These will consist of planning and preparing to initiate the new brand and the new services together.

*These activities should be implemented within six to eight months after completion and approval of the plan.*

1. **Provide NEMT services** – HOTRTD should initiate services where practical using all of its active fleet (less spares). HOTRTD should seek to coordinate NEMT with public transit.
2. **Complete branding effort** – In addition to the color scheme, a logo and name are needed. These changes should be ready to implement at the same time as the new pilot projects are implemented.
3. **Secure private sector sponsors** – This will be a mobility management function that should be initiated shortly after hire.

## Planning and Implementation Priorities

Implementing new service and expanding ridership are the next steps in the process of meeting the needs. This will include the selection and implementation of pilot projects and the branding effort.

*The pilots projects should be implemented over time, starting in eight to twelve months from the start of the process, through the five year timeline of the plan.*

1. **Plan and implement pilot fixed schedule service** – In this activity, HOTRTD should select two counties to initiate fixed schedule service.
  - a. Select counties: Look at low ridership counties that should see higher ridership: Hill, Falls, Freestone and Bosque Counties for example.
  - b. Review ridership patterns and dialysis needs, then divide up the county into quadrants, and develop schedules based on existing needs. In essence, the schedules should be able to meet the needs of the existing riders.

- c. Determine if any adjustments are needed to the schedules.
- d. Brand the service/system.
- e. Secure route sponsors.
- f. Market the new service – grass roots activities work well. Possibly have a series of kick-off events in each county.
- g. Be prepared for every contingency.
- h. Train staff.
- i. Implement service.
- j. Monitor ridership, miles and hours daily.
- k. Then start over with the other three counties.

**2. Plan and implement intercounty service** – HOTRTD should use the same approach to implementation as fixed schedule service above.

- a. Select appropriate corridors with connections as appropriate:
  - i. Marlin – Waco: Adjustments and coordination with WTS service
  - ii. Itasca – Hillsboro – Waco
  - iii. Fairfield – Teague – Mexia – Waco
  - iv. Meridian – Clifton – Valley Mills – Waco
- b. Review ridership patterns and dialysis needs, then develop route and schedules based on existing needs. In essence, the schedules should be able to meet the needs of the existing riders.
- c. Determine if any adjustments are needed to the schedules add bus stops in each town and major crossroads on the route.
- d. Brand the service/system.
- e. Secure route sponsors.
- f. Market the new service – grass roots activities work well. Possibly have a series of kick-off events in each county.
- g. Be prepared for every contingency.
- h. Train staff.
- i. Implement service.
- j. Monitor ridership, miles and hours by community, daily.

**3. Plan and implement on-demand service** – Also a similar approach:

- a. Select two - three pilot cities – The three largest cities are recommended for on-demand service: Hillsboro, Mexia and Marlin.
- b. Install and test the on-demand software and app in a simulated environment.
- c. Brand the service/system.
- d. Secure sponsors.
- e. Market the new service – grass roots activities work well. Possibly have a series of kick-off events in each city.
- f. Be prepared for every contingency.
- g. Train staff.
- h. Implement service.
- i. Monitor ridership, miles and hours by community, daily.
- j. Then start over with other cities.



## Section 9:

# Goals and Performance Measures

There are two parts to tracking performance. The first is tracking progress toward the goals and objectives first reviewed in Section 6. The second part is tracking performance of the transit system, a critical element to managing the service and identifying trends in their earliest stages.

HOTCOG will be responsible for tracking performance related to this planning process. The second part to this, is detailed in the recent HOTRTD Comprehensive Operations Analysis and summarized in this section, will help management identify potential problems before they become serious. Most, if not all, of the data management needed on a regular basis is tracked in the PTN 128 report. However, HOTRTD management needs this data in a timelier manner: in real time, daily, weekly and monthly as well. This data will also generate specific performance measures needed by management.

### Tracking Performance: Coordinated Planning

In addition to the performance data needed in the next part of this review, the progress toward the goals and objectives should be tracked.

### Overarching Goal

**For each of our projects we have one overarching goal which we believe is shared by all of our clients:**

*Help provide for more trips for more people while providing cost effective, high quality, and safe **transportation for our community.***

**Performance Measure:** Measured by ridership.

### Coordination Project Goals and Objectives

Next overall initial project goals and objectives are identified. The study advisory committee should review the following to ensure they are in sync with what HOTCOG and the stakeholders desire. Following are the goals to date:

## Goal No. 1: Improve the effectiveness of the advisory committee

This goal seeks to strengthen the advisory process through changes to the advisory committee.

**Performance Measure:** New by-laws.

## Goal No. 2: Identify unmet needs in the region

Outreach, service review and a review of demographics and land uses tell us the overall need.

**Performance Measure:** Updated as needed.

## Goal No. 3: Develop strategies to improve service, coordination and generate higher ridership

This critical goal seeks to ensure that the most appropriate services are deployed using the right tools for the assignment. Strategies include addressing: unmet needs, improving service performance and seeking coordination opportunities.

**Performance Measures:**      Develop and implement new services.  
   Implement NEMT service in six counties.

## Goal No. 4: Sustainability and Growth

Sustainability is one of the key elements of success. Sustainability also addresses growth and the need to sustain growth as appropriate.

**Performance Measure:** Funding levels for partners/sponsors, vehicles, Section 5310, FTA, COVID and other funds.

## System Performance Measures

**The bottom line: The best coordinated service is excellent public transportation.** This second part focuses on the information HOTRTD needs to properly manage the service. But it's more than just the numbers and measures. Some of the measures should be collected daily, weekly or monthly. And each county should be compiled separately. These activities were first written up in the recent Comprehensive Operations Analysis conducted for HOTRTD.

The best description of the performance measures needed by HOTRTD is in the Transit Cooperative Research Program's (TCRP) Research Report No. 136: *Guidebook for Rural Demand-Response Transportation: Measuring, Assessing, and Improving Performance*.

<http://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/162701.aspx>

This publication was written by the KFH Group. Attention should be focused on Chapter 4 which details the measures management should be reviewing. This combined with the following narrative will give HOTRTD the knowledge necessary to set up the new management reporting system in the Shah software.

The activities presented in this section should be set up to implement the enhanced tracking of service, using TCRP Report 136 as a guide.

