



Heart of Texas Council of Governments

Regional Public Transportation
Coordination Plan

Volume 1: Draft Final Plan



FOR PUBLIC REVIEW



HEART OF TEXAS
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Development of a Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (RPTCP) is a federal and state requirement. Such a plan must be developed/updated every five years, and is intended to identify and prioritize new and expanded opportunities and strategies for transportation coordination.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) views plan development as a “blueprint and a toolbox for implementing new and expanded instances of coordination that result in new efficiencies. In turn, these efficiencies are used to expand existing services or introduce new services that close the gap of unmet need among transit-dependent populations.”

Often additional funding may be required to implement new and/or expanded coordination projects or strategies. Key among these is FTA Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities). However, such coordination projects or strategies cannot be funded using Section 5310 funds unless they first appear in the RPTCP. Other funding sources, such as TxDOT’s biennial Coordinated Call, may be used for pilot projects.

Planning for the Heart of Texas Region

The Lead Coordination Agency for TxDOT Planning Region 11 (Heart of Texas), which includes Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan counties, is the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG).

Established in 1966, the Heart of Texas Council of Governments is an organization of local governments working together voluntarily to solve mutual problems and plan for the future of the six-county area. HOTCOG currently includes more than 80 member governments including counties, cities, school districts, community colleges, and special districts.

In preparing the RPTCP or a Plan update, TxDOT requires a locally organized Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) as the administering entity. The Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Committee serves as the RCC, and includes representatives from a variety of stakeholder organizations throughout the six-county region. At the time of the preparation of this Plan, the RCC included representatives from 39 entities. A full list of RCC members, along with the committee’s Vision, Mission, and Bylaws, is included in Chapter 1.

Public Engagement

While public engagement is an important component of any transportation planning project, it is absolutely essential for the development of a RPTCP. Given the goals, strategies, and projects arising from this Plan must be reflective of transportation needs and service gaps, extensive outreach must be conducted in order to accurately capture those needs and gaps. As the target populations for this Plan may be difficult to engage individually, outreach to stakeholders provides broader representative feedback as those organizations advocate for the needs of the populations they serve.



Target audiences

There are three target audiences for this RPTCP or Coordination Plan:

- Community stakeholders,
- Transportation providers (who are, by definition, also stakeholders), and
- Individual members of identified populations (a sub-set of the community at-large):
 - Seniors,
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Low-income residents,
 - Zero-car households,
 - Youth,
 - Residents with limited English proficiency,
 - Veterans,
 - Clients of workforce agencies, and
 - Employment/job seekers.

RCC meetings/workshops

HOTCOG's Regional Coordination Committee has been active since the development of the prior Coordination Plan in 2022. Regular meetings of the RCC included assessment of the Coordination Plan's progress. Individual RCC members also periodically participated in biweekly project status meetings with the consultant team. To complement these efforts, two in-person workshops provided the opportunity for in-depth discussion and direction at key points in the Plan's development. The first workshop was held on January 15, 2026 during the RCC's regularly scheduled meeting. This workshop focused on prioritizing mobility needs and service gaps and the development of a methodology for prioritizing coordination strategies and projects. The second, to be held during the June 2026 RCC meeting, will review goals and strategies developed to address the mobility needs and service gaps, including prioritization of proposed projects.

Pop-up events

Pop-up events offer an informal approach and help engage community members where they already are. They can help overcome transportation barriers for individuals who may not be able to attend a scheduled focus group. These events can be hosted in high foot-traffic areas such as transit centers, grocery stores, social service offices, and libraries. Additionally, partnerships with community stakeholders may present further location opportunities or allow for collaboration by aligning with existing community events.

Thirteen in-person pop-up or tabling events were hosted throughout the six-county project area during the week of October 20, 2025. These events were held at stakeholder locations in different communities to maximize access for the target populations. The final locations included senior centers, stakeholder offices, public libraries, and county or municipal facilities, etc. Interpretation was provided upon request. The community survey was promoted and made available at each pop-up event. A summary of each event is contained in Chapter 2.



Events were held in the following locations:

- Bosque County: Valley Mills, Walnut Springs
- Falls County: Golinda
- Freestone County: Fairfield, Teague
- Hill County: Hillsboro (2)
- Limestone County: Groesbeck, Mexia
- McLennan County: Waco (3)

Stakeholders and transportation providers

Each identified stakeholder received an invitation to participate in the Coordination Plan process by completing the stakeholder questionnaire, which was initially distributed by email. Up to three outreach attempts were made (generally by email and phone) to each stakeholder. Stakeholders not completing the survey online had the opportunity to submit a scanned hard copy of the survey or complete the survey over the phone. A list of all stakeholders included in this outreach is provided in Appendix A.

Stakeholders who fell into the transportation provider category were also invited to complete a separate transportation provider survey. Similar to the stakeholder survey process, multiple attempts were made to obtain a completed survey. Stakeholders also had the option of submitting additional documents (such as fleet inventories or service schedules) along with their completed surveys.

Stakeholder Survey

In September 2025, a self-administered survey was distributed to nearly 300 community stakeholders. The stakeholder engagement included outreach to a wide array of organizations including public, private, and non-profit transportation providers; human services providers; healthcare organizations; advocates of individuals with disabilities, seniors, low-income and unhoused persons, and veterans; workforce agencies; educational institutions; and faith-based organizations. Key findings along with a list of participating stakeholders are provided in Chapter 2. Full details regarding responses to survey questions are provided in Appendix D.

Summary of key findings:

- “Government” accounted for more than half (50.5 percent) of all survey respondents.
- Most common core functions included education (21.1 percent), information/referral (21.1 percent), City or County government/services (17.8 percent), social services (13.3 percent), and healthcare (general) (13.3 percent).
- With respect to “client/member base”, organizational size varied considerably, with one-quarter citing 100 to 149 individuals and 22.8 percent citing 1,000 to 4,999 individuals.
- Four demographic cohorts stood out with respect to populations served: “older adults” (67 percent), “low-income individuals” (62 percent), “non-ambulatory adults with a physical disability” (49 percent), and “ambulatory adults with a physical disability” (48 percent).
- Respondent organizations serve individuals in all six counties within the project area. The two counties with the highest number of responses were Hill (34.3 percent) and McLennan (30.3 percent).