### Determine Performance Measures to be used to Manage Performance

HOTRTD files a PTN 128 report documenting a wide variety of data and performance measures for TxDOT. While all of these numbers and measures are important to track, this effort will focus on those numbers and measures critical to operating performance. Further, this does not preclude the monitoring of any other activities – these should be considered a minimum.

#### Data Collection

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. One-way trips        | 6. On-time performance     |
| 2. Vehicle hours        | 7. No-shows                |
| 3. Vehicle miles        | 8. Missed trips            |
| 4. Cost data            | 9. Road calls/breakdowns   |
| 5. Accidents, incidents | 10. Complaints/compliments |

#### Performance Measures

Performance measures are critical to monitoring performance. Some are tracked on a daily basis, while most of the others can be tracked on a monthly basis. Following are the recommended key measures for management to use for guidance in operations. In all cases these numbers and measures should be disaggregated by county. All should be collected monthly with the exception of those indicated that should be collected daily.

***The key is to rapidly identify an issue before it becomes a problem; and then find solutions.***

## Key Measures

1. Passenger Trips per Vehicle-Hour – **Daily** - This is productivity and is the most critical performance measure (excluding safety). It drives operating cost per trip and ultimately overall system cost.
2. Operating Cost per Vehicle-Hour – This is an important unit of cost and easily measurable. It reflects the cost to operate one vehicle for one hour. It should not fluctuate significantly from month to month unless a large one-time payment is made. It should not fluctuate significantly from year to year, unless costs such as fuel, insurance or other costs increase.
3. Operating Cost per Vehicle-Mile – Similar to operating cost per hour.
4. Operating Cost per Passenger Trip – This is partially a reflection of operating cost per hour but is most affected by system productivity, as is discussed below.
5. Safety Incidents per 100,000 Vehicle-Miles – **Daily** - Can be tracked separately for incidents, accidents and other problems.
6. On-Time Performance – **Daily** – Percentage of trips that are on time compared to all completed trips.

## Other Important Measures

All measures should be reported and reviewed monthly, with most reported daily.

1. No-Shows, Missed Trips – **Daily** – Either actual number or percentage of total trips.
2. Road Calls/Breakdowns - Per 100,000 miles (daily numbers).
3. Complaints/Complements - **Daily**
4. Miles per Hour and Average Trip Length – These should be used monthly to test accuracy of other measures. Monthly fluctuations of more than a few percentage points should be investigated, verified and explained. If fluctuations occur, this should be tracked daily until the problem is resolved.

The next step is to set up the software to track this information on a regular basis. Once this is complete, initiate the monitoring of service. After two to three post COVID-19 months have been measured, initial benchmarks can be set.

## Appendix A: Trip Generators

- Multiunit Housing
- Major Employers
- Medical Facilities
- Shopping Centers
- Education Facilities
- Human Service Agencies



# Appendix A:

## Trip Generators

### Multiunit Housing

Name	County	City	Address
Valleyview Apartments	Falls	Lott	522 Cypress St, Lott, TX 76656
Marlin Manor Apartments	Falls	Marlin	1139 FM147, Marlin, TX 76661
Marlin Square Apartments	Falls	Marlin	502 San Antonio St, Marlin, TX 76661
Buckner Apartments	Freestone	Fairfield	920 W Commerce St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Angelica Homes Corps	Freestone	Fairfield	333 Williford St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Stoneleaf at Fairfield	Freestone	Fairfield	113 W Reunion St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Fairfield Retirement Apartments	Freestone	Fairfield	216 Oak St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Eastridge Apts	Freestone	Fairfield	100 Talford St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Freestone Apartments	Freestone	Teague	835 US Hwy 84 W, Teague, TX 75860
Jordan Health Services	Freestone	Teague	887 US Hwy 84 W, Teague, TX 75860
Rosemont of Hillsboro Apartment Homes	Hill	Hillsboro	807 Abbott Ave, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Airelle Towers	Hill	Hillsboro	300 W Walnut St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Allen's Point Apartments	Hill	Hillsboro	1031 Old Bynum Rd, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hillsboro Oaks Apartments	Hill	Hillsboro	208 Church St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Town Oaks Apartments	Hill	Hillsboro	1415 E Elm St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Emerald Retirement Village	Hill	Hillsboro	1940 Old Brandon Rd, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Wesley House Assisted Living	Hill	Hillsboro	110 Outlet Dr # 110, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Pecan Creek Apartments Ltd	Hill	Hillsboro	1815 Old Brandon Rd, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Crestridge Apartments	Hill	Hillsboro	309 I-35, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Madison Highlands	Hill	Hillsboro	100 Highland St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Meadows	Hill	Hillsboro	400 Old Brandon Rd # 701, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Walnut Manor Apartments	Hill	Hillsboro	119 E Walnut St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Tucker Apartments	Hill	Hillsboro	230 S Waco St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Divine Home Care Services	Hill	Hillsboro	127 E Elm St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Villas of Hubbard	Hill	Hubbard	222 S Magnolia Ave, Hubbard, TX 76648
Lamar Park Apartments	Hill	Itasca	210 S Lamar St, Itasca, TX 76055
Prairie Valley Senior Living Community	Hill	Whitney	104 Hill, County Rd 2115, Whitney, TX 76692
Whitney Retirement Village	Hill	Whitney	39 Circle Dr, Whitney, TX 76692
Whitney Place Apartments Ltd	Hill	Whitney	1107 Whitney Pl Dr, Whitney, TX 76692
Turner Place Senior Living	Hill	Whitney	200 S Bosque St, Whitney, TX 76692
Country Club Retirement Community Assisted Living	Hill	Whitney	4773 Farm to Market Rd 933, Whitney, TX 76692
Coolidge Apartments Ltd	Limestone	Coolidge	1302 Bell St, Coolidge, TX 76635
Longbridge Apartments	Limestone	Groesbeck	921 N Tyus St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Parkside Place Apartments	Limestone	Groesbeck	603 Parkside Dr, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Alpine Apartments	Limestone	Groesbeck	401 S Houston St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Kosse Apartments	Limestone	Kosse	410 Monroe St W, Kosse, TX 76653
Olde Oaks Place Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	793 Oak Hill Dr, Mexia, TX 76667

Name	County	City	Address
Sherwood Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	604 S McKinney St # 301, Mexia, TX 76667
EverGreen Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	505 E Evergreen St, Mexia, TX 76667
Parkside Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	601 Evergreen St, Mexia, TX 76667
Mexia Gardens Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	1000 E Grayson St, Mexia, TX 76667
FBM Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	827 E Grayson St, Mexia, TX 76667
Hillside Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	1125 N Ross Ave, Mexia, TX 76667
Manor Apartments	Limestone	Mexia	920 E Sumpter St # 4, Mexia, TX 76667
Centex Arc Group Home	Limestone	Mexia	405 E Titus St, Mexia, TX 76667

## Major Employers

Name	County	City	Address
Clifton Moulding	Bosque	Clifton	100 S Avenue B, Clifton, TX 76634
Gearench Inc	Bosque	Clifton	4450 Hwy 6, Clifton, TX 76634
Goodall-Witcher Hospital/Nursing Facility/Clifton Medical Clinic	Bosque	Clifton	101 Posey Ave, Clifton, TX 76634
Lhoist North America	Bosque	Clifton	2861 FM2602, Clifton, TX 76634
Lutheran Sunset Ministries	Bosque	Clifton	1800 W 9th St, Clifton, TX 76634
Texas New Mexico Power Company	Bosque	Clifton	806 N Avenue Q, Clifton, TX 76634
Golden Years Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Falls	Marlin	365 Coleman St, Marlin, TX 76661
HEB Marlin	Falls	Marlin	435 Live Oak St, Marlin, TX 76661
Walmart Marlin	Falls	Marlin	600 Hwy 6, Marlin, TX 76661
William P. Hobby Unit	Falls	Marlin	742 FM 712, Marlin, TX 76661
Freestone Medical Center	Freestone	Fairfield	125 Newman St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Fairfield Nursing & Rehab Center	Freestone	Fairfield	420 Moody St, Fairfield, TX 75840
M D Construction	Freestone	Fairfield	366 FM 27, Fairfield, TX 75840
Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Boyd Unit	Freestone	Teague	200 Spur 113, Teague, TX 75860
BNSF Railway Co	Freestone	Teague	208 S 3rd Ave, Teague, TX 75860
Bobcat Contracting	Hill	Hillsboro	1721 County Rd 3106, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hill College	Hill	Hillsboro	112 Lamar Dr, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Brandom Cabinets	Hill	Hillsboro	404 Hawkins St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hill County	Hill	Hillsboro	1 N Waco St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Limestone Medical Center	Limestone	Groesbeck	701 McClintic Dr, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Limestone County Detention Center	Limestone	Groesbeck	910 Tyus St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Fibrix	Limestone	Groesbeck	1002 N Ellis St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Kleen-Air	Limestone	Groesbeck	102 E Yeagua St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Mexia State Supported Living Center	Limestone	Mexia	540 Chapel Dr, Mexia, TX 76667
Wal-Mart	Limestone	Mexia	1406 E Milam St, Mexia, TX 76667
Parkview Regional Hospital	Limestone	Mexia	600 S Bonham St, Mexia, TX 76667
Carry-On Trailer	Limestone	Mexia	931 Industrial Blvd, Mexia, TX 76667

Source: HOTCOG Workforce <https://www.hotcog.org/hotedd/workforce/major-employers>

## Medical Facilities

Name	County	City	Address
Goodall Witcher Hospital	Bosque	Clifton	101 Posey Ave, Clifton, TX 76634
Bosque County Indigent Health	Bosque	Meridian	500 TX-174, Meridian, TX 76665
Falls County Kidney Center	Falls	Marlin	602 Hwy 6, Marlin, TX 76661
Falls Community Hospital and Clinic/ Falls Community Rural Health	Falls	Marlin	322 Coleman St #2358, Marlin, TX 76661
Fresenius Kidney Care Falls County Kidney Center	Falls	Marlin	602 Hwy 6, Marlin, TX 76661
Freestone Medical Center	Freestone	Fairfield	125 Newman St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Hill Regional Hospital	Hill	Hillsboro	101 Circle Dr, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Fresenius Kidney Care Hillsboro Kidney Clinic	Hill	Hillsboro	1507 Hillview Dr, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Carelite Itasca	Hill	Itasca	143540, Itasca, TX 76055
Limestone Medical Center	Limestone	Groesbeck	701 McClintic Dr, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Rettig Family Health Care	Limestone	Groesbeck	204 W Trinity St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Parkview Regional Hospital	Limestone	Mexia	600 S Bonham St, Mexia, TX 76667

## Shopping Centers

Name	County	City	Address
Brookshire's	Bosque	Clifton	900 FM 3220, Clifton, TX 76634
Brookshire Brothers	Bosque	Meridian	9265 Hwy 6, Meridian, TX 76665
Orfield Grocery	Bosque	Morgan	1008 Harris St, Morgan, TX 76671
HEB	Falls	Marlin	435 Live Oak St, Marlin, TX 76661
Walmart	Falls	Marlin	600 Hwy 6, Marlin, TX 76661
Brookshire Brothers	Freestone	Fairfield	300 US-84, Fairfield, TX 75840
Brookshire Brothers	Freestone	Teague	220 E Loop 225, Teague, TX 75860
Outlets at Hillsboro	Hill	Hillsboro	104 I-35 NE Ste A001, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Walmart Supercenter	Hill	Hillsboro	401 Coke Ave, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Brookshire's	Hill	Hillsboro	120 S Waco St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Brookshire Brothers	Hill	Hubbard	305 NE 4th St, Hubbard, TX 76648
Itasca Foods	Hill	Itasca	208 S Hill St, Itasca, TX 76055
Olde Towne Country Store	Hill	Itasca	102 W Main St, Itasca, TX 76055
Lucko's Grocery	Hill	Malone	112 W Live Oak, Malone, TX 76660
Brookshire's	Hill	Whitney	1310 N Brazos St, Whitney, TX 76692
David's	Hill	Whitney	803 S Bosque St, Whitney, TX 76692
Brookshire's	Limestone	Groesbeck	519 E Yeagua St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
HEB	Limestone	Mexia	701 E Milam St, Mexia, TX 76667
Walmart Supercenter	Limestone	Mexia	1406 E Milam St, Mexia, TX 76667