- Twenty percent of respondents directly transport clients while 37.8 percent provide no transportation service or support, either directly or indirectly.
- With respect to other forms of transportation assistance, 36.7 percent refer clients to transportation guides or websites and 23.3 percent provide transportation guides or schedules, while an additional 22.2 percent use 211 Texas to provide their clients with transportation information.
- Respondents indicated having clients who encounter challenges (ranging from “sometimes” to “often”) accessing four relatively common travel destinations: medical (64.6 percent), shopping (51.2 percent), work and/or school (46 percent), and veterans’ services (44 percent).
- Lack of knowledge about available services and/or how to use them represented one of the most common barriers to use of public transportation.
- The most significant challenges respondents cited with respect to providing transportation services were lack of transportation services in the areas served (39.1 percent), lack of operating funding (27.5 percent), insufficient staffing (23.2 percent), and lack of capital funding (vehicle purchases) (21.7 percent). More than 39 percent of stakeholders said transportation was not part of their organization’s core mission.
- Stakeholder organizations are most interested in learning about or participating in coordinated outreach/public engagement (23.8 percent).

Community Survey

A 17-question survey was designed to capture a basic profile of the respondent (e.g., age, preferred language, presence of disability impacting mobility), current mobility behavior and patterns, perceived transportation barriers to accessing day-to-day activities (e.g., work, shopping, healthcare, etc.), and identification of potential motivators/enhancements which could impact/influence future use of the current or enhanced regional transportation network.

The community survey was available August 18 through October 30, 2025. In total, 261 valid responses were received. The survey was available online via the bilingual project webpage and at community events throughout the project area. Key findings are provided in Chapter 2. Full details regarding responses to survey questions are provided in Appendix E.

Key takeaways:

- Survey participation was spread across all six counties with the greatest participation in McLennan county. This is not surprising given McLennan county is home to Waco, the city with the largest population.
- The RPTCP is particularly focused on the mobility needs of historically transportation-disadvantaged individuals including older adults, low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities. While there was some duplication across these demographic cohorts, 37.9 percent self-identified as age 65 or older, 30.3 percent as low-income, and 21.1 percent as having a disability which impacts their mobility.
- Nearly 72 percent of respondents who indicated what types of transportation they used noted driving their own vehicle, while 26.5 percent indicated reliance on family and/or friends. Nearly one-quarter indicated reliance on public transit/transportation.



- Public transit ridership was spread across Waco Transit (50 percent), HOTRTD Blue (40.9 percent), and McLennan Rural Transit (22.7 percent).
- Nearly 40 percent identified a lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing common day-to-day activities, the most common being access to healthcare.
- The most commonly cited transportation challenges were a lack of transportation service to the desired destination, lack of knowledge about how to get/obtain information about transportation services, and transportation services not being available when riders need to travel.
- Travel between an individual's home community and areas within the six-county region was the most frequently cited challenge (28.1 percent of those who indicated having trouble making some types of trips). Specified locations included McLennan, Hill, and Limestone counties.
- Challenges specific to accessing healthcare was the most commonly cited transportation need.
- In terms of travel outside the six-county region, access to destinations in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex was (by far) the most frequently cited need. The most common trip purpose for out-of-area trips was healthcare.

Summary of Observations and Findings from Public Engagement

Throughout the community and stakeholder engagement, the project team encountered several reoccurring themes with respect to transportation challenges. The following is a list of key take-aways based on stakeholder and community survey responses, conversations with individuals and stakeholders, and discussions with HOTCOG staff and the RCC.

1. The most frequently-cited issue was a lack of available transportation service in the rural counties (Blue Transit service area) including:
 - Requested trips were unable to be booked due to a lack of capacity.
 - While Blue Transit officially provides service into the surrounding counties, many out-of-area trips are denied because there is no driver available to make this trip.
 - Some scheduling decisions do not seem to make sense.
 - Having Blue Transit operations centralized in Waco makes it harder to serve rural areas.
2. There are significant challenges associated with traveling out of the six-county region. While neighboring counties are technically served by Blue Transit, the ability to provide those trips is restricted by driver availability, especially under the agency's reduced budget.
3. There were numerous comments about insurance-provided transportation being unreliable, including leaving riders stranded. However, most Medicaid trips are provided by a broker, and decisions about service are out of the hands of the public transportation providers.
4. There appears to be a significant knowledge gap regarding the Blue Transit service, including the type of trips it can be used for and who can use it.
5. There is confusion/frustration about travel into Waco, as travel beyond the initial destination must be made via Waco Transit. Many riders do not appear comfortable with this.
6. The impact of these transportation gaps, including missed healthcare appointments, lack of access to jobs and education, inability to get essential supplies, missed probation reporting, etc., have real and significant impacts on people's lives, more than just not being able to go somewhere.
7. Access to medical providers is often determined by which one they can get transportation to.



8. Despite the issues, there have been some successes. Coordination between Blue Transit and veterans' transportation was able to ensure veterans traveling from the VA facility in Temple would have a connection to return to their homes in the rural area.
9. There is some desire for earlier morning/late afternoon service on weekdays and service on weekends, which could provide more options for doctor appointments as well as enable access to jobs and school. Weekend service could provide an opportunity for shopping and other activities.
10. One stakeholder noted there is a gap for transportation through the insurance provider. For non-emergent appointments, the ride must be scheduled 72 hours ahead. If an appointment is inside that time frame, the client has to call for an ambulance even though it's not an emergency.
11. Long wait times are a concern for some clients, especially those who are elderly. Others, such as veterans with PTSD or anxiety, have trouble with the environment onboard the bus.
12. There is a lack of bus shelters and/or seating at Waco Transit stops, especially in East Waco. Since the routes operate on an hourly basis, longer waits may be required, which can be uncomfortable when there is no shade. (Though it should be noted that Waco Transit allows flag stops, and as such not all potential stops have amenities.)
13. Cost is a concern for some clients, and stakeholder organizations cannot always help.
14. Stakeholders are primarily interested in coordinated outreach and public engagement.
15. Lack of funding appears to be a significant challenge. Blue Transit's budget was reduced this year, and many of the stakeholders do not have any funding available for transportation.
16. While many individuals rely on driving a personal vehicle, there were a number of seniors who indicated they did not like driving into Waco or were cognizant that they were approaching a time in their lives when they might need other transportation options.

Geographic Area Assessment

The Geographic Area Assessment provides geographical context for the project area. It considers the physical location of counties and communities and key trip generators located therein, commute characteristics, primary highways and interstates, and cities located just outside the region's boundaries. Included within Chapter 3 are:

- A map of the Heart of Texas region.
- Methodology for identifying key trip generators.
- Lists of trip generators within each county and one or more maps illustrating the locations of those trip generators.
- Maps identifying job densities within each county.
- Maps identifying commute locations for workers living within each county.