## Education Facilities

Name	County	City	Address
Clifton High School/ISD	Bosque	Clifton	1101 N Avenue Q, Clifton, TX 76634
Meridian High School	Bosque	Meridian	500 Yellow Jacket Dr., Meridian, TX 76665
Hill College Adult & Special	Bosque	Meridian	301 2nd St, Meridian, TX 76665
Chilton High School	Falls	Chilton	905 Durango St, Chilton, TX 76632
Rosebud-Lott High School	Falls	Lott	1789 US-77, Lott, TX 76656
Marlin High School	Falls	Marlin	1400 Capps St, Marlin, TX 76661
Marlin Independent School Superintendent	Falls	Marlin	130 Coleman St, Marlin, TX 76661
Booker T Washington High School	Falls	Marlin	1005 Commerce St, Marlin, TX 76661
Marlin Area Vocational School	Falls	Marlin	1400 Capps St, Marlin, TX 76661
Rosebud City Hall & Rosebud Intermediate School	Falls	Rosebud	202 College St, Rosebud, TX 76570
Fairfield Senior High School	Freestone	Fairfield	631 Post Oak Rd, Fairfield, TX 75840
Teague Junior / Senior High School	Freestone	Teague	420 Loop 255, Teague, TX 75860
Dew School	Freestone	Teague	610 Co Rd 481, Teague, TX 75860
Wortham Jr-Sr High School	Freestone	Wortham	200 S 5th St, Wortham, TX 76693
Abbott Independent School District	Hill	Abbott	219 1st St, Abbott, TX 76621
Aquilla Independent School District	Hill	Aquilla	404 N Richards, Aquilla, TX 76622
Covington ISD-High School	Hill	Covington	501 N Main, Covington, TX 76636
Hill College	Hill	Hillsboro	112 Lamar Dr, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hillsboro High School	Hill	Hillsboro	1600 Abbott Ave, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Mount Calm High School	Hill	Mt Calm	205 Coates Ave, Mt Calm, TX 76673
Whitney High School	Hill	Whitney	1400 N Brazos St, Whitney, TX 76692
Coolidge Independent High School	Limestone	Coolidge	1002 Kirven St, Coolidge, TX 76635
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service	Limestone	Groesbeck	200 W State St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Groesbeck High School	Limestone	Groesbeck	1202 N Ellis St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Enge-Washington Intermediate School	Limestone	Groesbeck	803 S Ellis St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Mexia Independent School District	Limestone	Mexia	616 N Red River St, Mexia, TX 76667
Mexia High School	Limestone	Mexia	1120 N Ross Ave, Mexia, TX 76667
Navarro College South at Mexia	Limestone	Mexia	901 N Dr M.L.K. Jr. Hwy, Mexia, TX 76667
Old Trinity University - Texas Hall	Limestone	Tehuacana	103 College Ave, Tehuacana, TX 76686

## Human Service Agencies

Name	County	City	Address
Lutheran Sunset Ministries Retirement Community	Bosque	Clifton	1800 W 9th St, Clifton, TX 76634
Bosque County Senior Services	Bosque	Clifton	403 W 3rd St, Clifton, TX 76634
Clifton Nursing & Rehabilitation	Bosque	Clifton	Farm Rd 3220, Clifton, TX 76634
Goodall Witcher Nursing Facility	Bosque	Clifton	101 S Avenue L, Clifton, TX 76634

Name	County	City	Address
Willow Park Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center	Bosque	Clifton	1000 FM 3220, Clifton, TX 76634
Hospice Sunset	Bosque	Clifton	113 S Avenue D, Clifton, TX 76634
Veterans of Foreign Wars	Bosque	Clifton	215 N Avenue D, Clifton, TX 76634
Nellie Pederson Library	Bosque	Clifton	406 Liveoak St, Clifton, TX 76634
Housing Authority of Meridian	Bosque	Meridian	205 1st St, Meridian, TX 76665
Bosque County Transit	Bosque	Meridian	405 S Hill St, Meridian, TX 76665
Meridian Manor Nursing-Retire	Bosque	Meridian	1015 N Main St, Meridian, TX 76665
North Bosque Helping Hands	Bosque	Meridian	415 S Hill St, Meridian, TX 76665
Human Service Department	Bosque	Meridian	401 S Hill St, Meridian, TX 76665
Texas Department-State Health	Bosque	Meridian	409 N Hill St, Meridian, TX 76665
Bosque County Medicaid Office	Bosque	Meridian	401 S Hill St, Meridian, TX 76665
Meridian Public Library	Bosque	Meridian	118 N Main St, Meridian, TX 76665
Bosque Valley Food Pantry	Bosque	Valley Mills	306 N 4th St, Valley Mills, TX 76689
Lott Housing Authority	Falls	Lott	211 S 7th St #34, Lott, TX 76656
Housing Authority of Marlin	Falls	Marlin	101 Burnett St, Marlin, TX 76661
William P. Hobby Unit-Prison	Falls	Marlin	742 FM 712, Marlin, TX 76661
Marlin Unit	Falls	Marlin	2893 Hwy 6, Marlin, TX 76661
Golden Years Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Falls	Marlin	318 Chambers St, Marlin, TX 76661
Outreach Health Services	Falls	Marlin	211 Fortune St, Marlin, TX 76661
Marlin Public Library	Falls	Marlin	400 Oaks St, Marlin, TX 76661
Falls County Mental Health Center	Falls	Marlin	365 Coleman St, Marlin, TX 76661
Mother Goose Home Daycare	Falls	Marlin	118 Neumann Dr, Marlin, TX 76661
Human Service Department	Falls	Marlin	217 Williams St, Marlin, TX 76661
Food Distribution Center - Falls County Samaritan House	Falls	Marlin	154 Live Oak St, Marlin, TX 76661
Heritage House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Falls	Rosebud	407 College St, Rosebud, TX 76570
D Brown Memorial Library	Falls	Rosebud	203 North 2nd St, Rosebud, TX 76570
Freestone County Senior Services	Freestone	Fairfield	201 N Bateman Rd, Fairfield, TX 75840
Fairfield Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Freestone	Fairfield	420 Moody St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Butler Senior Citizens Center	Freestone	Fairfield	1604 FM 489 E, Fairfield, TX 75840
Fairview Healthcare Residence	Freestone	Fairfield	601 E Reunion St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Pineywoods Home Health Care	Freestone	Fairfield	110 N Keechi St, Fairfield, TX 75840
River of Life Food Pantry	Freestone	Fairfield	402 E Commerce St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Health Department	Freestone	Fairfield	920 S Bateman Rd, Fairfield, TX 75840
Fairfield Library Association Inc	Freestone	Fairfield	350 W Main St, Fairfield, TX 75840
City of Fairfield - City Hall	Freestone	Fairfield	222 S Mount St, Fairfield, TX 75840
Teague Housing Authority	Freestone	Teague	205 5th Ave, Teague, TX 75860
Teague Community Center	Freestone	Teague	511 Main Street, Teague, TX
Over 55 Center	Freestone	Teague	511 Main St, Teague, TX 75860
Centex Arc Assisted Living	Freestone	Teague	1600 E Main St, Teague, TX 75860
The Lord's Community Storehouse	Freestone	Teague	400 E Main St, Teague, TX 75860



Name	County	City	Address
Teague Nursing and Rehabilitation	Freestone	Teague	884 US-84, Teague, TX 75860
Teague Library	Freestone	Teague	402 Main St, Teague, TX 75860
13 DEW SCHOOL LIBRARY	Freestone	Teague	13 DEW SCHOOL LIBRARY 606 FCR 481, Teague, TX 75860
TDCJ-ID Boyd Unit-Prison	Freestone	Teague	200 Spur 113, Teague, TX 75860
Teague City Hall	Freestone	Teague	105 4th Ave, Teague, TX 75860
Wortham Senior Citizens Center	Freestone	Wortham	107 S 2nd St, Wortham, TX 76693
Helping Hands Food Pantry	Freestone	Wortham	W Main Ave, Wortham, TX 76693
Wortham Housing Authority	Freestone	Wortham	105 W Main St, Wortham, TX 76693
Wortham Community Center	Freestone	Wortham	105 E Main St, Wortham, TX 76693
Wortham Senior Citizens Center	Freestone	Wortham	107 S 2nd St, Wortham, TX 76693
Twin Circle Group Home	Freestone	Wortham	115 Twin Cir, Wortham, TX 76693
Wortham City Hall	Freestone	Wortham	108 W Main Ave, Wortham, TX 76693
Hillsboro Housing Authority	Hill	Hillsboro	617 Cliff St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Central Texas Senior Ministry	Hill	Hillsboro	126 Covington St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Homestead Nursing & Rehab	Hill	Hillsboro	411 Old Brandon Rd, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hillsboro Interfaith Ministry	Hill	Hillsboro	214 E Elm St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Peoria Community Center	Hill	Hillsboro	103 County Rd 1320, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hillsboro City Library	Hill	Hillsboro	118 S Waco St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Health Department	Hill	Hillsboro	605 S Ivy St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hill County Indigent Health Care	Hill	Hillsboro	1 N Waco St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Human Service Department	Hill	Hillsboro	511 Abbott Ave, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Encompass Health - Home Health	Hill	Hillsboro	305 Coke Ave #150, Hillsboro, TX 76645
Hubbard Housing Authority	Hill	Hubbard	640 NE 7th St, Hubbard, TX 76648
Hubbard Senior Center	Hill	Hubbard	501 Davis St, Hubbard, TX 76648
Hubbard Library	Hill	Hubbard	NE 6th St, Hubbard, TX 76648
Itasca Senior Center	Hill	Itasca	103 W Main St, Itasca, TX 76055
Itasca Community Center	Hill	Itasca	101 W Main St, Itasca, TX 76055
Brandon Community Center	Hill	Mertens	7414 E State Hwy 22, Mertens, TX 76666
Mt Calm City Library	Hill	Mt Calm	222 Allyn Ave, Mt Calm, TX 76673
Whitney Housing Authority	Hill	Whitney	115 W Polk Ave, Whitney, TX 76692
Central Texas Senior Ministry	Hill	Whitney	302 N Brazos St, Whitney, TX 76692
Mc Cown Valley Community Center	Hill	Whitney	757 FM 1713, Whitney, TX 76692
Whitney Food Bank	Hill	Whitney	100 Sims Drive, Whitney, TX 76692
Lake Whitney Public Library	Hill	Whitney	602 E Jefferson Ave, Whitney, TX 76692
Town Hall Estates Nursing	Hill	Whitney	101 S San Marcos St, Whitney, TX 76692
Abbott Community Center	Hill	Abbott	110 N, Willie Nelson Rd, Abbott, TX 76621
Coolidge Housing Authority	Limestone	Coolidge	502 Jester St, Coolidge, TX 76635
Coolidge Civic Center	Limestone	Coolidge	806 Bell St, Coolidge, TX 76635
Groesbeck Housing Authority	Limestone	Groesbeck	407 N Leon St, Groesbeck, TX 76642

Name	County	City	Address
Groesbeck City Hall	Limestone	Groesbeck	402 W Navasota St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Senior Citizens Center	Limestone	Groesbeck	510 W State St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Windsor Healthcare Residence	Limestone	Groesbeck	1025 W Yeagua St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Limestone County Detention Center	Limestone	Groesbeck	910 Tyus St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Vincent Personal Care Home	Limestone	Groesbeck	458 Lcr 635, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Groesbeck LTC Nursing-Rehab	Limestone	Groesbeck	607 Parkside Dr, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Windsor Healthcare Residence	Limestone	Groesbeck	1025 W Yeagua St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry	Limestone	Groesbeck	310 W Navasota St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Groesbeck Public Library	Limestone	Groesbeck	601 W Yeagua St, Groesbeck, TX 76642
Kosse Community Center	Limestone	Kosse	200 TX-14, Kosse, TX 76653
Mexia State Supported Living Center	Limestone	Mexia	540 Chapel Dr, Mexia, TX 76667
Housing Authority	Limestone	Mexia	701 N Sherman St, Mexia, TX 76667
Daybreak Community Services, Inc.	Limestone	Mexia	1343 E Milam St, Mexia, TX 76667
Limestone County Senior Services	Limestone	Mexia	109 N Sherman St, Mexia, TX 76667
Skilled Care Of Mexia	Limestone	Mexia	501 E Sumpter St, Mexia, TX 76667
Mexia LTC Nursing & Rehabilitation	Limestone	Mexia	601 Terrace Ln, Mexia, TX 76667
The Manor Healthcare Residence	Limestone	Mexia	831 Tehuacana Hwy, Mexia, TX 76667
Caritas Food Pantry	Limestone	Mexia	608 E Commerce St, Mexia, TX 76667
Food Bank	Limestone	Mexia	100 N McKinney St, Mexia, TX 76667
Human Service Department	Limestone	Mexia	939 Industrial Blvd, Mexia, TX 76667
Gibbs Memorial Library	Limestone	Mexia	305 E Rusk St, Mexia, TX 76667
Heart of Texas Region MHMR	Limestone	Mexia	700 TX-171, Mexia, TX 76667
Mary Helen Nance Community Center	Limestone	Thornton	301 E 8th St, Thornton, TX 76687