The Geographic Area Assessment also includes a review of completed and ongoing studies and plans to ensure that mobility- and coordination-related recommendations are appropriately considered for inclusion within the updated Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan. Chapter 3 provides a summary of each document, along with the sponsoring organization, the year it was completed, and the geographic area represented by the study or plan. Each entry also reflects key findings and recommendations identified within the Plan with respect to their applicability to transportation and mobility within the HOTCOG region.



The documents included within this literature review include:

Statewide Plans:

1. Texas Triangle Multimodal Strategic Plan (in progress 2026)
2. Texas Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan 2050 (draft plan October 2025)
3. Statewide Active Transportation Plan (2025)
4. Connecting Texas 2050 (Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (2024)

Local/Regional Plans:

1. Convey 2050 Waco Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2025)
2. Waco Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) (2024)
3. City of Waco 25th Street Corridor Implementation Plan (2024)
4. Limestone Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment (2025)
5. Waco-McLennan County Community Health Improvement Plan (2025)
6. Baylor Scott & White Health Waco-McLennan Region Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2025)
7. Freestone Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2024)
8. Bosque County Hospital District/Goodall-Witcher Healthcare Community Health Needs Assessment (2024)
9. Falls Community Hospital and Clinic Community Health Needs Assessment (2024)
10. Waco-McLennan County Community Health Needs Assessment (2023)

Demographic Area Assessment

The Demographic Area Assessment is a useful tool to identify population growth and areas of high latent transportation demand. Chapter 3 includes demographic tables for the region as a whole as well as each individual county. This data helps to visualize population densities by target population and population changes.

Nearly 70 percent of the project area's population resides in McLennan County, and nearly 80 percent resides within the Waco Metropolitan Area. Youth under age 18 comprise nearly a quarter of residents, while seniors age 65 and older make up just under 17 percent.

Nearly 15 percent of residents in the region have a disability, while more than seven percent are veterans. More than 16 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level.

Fewer than nine percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), although nearly 18 percent speak a language other than English at home. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language.

Transportation Services Assessment

The Transportation Services Assessment provides information about transportation providers in the region. A transportation provider is defined as an entity that operates or contracts for such a service, purchases service from another agency, or provides a subsidy to a rider. Data was obtained through a



transportation provider survey, individual transportation provider websites, phone calls, and NTD Transit Agency Profiles.

There are three public transportation providers operating in the region. The Heart of Texas Council of Governments operates Blue Transit, which serves five rural counties (Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone). The Waco Transit System provides service within the Waco Urbanized Area. It also operates McLennan Rural Transit, which serves the non-urbanized portions of McLennan County. Additional transportation service is provided by social service providers and private non-profit and for-profit companies.

Chapter 5 includes information about the transportation providers, including fixed-route and service area maps, fare tables, service parameters, eligibility requirements, operating data, and contact information. In addition, transportation providers responding to the transportation provider survey were also asked to provide their perceptions of unmet transportation needs and most needed coordination efforts. Chapter 5 also details mobility management and other transportation support provided by organizations in the region. A copy of the Transportation Provider Survey instrument is provided in Appendix F.

Transit Needs Index and Maps

The Transit Needs Index (TNI) uses weighted demographic data to identify where transportation needs are more pronounced. Demographic data used in the TNI includes older adults (age 65 and older), individuals with a disability, persons living below the federal poverty level, and households lacking access to a personal vehicle. Demographic data from the American Community Survey, 2023 five-year estimates, for each census tract within each county in the HOTCOG region was utilized in developing the Transportation Needs Index.

Census tract maps for each county are provided, along with a narrative description of the location of each *high* or *very high transit need* census tract. These maps are provided in Chapter 6. Individual tables detailing the TNI calculations for each census tract are provided in Appendix G.

For the *high* and *very high transit need* census tracts located in the rural counties (Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone), transit service is available to the general public through Blue Transit. While there may be issues with capacity, especially for out-of-county trips, the service is available.

In McLennan County, areas within the Waco Urbanized Area are eligible to be served by Waco Transit, while those outside of the urbanized area are served by McLennan Rural Transit. Most of the census tracts located within the Waco Urbanized Area are service in some capacity by Waco Transit, either via a fixed route or through Demand-Response service.

After reviewing the *high* and *very high transit need* census tracts, all of these areas are currently served by public transportation. As a result, no new service is warranted absent the identification of previously unidentified demand.



Transportation Needs and Service Gaps

Nearly all of the transportation needs identified within this Plan can be addressed as part of four core needs: Increased funding for operations, coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, lower fares, and increased outreach and engagement.



Exhibit ES.1 Summary of transportation needs

Core Need	Specific need	Impact	What addressing the need looks like
Increased funding for operations	Service capacity	Dependent on the number of vehicles and drivers available to provide service	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Intra-county and inter-county trips within the primary service area can be provided as needed or on a reasonable schedule. (Local/Regional)
			Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Inter-county trips outside the primary service area can be provided as needed or on a reasonable schedule. (Regional)
			Waco/McLennan County: There are enough drivers to provide the scheduled service. (Local)
	Service reliability	Rides are available when and where the rider needs to travel; highly dependent upon adequate service capacity	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Riders can reasonably expect to be able to use public transportation to meet their mobility needs for intra-county and inter-county trips within the primary service area. (Local/Regional)
			Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Riders can reasonably expect to be able to use public transportation to meet their mobility needs for inter-county trips outside the primary service area. (Regional)
	Weekend service	Enables riders in rural communities to access essential shopping, etc.	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Intra-county and inter-county trips within the primary service area can be provided on weekends as needed or on a reasonable schedule. (Local/Regional)



Core Need	Specific need	Impact	What addressing the need looks like
Coordination with neighboring jurisdictions	Service capacity	Travel outside of the primary service area could be coordinated with a partner agency to optimize vehicle/driver use	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Inter-county trips outside the primary service area could be provided through transfer to a neighboring jurisdiction's transportation provider. (Regional)
			McLennan County: Inter-county trips outside the primary service area could be provided through transfer to a neighboring jurisdiction's transportation provider. (Regional)
Lower fares	Affordability	While transit fares throughout the project area are reasonable, they are still too high for some members of target populations	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Subsidies for low-income riders are provided through a grant or partnerships with local stakeholders. (Local/Regional)
			Waco/McLennan County: Subsidies for low-income riders are provided through a grant or partnerships with local stakeholders. (Local)
Increased outreach and engagement	Raising awareness among target populations	Increases awareness of transportation options and addresses misperceptions	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Individuals within target populations in the rural counties are aware of the transportation options available to them for intra- and inter-county travel. (Local)
	Travel training	Teaches individuals how to use the available transportation options	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Members of target populations in the rural counties understand how to access the available transportation options. (Local)
	Engagement with stakeholders	Seeks coordination and partnerships with stakeholders serving the same target populations	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Stakeholders (including cities, counties, social service providers, etc.) play an active role in supporting access to transportation. (Local/Regional)
			McLennan County: Stakeholders (including cities, counties, social service providers, etc.) play an active role in supporting access to transportation. (Local)