## Appendix B:

# Case Study on Mobility Management Collaboration

### **Mobility Management Improving Access to Health Care in Central Texas:**

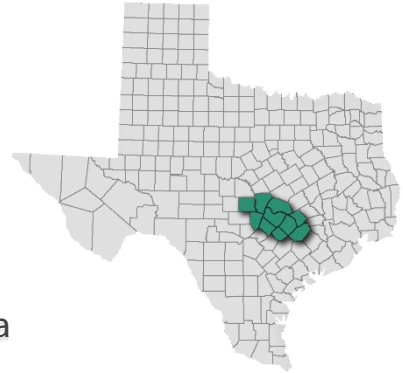
Capital Metro Transportation Authority and Capital Area Rural Transportation System

*Source: Transit Cooperative Research Program - TCRP Report No. 223 Guidebook for Communities to Improve Transportation to Health Care.*

## Mobility Management Improving Access to Health Care in Central Texas:

Capital Metro Transportation Authority and Capital Area  
Rural Transportation System

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### Snapshot of Collaboration

Two transit agencies in central Texas—the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) and the Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS)—partnered to develop a regional mobility manager charged with expanding transit for those in need in the nine-county Capital Region surrounding Austin. The resulting Office of Mobility Management (OMM) has coordinated funding and services with numerous health care providers in:

- Capital Metro’s service area of Austin and some close in suburbs.
- Rural parts of nine counties surrounding Austin; six of those counties are entirely rural.

Additionally, the OMM helped build a number of transportation services in the geographic area between the two transit agencies’ service areas that previously had no service.

One of the key issues in development of the OMM was determining how to expand transit service to support health care access. OMM’s response: the office strives to integrate the region’s network of transit services to help connect people to needed goods and services in the Capital Region.

The coordinated efforts of [Capital Metro](#), an urban transit agency and [CARTS](#), a rural agency, now provide access to almost 30 community partners through the OMM, which is dedicated to meeting the transportation needs of seniors, people with disabilities, veterans and others in need. This collaborative effort has increased fixed route and specialized transportation, improving access to health care through the expansion of public transit service in formerly under and unserved areas.



*Pickup by Capital Metro  
Photo courtesy of KFH Group*

## How Did the Collaboration Start?

Rapid growth brought changes to Central Texas. Areas previously served by CARTS had become urbanized and were no longer eligible for CARTS service. These newly urbanized areas were also not in Capital Metro's service area, leaving them in a transit desert with no service.

The collaboration was initiated by CARTS and Capital Metro in response to this loss of service and new unmet needs. The two organizations formed the OMM, which is hosted and funded predominantly by Capital Metro. The OMM was charged with building transit services in areas of high needs. Soon, Travis County joined forces and ultimately service was coordinated with the Transit Empowerment Fund.





Capital Metro contributed \$250,000 in seed funding in 2012 and, in 2013, the transit agency increased its annual contribution to \$350,000. An independent volunteer board representing non-profit health care and human service agencies, the business community, and Capital Metro oversees the work of the Transit Empowerment Fund.

Since 2012, the Transit Empowerment Fund has distributed thousands of Capital Metro transit passes to local non-profits for use by their clients. Recipients of the transit passes must be low-income, reside in the Capital Metro service area, and use public transportation.

The Transit Empowerment Fund Board's target populations are: adults over the age of 65, people with disabilities, youth under the age of 18, low-income workers or those enrolled in job training programs, refugees, people experiencing homelessness, Medicare card holders, Medicaid recipients, and veterans. The goal of the program is to promote self-sufficiency by providing transportation for employment, health care, education, and social services.

Additionally, the Transit Empowerment Fund Board has funded the following demonstration projects to expand transit services in underserved areas in the Central Texas region:

- In 2013, the Transit Empowerment Fund invested in a demonstration project that provides transportation to clients of a non-profit living in designated areas in order to access the organization's Parent-Child Education programs.
- In 2014, the Transit Empowerment Fund partnered with AGE of Central Texas, a non-profit serving older adults, to identify transportation gaps and resources and to create a plan to address identified transportation needs of older adults in the Austin area. The plan was completed in February 2015 and is guiding the future work of the Board to expand transportation access for seniors in the Austin community.
- In 2017, the Transit Empowerment Fund provided a grant to Ride Austin, a local app-based, on-demand transportation service. This grant allowed the non-profit ride-sourcing organization to partner with a collaboration of Central Health and a regional hospital for a pilot program in which those without the means to pay for health care transportation are able to request no-cost rides to health care appointments or pharmacies within the collaborative's network.
- Also in 2017, the Transit Empowerment Fund awarded the Housing Authority of the City of Austin funds intended to expand and enhance the impact of its "Smart Work, Learn Play-Mobility Equity Program."

## Development

Capital Metro and CARTS developed the OMM in 2013 to address findings of studies and local stakeholder concerns about gaps in transportation services arising from the growing urban area and shrinking rural area. Transportation needs were appearing in suburban, exurban and smaller communities between 10,000 and 120,000 population that were not served by either the urban transit agency, Capital Metro, or the rural provider, CARTS.

After its initiation in 2013, the OMM has been funded and is sustained primarily by Capital Metro, with additional funding from FTA Section 5310 grants. Critical to the development of the office is ensuring that all participants understand the needs, constraints and capabilities of each type of participating organization. The approach of this mobility manager is that fixed route should always be the first choice of service for an individual, when such service is appropriate and feasible.

The low transit fares, subsidized through Capital Metro, help the mobility manager accommodate many of the health care transportation needs very cost-effectively. Approximately 50 percent of the trip purposes associated with the bus pass program is for health care access.

## Description

The Office of Mobility Management conducts a wide array of services and activities in support of expanded access to destinations throughout the region:

- Conducts planning efforts.
  - Planning efforts have focused on unserved and underserved areas in the large region, with plans completed for multiple small cities ranging in size from 10,000 to 120,000 population. So far, two of the small cities have implemented transportation service as a result of the planning efforts.
- Pursues funding and sustainability.
  - Pursue grant funding through the Georgetown Health Foundation, which has provided \$200,000 annually to the City of Georgetown for transit for three years.
  - Obtain funding from Travis County,
    - Secured funding from the county and United Way for "Access to Health Care," a program serving lower income areas that were unserved outside of both Capital Metro and CARTS service areas.
    - Funding of low cost bus passes (one-quarter fare).
  - Capital Metro funds portions of service in Georgetown and Round Rock.
  - Coordinate funding with the Transit Empowerment Fund and Travis County.
- Builds new public service where none existed.
  - Travis County – expansion of transit service in unserved exurbs and suburbs, a crucial service driven by health care needs.

- Round Rock and Georgetown both initiated fixed route service through the efforts of the OMM, expanding access to health care and other needed services.
- The City of Manor - through the OMM, the city initiated a loop route shuttle that had very low ridership. This service was revised to an app-based on-demand service provided by VIA and ridership has increased significantly, with many of the trips providing access to health care.
- Engages with the Community Health Impact Plan.
- Provides a Trip Planner – 90 percent of trip planning is for access to health care.
- Developed the "Greater Austin Transportation Services and Senior Ride Guide," a comprehensive rider's guide of transportation services in the region.
- Administers Section 5310 funding, ensuring coordination of services.

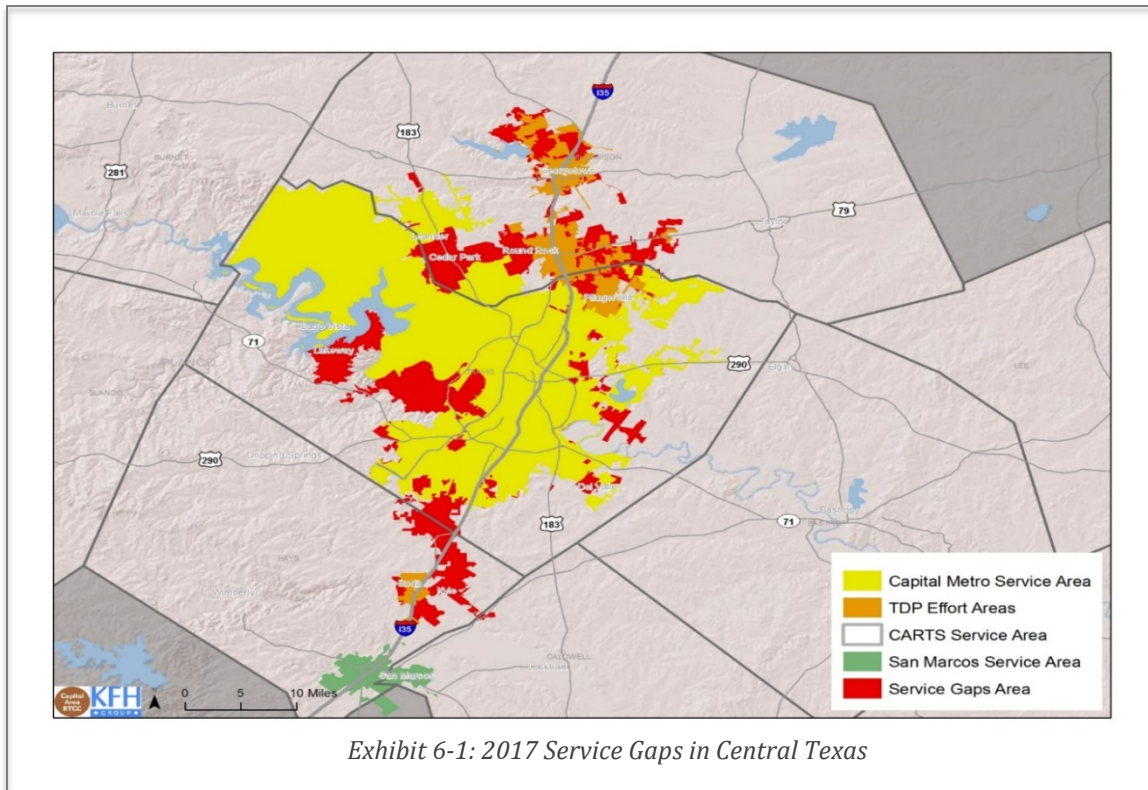
## **The Need for Transportation**

While Capital Metro and CARTS provide excellent transit service, there are still gaps as identified in a recent coordinated plan.<sup>1</sup> These areas are not eligible for federal transit funds as is typical for parts of an urban area that are outside of the transit system's service coverage. Over 200,000 people live outside of Capital Metro's service area yet still in the urban area.

Exhibit 6-1 depicts gaps in service in Central Texas in 2016. Since that time, two of the cities where the OMM conducted transportation plans have implemented some transit service. In addition, the OMM has teamed with Travis County to provide service in the unincorporated areas of eastern Travis County that are not in the Capital Metro or CARTS service area.

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<sup>1</sup> Central Texas Coordinated Public Transit – Health and Human Services Transportation Plan, Pg. 4-9 2017, Austin, TX



## Filling Transportation Gaps

Many transportation needs can be met through fixed route service, unless the individual cannot get to the service due to distance or mobility limitations or where there is no fixed route service. For those that cannot use fixed route, other services will be needed. OMM has worked hard to fill these gaps with appropriate service through its partnership arrangements.