Core Need	Specific need	Impact	What addressing the need looks like
Increased outreach and engagement (continued)	Better communication of transportation provider service information	Reduces confusion by clarifying service days/times and policies	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Comprehensive service information (including service days and times, fares, and policies) is available through multiple formats, including online and in print, as well as in Spanish. (Local/Regional)
			McLennan County: Comprehensive service information (including service days and times, fares, and policies) is available through multiple formats, including online and in print, as well as in Spanish. (Local)



Goals, Strategies, and Projects

Chapter 7 seeks to establish regional goals, along with specific strategies and projects, that reflect the needs identified earlier in the Plan through public engagement. Following an overview of the different types of coordination strategies and common obstacles to coordination, the chapter details a series of regional goals and the strategies identified to address them.

Regional Goals

Within the Coordination Plan, regional goals are based on the needs identified through the public engagement and outreach process as well as the service and gap analysis. Each of the goals is supported by strategies designed to further progress toward that goal. Each strategy is a measurable action that can be objectively assessed.

Five goals have been identified for the HOTCOG region.

Regional Goal 1.0: Ensure sustainability of the transportation network through consistent local support and engagement of local communities.

One of the most significant concerns within transportation is ensuring the services and programs offered to address community needs have sufficient resources for continued operation. Pilot and demonstration projects are excellent opportunities to “test” demand or operational models, but there should always be consideration for how the project or program will be funded once the initial funding (often through a grant) is exhausted. This is especially important for transportation, as people can quickly grow to rely on a program that meets their needs. If that program is eliminated because continuing funding cannot be secured, not only does it significantly impact their mobility, but it can also create distrust or animosity for the provider of the service.

Different types of funding are critical for sustaining a healthy transportation environment. Federal formula funds, such as FTA Section 5310 (seniors and persons with disabilities), 5311 (rural), and 5307 (urban) require a local match. In some cases, additional formula funds are available if there is an additional local match. This local match can include funding from the State or from local jurisdictions (such as cities or counties) or organizations (such as colleges, human service providers, etc.). Partnerships or agreements that contribute to the local match can often make additional federal funding available. Non-transit grant funding secured by local and regional partners can often be used as a local match as well.

Local support is also important with respect to competitiveness for discretionary grant funding. A grant application typically scores higher if there is greater support for the project or program to be funded. Local financial contributions, as well as letters of support, can bolster a grant application’s competitiveness, resulting in greater funding.

Simply put, the ability to provide effective mobility solutions of all types, including the provision of transportation services, is contingent on sufficient funding. Sustainability requires consistent and stable sources of funding as well as regular use of the transportation service by members of the community. The more sources of funding are used, the more sustainable a program is, because it will be impacted less if funding from one source is decreased or eliminated. The greater the number of funders, the less of a burden it is on any one entity, and the better the transportation provider can address the needs of the community through its programs.



Regional Goal 2.0: Improve the reliability of service within rural counties.

At present, service is nominally offered in each of the five rural counties within the HOTCOG region. However, whether or not an individual trip can be delivered is subject to driver and vehicle availability. In recent years Blue Transit has had to adjust its capacity to provide trips based on decreased funding levels. This leaves riders in the rural counties with little certainty that any given trip can be successfully scheduled.

Reliability is a key aspect of any transportation service. Riders not only need to feel confident that they will arrive at their destination on time, but also that they will be able to make the trip at all. When there is a general distrust as to the reliability of a service, fewer people see its value, and fewer potential partners are interested in funding it, resulting in a downward spiral of even lower performance. Ensuring there is ongoing collection and analysis of relevant data both drives how transportation services are delivered and supports partnership and funding opportunities, advocacy, and collaboration.

Regional Goal 3.0: Create partnerships to enhance regional mobility.

Building partnerships is a never-ending process, and the more partnerships that are created, the better opportunities there are for increased local revenue generation and expanded services.

Not all partnerships have to consist of financial support. Coordination with medical offices, for example, where there is a better understanding of the travel constraints of those who arrive via regional public transit, can improve efficiency and greatly improve the rider's overall experience with the trip. Such understanding can impact scheduling and prioritization on the part of the medical office. Other partnerships can offer other types of coordination, such as letters of support for grant funding (as noted in Goal 1.0), joint contracting for maintenance or other services, shared technology or dispatching, advertising partnerships, and more. Partnerships can advance awareness of transportation services and programs in the community, encourage usage of those programs through endorsement by a trusted community partner, and benefit both the partner and the transportation program, as well as enhance reliability and the rider experience.

Regional Goal 4.0: Expand transportation provider capacity to meet the needs of rural communities.

While increasing capacity by increasing funding was discussed under Goal 1.0, there are additional opportunities to expand capacity, especially in rural communities. The obvious step of increasing capacity on existing public transportation providers (including HOT RTD and McLennan Rural) is to increase available funding, especially through local match. Other opportunities to expand capacity may include the development of localized transportation programs that can address needs within a specific community or population, for example, thereby creating the capacity for the rural transportation service to cover more trips. These localized programs could include City- or County-based services as well as those sponsored by health and human services providers. They could include transportation services, voucher programs for ridehailing services (if they exist in the area), volunteer driver programs, mileage reimbursement programs, etc.

Regional Goal 5.0: Increase awareness of available transportation services.

Awareness of a transportation program is critical for its use. However, expanding awareness of a program when that program is already at capacity can be a dilemma. In addition to expanding general awareness of regional transportation programs (including key service information), raising awareness of the



programs and the needs they address is important at the stakeholder level as well. Some of the most important stakeholders in this effort include decision-makers within local jurisdictions, particularly at the county level. In a culture that centers around personal mobility and vehicle ownership, many of those who have never faced a lack of mobility do not understand how prevalent the need for transportation is, especially among those who cannot drive, do not have access to a personal vehicle, or do not have a reliable personal vehicle. Raising awareness and increasing understanding among stakeholders is also the first step in creating advocates for mobility.

Regional Coordination Strategies

While goals represent broad, long-term outcomes to be achieved, strategies represent the methods to be used to help achieve those goals. Strategies and action items can be implemented to further progress toward each goal. Strategies are initially discussed within the narrative in Chapter 7, with additional detail (as required by the TxDOT Coordination Plan Guidebook) provided within the matrix in Appendix H.

Regional Goal 1.0: Ensure sustainability of the transportation network through consistent local support and engagement of local communities.

- **Strategy 1.1: Maintain county-specific data for all rural counties.** Blue Transit serves five rural counties, with some trips into McLennan County to provide access to the urbanized area. At present, Blue Transit tracks the pick-up location but not the drop-off location. In addition, rides that are not able to be negotiated (and are ultimately declined by the rider) are not currently tracked.

Tracking performance (e.g., number of trips) provided on a county- (and/or community-) specific basis, as well as information on both the origin and destination of each trip, and sharing that information within the region would offer insight into the current demand as well as how often an operator travels into another jurisdiction. It will facilitate a more complete look at the demand for transportation overall as well as by individual counties or communities. This data can also be used to demonstrate to rural county decision makers how additional funding could impact the availability and sustainability of service.

While McLennan Rural Transit District only serves a single county, it does provide some trips into the other rural counties. McLennan Rural Transit maintains comprehensive documentation about where riders are traveling and is happy to share its information to enhance the regional understanding of rural mobility.

- **Strategy 1.2: Effectively communicate the public transit message throughout the region.** This strategy is intended to garner support for transportation, both financial and otherwise. If transportation services, particularly public transportation services, are viewed as something “other people” use or a mode of last resort, they hold less value. Raising awareness of how public transportation works and how it addresses the needs of the community also raises the profile of the programs throughout the region.
- **Strategy 1.3: Increase FTA Section 5311 funding by increasing the local match.** There is currently additional FTA Section 5311 funding available, but it is inaccessible because there is an insufficient



local match. At present, each local dollar is essentially doubled as it unlocks an equal amount of federal funding.

There are numerous methods to increase the amount of local match funding, which despite its name can be generated through local contributions or strategies such as federal fund braiding, where federal funds under one program can be used to unlock federal funds under another. Requesting the member counties to contribute to the transit program is one of the most straightforward ways to increase local funding. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) could be employed to define each county's contribution based on population share, or individual contributions could be used to expand service in a specific community or county. HOTCOG could also explore the use of "Rural Texas Strong" Rural Health Transformation prevention funds (Initiative 1) for service to wellness centers as additional local match for Section 5311 funds. Should Blue Transit wish to explore becoming a Medicaid provider, those funds could also be used as a local match to increase Section 5311 funding.

Regional Goal 2.0: Improve the reliability of service within rural counties.

- **Strategy 2.1: Adjust service days/hours to provide more reliable Blue Transit service.** The objective is for Blue Transit to provide as much service as it reliably can. "Reliable service" means that if a rider calls to schedule a trip, they can be confident that the trip can be accommodated within a reasonable time period. This may mean changing its coverage days or service hours until Blue Transit has sufficient funding to reliably serve the current schedule. Blue Transit has already implemented some actions in support of this, such as only providing inter-county service into Waco on certain days of the week. Blue Transit may also wish to examine how it is scheduling trips, keeping at least one vehicle within the county throughout the service day to facilitate shorter intra-county trips. One or more key performance indicators (such as trip requests vs. trip fulfillment) should be defined to measure performance and improvement.

Consistent with Strategy 1.1, knowing what trips are not being served is critical to effective service development. To this end, Blue Transit should not only document trip denials but also trip requests that were not able to be fulfilled. For example, if a rider requests a trip at a particular day and time, but there is no reservation available, they will be provided with an alternative. If the rider does not want to travel using the alternate appointment and cancels the request, that trip is not considered a trip denial, but does represent a trip that could not ultimately be provided. This includes such circumstances as a trip into Waco requested for a Tuesday when the bus only travels on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The rider would be offered a reservation for Wednesday, which they would have the option to accept or decline. As Blue Transit continues to refine its service, and especially when the opportunity arises for it to expand service, it will be critical to understand what travel needs are not currently being met by understanding what trips are not being taken. This data can also help to support funding requests, as it can point to specific conditions that can be improved with additional revenue.

- **Strategy 2.2: Evaluate demand for scheduled or true on-demand service within communities/counties.** Offering scheduled or true on-demand service within a community or county may help improve reliability by providing service that does not need an advance



reservation. A fixed-route circulator that serves defined stops within a single community (or between two communities, if they are close together) even one day per week would help riders who need to access a grocery store, local clinic, pharmacy, laundromat, or other local activity centers. It would also take some of the scheduling burden off of the Blue Transit demand-response service. Another option would be on-demand microtransit operating one or more days per week, which would offer point-to-point service within a defined area but would not require an advance reservation. Documenting actual service and requests for service within each county and/or community would help to assess demand for a localized scheduled or on-demand service.

- **Strategy 2.3: Evaluate demand for inter-county scheduled service.** Documenting actual service within between counties would help to assess demand for scheduled service. “Scheduled service” could mean a fixed route that travels from a rural county into Waco (similar to the commuter routes operated by McLennan Rural Transit), or simply specific days during which Blue Transit provides service from a particular county into Waco. Blue Transit has already initiated the latter option, but it should continue to explore whether fixed-route service between one or more rural counties and Waco would be effective in meeting community transportation needs.
- **Strategy 2.4: Where possible, continue to store Blue Transit vehicles in the county they serve to minimize deadhead travel and potentially increase availability.** There is a perception in the rural counties that, while at one time, Blue Transit vehicles were stored within the county in which they operated, all vehicles are now stored and dispatched from Waco. In reality, some vehicles are stored locally, though possibly not in the same locations as in prior years. Maintaining storage locations within the individual counties minimizes vehicle deadhead time while also reinforcing the idea that Blue Transit operates within that county. Blue Transit may also wish to explore opportunities to reinforce the idea of a “local bus” within the county where a vehicle is stored to generate a sense of ownership of the local service.
- **Strategy 2.5: Consider implementing county-specific service (including intra- and inter-county).** Treating each county (or pairs of counties, as appropriate) as a single service area may help Blue Transit optimize trips. Treating Freestone and Limestone counties, for example, as a single service area (with the intra-county fare) would expand access to essential services and supplies, especially for those who live in Freestone County but have frequent business in Mexia. This would also make it easier to limit inter-county trips.

Regional Goal 3.0: Create partnerships to enhance regional mobility.