## Partners – Participating Organizations

The greatest strength of the OMM is its ability to build services through partnerships with a diverse group of organizations, including:

- Local governments
- Transportation providers
- Health care organizations
- Human service agencies



The OMM has close to 30 partners, most of whom provide support. These are depicted in Appendix 1 to the case study and are summarized as follows.

## **Health Care and Human Service Agencies**

Numerous health care providers serve as partners. As noted above, the OMM has succeeded in securing funding from various health care entities, the United Way, and human service agencies. The Georgetown Health Foundation has contributed over \$200,000 to Georgetown's new transit service.

The OMM has been active in the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan-Year 1 Action Plan.<sup>2</sup> This plan sets forward a wide range of goals to improve health care. The goals pertaining to transit are in Appendix 2 to the case study.

## **Local Governments**

Travis County provides funding on a per trip basis and the Austin-Travis County health service, known as Central Health, has been actively involved in transportation and mobility management activities. This organization has been working actively with the OMM to implement health care transportation for the isolated lower income communities beyond the Capital Metro and CARTS service areas.

The cities of Round Rock and Georgetown implemented some fixed route services to support those accessing health care, jobs and other needs. These services were planned and supported by the OMM, CARTS and Capital Metro.

## **Technology and Innovation**

CARTS, in partnership with Capital Metro and Travis County, recently planned a service change in the City of Manor, which is a rapidly expanding suburb of Austin (9,200 population as of 2017). The service is now “micro-transit” – an app-based on-demand service that has proven to be very successful. Ridership has gone from an average of 40 one-way trips per month before the change to currently 100 per day in peak times<sup>3</sup>.

CARTS and Capital Metro use fare payment cards and paratransit software and supporting technologies in their paratransit systems.

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<sup>2</sup> Community Health Improvement Plan Austin/Travis County, Texas August 2018, Year 1 Action Plan.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with CARTS Management and observation of the technology, January 3, 2020

## Facilitators of Success

The initiative started with a partnership between CARTS and Capital Metro. These two organizations continue to lead and facilitate new service development through the OMM. Strong leadership and collaborative skills of OMM, CARTS and Capital Metro management continue to facilitate success. The funding provided by Capital Metro continues to ensure the sustainability of these services.

## Barriers, Constraints and Challenges

The OMM staff reported early challenges in gathering the coalition together and working with local governments to fund local transit service. Yet because the transportation needs were so evident, the OMM found most of the organizations willing to participate and support the improvement of transportation services.

## Funding and Sustainability

There have been four primary sources of funding for transportation services in the Capital Region. First and foremost, the funding provided by Capital Metro to support both the OMM (in conjunction with CARTS) and the Transit Empowerment Fund is critical to both. Capital Metro has also provided FTA Section 5307 funding to Travis County as well as the cities of Round Rock and Georgetown, both outside the Capital Metro's service area.

Second, the Transit Empowerment Fund has been extremely supportive of the entire process of improving transportation services in Austin's Travis County. The fund provides a number of options for funding in concert with the OMM including:

- Micro grants which provide additional opportunities to meet the Transit Empowerment Fund mission of enhancing access to transportation for low-income, transit-dependent individuals in the Austin area.
- Free and deeply discounted transit passes provided to non-profit health care and human service organizations and governmental entities in Central Texas to help meet the transportation needs of low income clients.

Third, local governments have been supportive of new transit services in Travis County, as well as in the cities of Round Rock and Georgetown. Without such local support, the transit services in these jurisdictions would be non-existent.

Fourth is funding from health care and human service organizations that provide matching funds for bus passes and other services in support of their programs. The Health Foundation of Georgetown, in particular, provided \$200,000 per year for three years for public transit in Georgetown.

Overall, the OMM has been able to secure funding to implement much needed services. The staff believes that if the project is worthy, the funding will come. This echoes comments of transit managers leading innovative agencies that were reported in earlier TCRP research:

*“(Innovative) Managers do not let funding issues get in their way. They realize that if the service has merit, someone will pay for it.”*<sup>4</sup>

## Lessons Learned

OMM staff cited the following steps that have led to their successful activities and efforts in providing mobility management in the Capital Region of Texas:

- Get engaged early in the process when transportation needs become evident and understand the stakeholders' needs.
- Make sure “the right people are at the table”—decision makers and people with influence in the community.
- Seek funding from a variety of sources.
- Offer an array of services.
- Be resourceful and relentless in the pursuit of opportunities to provide transportation.

## Transferability

Mobility management functions and activities are diverse. The OMM has chosen to focus on building transportation services and providing information to those who need it. These functions can be adopted by other agencies or organizations that pursue mobility management.

Advocating for individuals in the community who are transit dependent includes:

- Provide information on transportation resources as well as trip planning services.
- Identify and secure a variety of sources of funding to help ensure transit sustainability.
- Be resourceful in the pursuit of the mobility management objectives.

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<sup>4</sup> TCRP Report No. 70: *Guidebook for Change and Innovation at Rural and Small Urban Transit Systems*, KFH Group, et al. Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C., 2001.

## Contact Info

Office of Mobility Management

Austin, Texas

<http://mytxride.com/>

# **Appendices to Case Study of Capital Metro and CARTS *Office of Mobility Management for Central Texas***

## **Appendix No. 1: Partnering Organizations**

### **Transportation Providers**

- CARTS
- Capital Metro
- City of Round Rock – Transit
- The HOP
- Burnet County Vet-Rides
- Drive a Senior – Health Care

### **Health Care Organizations**

- Austin-Travis County Integral Care
- Central Health, Austin-Travis County
- La Grange VA Outreach Clinic
- Easter Seals of Central Texas
- Hays County Veteran Medical Transportation Services
- Health Foundation of Georgetown
- Hill County Mental Health and Developmental Disability Center
- Road to Recovery – American Cancer Society
- Medicaid Transportation
- Multiple health care providers

### **Agencies Supporting the *Social Determinants of Health***

- Age of Central Texas
- ARCIL, Inc.
- Area Agency on Aging



- Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- Bastrop County Emergency Food Pantry & Support Center
- Bluebonnet Trails Community Services
- Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas
- Hutto Community Resource Center
- Mary Lee Foundation

## **Others**

- Commute Solutions
- Regional Transportation Coordination Council
- United for the People