- **Strategy 3.1: Engage stakeholders (especially local elected officials and healthcare providers) for local support.** Stakeholders are key partners in regional mobility, either by advocating for transportation or contributing financially. Local elected officials have an important role as stakeholders, as they can be important advocates for transportation services in their communities as well as have input into whether local funding can be provided for transportation. Engagement with elected officials – especially those who are new to their role – is vital to communicating the essential role transportation services play, especially in rural communities. Healthcare providers are also well-positioned as transportation advocates, since access to healthcare is one of the most frequent reasons for rural customers to need transportation services. It is critical for healthcare



providers to not only be aware of the challenges their patients face in accessing care, but knowledgeable about the transportation options available.

- **Strategy 3.2: Conduct outreach to healthcare providers regarding patients who use public or NEMT transportation for travel to appointments.** Raising awareness of the transportation challenges of patients among healthcare providers is the first step. This strategy gives them a potential role to play in improving access to healthcare. While use of public or NEMT transportation should not entitle a rider to special treatment, awareness that a patient is using a transportation service can help inform scheduling or other decisions. For example, if a patient travels into Waco from a rural county using Blue Transit and transit service is only provided on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, an appointment should not be scheduled on a Tuesday or Thursday. This applies to initial appointment setting, follow-up appointments, and any rescheduling that may be necessary. The same principle applies to the timing of appointments – a patient traveling via Blue Transit cannot be scheduled for an early morning or late afternoon appointment. Ideally this same information would be shared between healthcare providers with respect to referrals as well (for labs, specialist appointments, etc.).
- **Strategy 3.3: Partner with transit operators outside the primary service area (where available) to offer connections (transfers) to key destinations.** Establishing relationships with transit operators outside of the HOTCOG region is one way to address mobility needs that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. At present, Blue Transit does provide service into counties in the secondary service area, though the number of trips is modest.

HOTCOG's service area is bordered by 13 counties served by multiple regional rural transit providers. Rather than having Blue Transit vehicles traveling outside of the primary (five-county) service area, they can coordinate a transfer with a neighboring provider. For example, a rider needing to travel to Temple from Falls or Limestone County could transfer to The HOP's rural demand-response service near the Bell County line. This would enable the Blue Transit bus to remain in service within the primary service area while the rider continued on to their destination. However, both operators would need to coordinate to ensure a timely transfer for both directions of travel, which can be challenging.

Regional Goal 4.0: Expand transportation provider capacity to meet the needs of rural communities.

- **Strategy 4.1: Expand service capacity/options based on funding from a specific area/county.** There are two primary methods for expanding transportation provider capacity in rural communities. The first is to provide additional funding for the public transportation provider (e.g., Blue Transit). If a city, county, or community is willing to fund additional service, approaching Blue Transit regarding the desired service may be its first step. (This also ties into Strategy 1.3, wherein additional local funding can be used to generate additional Section 5311 funding.) Another approach would be if a local organization is interested in providing a transportation service. While this would not result in the additional funding available to Blue Transit by increased local funding, it would provide an opportunity for an interested human or social services provider, for example, to introduce a new local service, or for the introduction of an innovative approach to mobility at



a local level. Either way, additional capacity would be created, resulting in the provision of more trips in the local area.

- **Strategy 4.2: Educate and recruit human and social services providers in an effort to expand the pool of qualified Section 5310 providers to better meet community needs.** The FTA Section 5310 program in Waco is administered by Waco Transit, which is responsible for making sure the money that is awarded is spent for its intended purpose. If there is a shortage of human services operators or if the money is not used, it reflects on Waco Transit as the federal recipient. While there has historically not been a lot of interest in local organizations using Section 5310 in the region, this strategy is included in this Plan to ensure any organization interested in qualifying as a Section 5310 provider is given the opportunity to do so. Many organizations choose not to utilize Section 5310 funding due to the administrative requirements, while others may not be aware of how to obtain funding under the program. Increasing available resources and guidance for how Section 5310 funding can be used and what the program requirements are would raise awareness and may result in new Section 5310 providers.
- **Strategy 4.3: Introduce a volunteer driver program and/or mileage reimbursement program (pay-your-pal) in the HOTCOG region to improve mobility, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities.** Introducing non-transit mobility options can often help to meet specific needs of target populations. Two such options are volunteer driver programs and mileage reimbursement programs. These types of programs are frequently sponsored by human or social services organizations, which may or may not operate other transportation programs.

A volunteer driver program relies on a pool of qualified drivers who can be called upon to provide trips. This can be especially valuable for trips outside of regular service hours for public transportation or when other transportation options are not suitable. In a volunteer driver program, volunteer drivers typically use their own vehicles to provide transportation for ambulatory riders who can transfer in and out of a standard vehicle. A sponsoring organization would be responsible for recruiting and screening drivers and matching up the drivers with the persons needing a ride, which would likely require additional funding and may require additional staff. Onboarding a volunteer often includes an application, background check, and orientation/training. However, recruiting volunteer drivers can be one of the most challenging aspects of such a program. Some programs offer a mileage reimbursement stipend to volunteer drivers as an incentive.

An option that requires less management by the sponsoring organization is a mileage reimbursement program, where riders arrange for their own drivers but are able to request reimbursement to pay their driver for the trip. This can be an effective mobility solution for individuals who have someone to drive them, but are afraid of becoming a burden or are unable to help defray the cost of the trip. This type of program would require someone at the sponsoring organization to manage eligibility and fulfill requests for payment, and would likely require additional funding. There are many examples of mileage reimbursement programs specific to transportation that is covered by insurance; however, there are several programs in place across the country that are independent of insurers. All of these programs establish their own eligibility requirements (such as age or disability), registration process, travel documentation requirements,



and reimbursement process. Some also cap the amount of reimbursement an individual can receive in a given month or calendar year.

- **Strategy 4.4: Continue to recruit and retain a sufficient driver pool to provide the full level of service for Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit District.** At the beginning of the update process for the Coordination Plan, a driver shortage in Waco resulted in less service being provided in Waco and McLennan County. Since that time, Waco Transit automated parts of its application process, which expedited the hiring process. At the time of this report, the driver workforce was fully staffed. However, since driver retention is not guaranteed, Waco Transit should continue efforts to recruit and retain qualified drivers on an ongoing basis so as to be able to maintain its full level of service.
- **Strategy 4.5: Explore the introduction of a vanpool program that can provide regular transportation between locations (such as for work and school).** A vanpool program typically has all of the riders gather at the origin location before traveling to the destination location, which can be effective provided those locations are the same for all riders. Consider implementing a vanpool program with opportunities for riders who may live along the path of travel but do not board at the origin destination, or who get dropped off prior to the van reaching its ultimate destination. This could provide more flexibility and potentially result in a greater number of interested riders. While HOTCOG may help facilitate such a program, engaging employer and/or educational partners would be needed in order to maximize the success of a vanpool program.

Regional Goal 5.0: Increase awareness of available transportation services.

- **Strategy 5.1: Improve the service information available online and in print (especially with respect to rural transportation).** While many individuals, especially seniors, prefer to pick up the phone when they have a question, many others would prefer to look for printed or online materials when they need information. It is critical that public transportation providers – especially rural providers – maintain an informative and accurate online presence. For those new to public transportation, having limited information can result in unrealistic expectations or deter them from using the service at all. Having accurate service information available, even if only online, can result in a more well-informed community. Progress on this strategy can be measured by documenting changes in phone calls seeking information, website hits, and overall customer satisfaction.
- **Strategy 5.2: Develop train-the-trainer materials so that travel training can be conducted by local organizations.** While it is not uncommon for a regional entity to conduct travel training, passing such knowledge to local organizations can often be a more effective way to communicate such information. HOTCOG may wish to develop materials that can be used to educate members of local organizations about travel training, who can then pass that information along to members of their own communities or the populations they serve. This can also serve to raise awareness about how public transportation (especially rural public transportation) works without unduly increasing the burden on HOTCOG staff. Effective implementation of this type of program requires the support and participation of local organizations who can set up periodic (or more frequent) travel training sessions for the populations they serve.



- **Strategy 5.3: Improve bus stop infrastructure in Waco.** While Waco Transit does allow flag stops (where a rider can flag down a bus at points along the route other than designated stops), each route does include designated bus stop locations. However, the lack of shelter at bus stop locations was cited several times during the public engagement for this Plan. While this lack of shade may have been the issue riders who provided input were most vocal about, the overarching challenge is an overall lack of infrastructure surrounding Waco Transit bus stops. Before any type of shade structure can be provided, a bus stop needs to include basic features such as an ADA-compliant sidewalk and concrete landing pad. Once those elements are in place, then other amenities (such as a bench or shelter) can be added as warranted. Such bus stop improvements have multiple benefits beyond customer comfort – they ensure ADA compliance by enabling deployment of a wheelchair ramp as well as provide a clear path of travel to the bus stop. Waco Transit has an existing Bus Stop Improvement Plan which should be used to guide the development of stop locations.

Description of Prioritization/Rating Methodology

During RCC Workshop #1 on January 15, 2026, participants were asked to rank the 16 transportation needs identified in Technical Memos #1 and #2 (provided herein in Chapters 2 and 5) as *low*, *medium*, or *high* priority. The purpose of this exercise was to guide the subsequent development of the goals, strategies, and projects.

All results were tallied and a mean rating was calculated for each need. The following rating scale was used to rank each need based on the mean rating as *low*, *medium*, or *high* priority.

- Low: 1.00 to 1.69
- Medium: 1.70 to 2.39
- High: 2.40 to 3.00



Exhibit ES.2 Summary of transportation priorities

Rank	Mean Rating	Score	Need
1	3.00	High	Reliable access to transportation for intra- and inter-county trips (within the primary service area) within the five rural counties. (#4)
2	2.94	High	Greater awareness of transportation options within the five rural counties. (#11)
3	2.88	High	Increased partnerships with and support for transportation from stakeholders in the five rural counties. (#13)
4	2.81	High	Improved access to comprehensive service information for persons in the five rural counties. (#15)
5 (tie)	2.71	High	Greater service capacity for intra- and inter-county trips (within the primary service area) within the five rural counties. (#1)
5 (tie)	2.71	High	A sufficient number of qualified transit drivers to serve Waco and McLennan county. (#3)
6 (tie)	2.56	High	Increased partnerships with and support for transportation from stakeholders in rural McLennan County. (#14)
6 (tie)	2.56	High	Improved access to comprehensive service information for persons in rural McLennan County. (#16)
7	2.38	Medium	Coordinated service between other transportation providers for service outside of the primary service area for the five rural counties. (#7)
8	2.25	Medium	Greater access to travel training for persons in the five rural counties. (#12)
9 (tie)	2.19	Medium	Reliable access to transportation for inter-county trips outside of the primary service area within the five rural counties. (#5)
9 (tie)	2.19	Medium	Coordinated service between other transportation providers for service outside of McLennan County. (#8)
10	2.13	Medium	Weekend service for intra- and inter-county trips (within the primary service area) within the five rural counties. (#6)
11	2.00	Medium	Greater service capacity for inter-county trips outside of the primary service area within the five rural counties. (#2)
12	1.25	Low	More affordable transit fares for travel within the rural counties. (#9)
13	1.00	Low	More affordable transit fares for travel within Waco and McLennan County. (#10)



In addition to prioritizing the transportation needs identified through outreach to the community and transportation providers, RCC Workshop #1 included a discussion of the criteria the committee would like to use for prioritizing the projects and strategies that would be developed in the second half of the project.

The RCC ultimately selected four primary criteria. In order of importance, they were:

1. Works within existing funding available
2. Identifies new funding
3. Improves regional transportation network/coordination
4. Effective communication

Following the meeting, the project team developed a scoring matrix for future projects and strategies. Using the methodology shown below, each project/strategy will receive a score between 0 and 20.

Criterion	Max points
Works within existing funding	5
Identifies new funding	5
Improves regional transportation network/coordination	4
Improves access to information/communication	3
Improves access to transportation services	2
Addresses a project goal/need	1
Total possible points	20

Documentation of Priorities

Both the needs prioritization and the prioritization methodology for scoring projects and strategies were approved by the RCC at its February 19, 2026 meeting. This methodology was used to prioritize the strategies, which were reviewed as part of RCC Workshop #2. The points totals used for calculating the priority level for each strategy are provided in Exhibit ES.3.

All recommended strategies are scored in the following matrix. Resultant scores were categorized within priority levels as follows:

- Low: 11 points or fewer
- Medium: 12 – 13 points
- High: 14 points or higher

The matrix of goals and strategies, which includes the scope, needs addressed, priority level, relative cost, implementation timeline, responsible party, resources needed, potential funding sources, and performance measures, is provided as Appendix H.



Exhibit ES.3 Prioritized list of coordination strategies

Strategy/Project	Works within existing funding (5 pts)	Identifies new funding (5 pts)	Improves regional network/coord. (4 pts)	Improves access to information (3 pts)	Improves access to transportation (2 pts)	Addresses a project goal/need (1 pt)	Total points	Priority
Strategy 1.1: Maintain county-specific data for all rural counties.	5	N/A	4	0	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 1.2: Effectively communicate the public transit message throughout the region.	5	N/A	4	3	2	1	15	High
Strategy 1.3: Increase FTA Section 5311 funding by increasing the local match.	N/A	5	4	3	2	1	15	High
Strategy 2.1: Adjust service days/hours to provide more reliable Blue Transit service.	5	N/A	3	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 2.2: Evaluate demand for scheduled service within communities/counties.	3	1	4	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 2.3: Evaluate demand for inter-county scheduled service.	3	N/A	4	2	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 2.4: Consider housing Blue Transit vehicles in the county they serve to minimize deadhead travel and potentially increase availability.	5	N/A	4	0	1	1	11	Low
Strategy 2.5: Consider implementing county-specific service (including intra- and inter-county).	5	N/A	4	3	2	1	15	High
Strategy 3.1: Engage stakeholders (especially medical providers and local elected officials) for local support.	5	2	4	3	1	1	16	High



Strategy/Project	Works within existing funding (5 pts)	Identifies new funding (5 pts)	Improves regional network/coord. (4 pts)	Improves access to information (3 pts)	Improves access to transportation (2 pts)	Addresses a project goal/need (1 pt)	Total points	Priority
Strategy 3.2: Conduct outreach to medical providers regarding patients who use public or NEMT transportation for travel to appointments.	4	N/A	4	3	0	1	12	Medium
Strategy 3.3: Partner with transit operators outside the primary service area (where available) to offer connections (transfers) to key destinations.	4	NA	4	2	2	1	13	Medium
Strategy 4.1: Expand service capacity/options based on funding from a specific area/county.	N/A	5	4	2	2	1	14	High
Strategy 4.2: Educate and recruit human and social services providers in an effort to expand the pool of qualified Section 5310 providers to better meet community needs.	N/A	4	4	2	0	1	11	Low
Strategy 4.3: Introduce a volunteer driver program and/or mileage reimbursement program (pay-your-pal) in the HOTCOG region to improve mobility, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities.	3	N/A	4	2	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 4.4: Recruit and retain a sufficient driver pool to provide the full level of service for Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit District.	4	N/A	4	1	2	1	12	Medium



Strategy/Project	Works within existing funding (5 pts)	Identifies new funding (5 pts)	Improves regional network/coord. (4 pts)	Improves access to information (3 pts)	Improves access to transportation (2 pts)	Addresses a project goal/need (1 pt)	Total points	Priority
Strategy 4.5: Explore the introduction of a vanpool program that can provide regular transportation between locations (such as for work and school).	2	N/A	4	3	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 5.1: Improve the service information available online and in print (especially with respect to rural transportation).	5	N/A	3	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 5.2: Develop train-the-trainer materials so that travel training can be conducted by local organizations.	4	N/A	4	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 5.3: Improve bus stop infrastructure in Waco.	3	N/A	3	3	2	1	12	Medium



Plan Approval

Documentation of Individuals Included in Plan Adoption **[pending]**

The link to the draft final Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan, which was posted to the project webpage at www.GetConnectedHOT.com as well as www.hotcogtx.gov and www.gobluetransit.com, was distributed to the following entities and individuals:

- Members of the Regional Coordination Committee,
- TxDOT's Regional Public Transportation Coordinator,
- Transportation provider survey respondents,
- Counties located within the region,
- Municipalities located within the region,
- Human service agencies within the region,
- Stakeholder survey respondents, and
- Community survey respondents (who provided an email address and expressed an interest in being updated on the project).

Counties, municipalities, human service agencies, and stakeholders were asked to alert their constituents and clients that the draft final Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan would be available for review online at the aforementioned website from August 11, 2026 through September 11, 2026. A printed version was also made available at the HOTCOG offices, located at 1514 S. New Road in Waco, during business hours.

Steps Completed for RPTCP Adoption **[pending]**

All comments received during the public review period were documented and reviewed. Comments and feedback, as well as a summary of requested changes and actions taken, is provided in Appendix I.

The RCC met on September 24, 2026, to review the feedback received and determine if any additional revisions were needed. The revised draft final Coordination Plan was presented as a red-line version with the input/requested changes and the proposed changes to the document. The RCC determined the document with the proposed changes reflected its direction and appropriately integrated the public and stakeholder feedback received during the comment period. The RCC subsequently voted to adopt the Regional Public Transportation Plan as amended during the meeting.

Individuals involved in the adoption of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan were as follows:

- Carey Amthor, Friends for Life
- Judge Shane Brassell, Hill County
- April Cook, Hill County Indigent Health Care
- Judge Richard Duncan, Limestone County
- Judge Jay Elliott, Falls County
- Judge Scott Felton, McLennan County
- Jefferson Gunn, Heart of Texas National Federation of the Blind



- Melissa Ingriola, Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center
- James Jarmon, Meals on Wheels Waco
- Commissioner Will Jones, McLennan County
- Mukesh Kumar, Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Susan Nemmer, McLennan County
- Frank Patterson, McLennan Community College
- Jason Pettegrow, Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network
- Rep Pledger, Blue Transit
- Will Roe, City of Marlin
- Meredith Stephens, Texas Workforce Solutions
- Serena Stevenson, Waco Transit/McLennan Rural Transit
- Julie Talbert, Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions Development Board
- Heather Travers, McLennan County Health Services
- Danielle Utrera, Veterans Affairs
- Keith Vandiver, Bosque County Senior Services
- Judge Cindy Vanlandingham, Bosque County
- John Vorderkunz, HOTCOG Health and Human Services Director

The required signature page is provided in Chapter 9.



Volume 1: Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
Introduction.....	i
Planning for the Heart of Texas Region.....	i
Public Engagement	i
Geographic Area Assessment.....	vi
Demographic Area Assessment	vii
Transportation Services Assessment.....	vii
Transit Needs Index and Maps.....	viii
Transportation Needs and Service Gaps	ix
Goals, Strategies, and Projects.....	xiii
Description of Prioritization/Rating Methodology	xxi
Documentation of Priorities.....	xxiii
Plan Approval.....	xxvii
Chapter 1 RPTCP Content and Organization.....	1
Lead Agency Description and Contact.....	1
RCC Representatives List.....	1
RCC Vision, Mission, and Bylaws	2
Chapter 2 Public Outreach and Community Engagement	7
Public Outreach Plan.....	7
RCC and Stakeholder Meetings.....	14



Summary of Pop-Up Events	15
Stakeholder Survey	22
Community Survey.....	26
Summary of Observations and Findings from Public Engagement	27
Chapter 3 Geographic Area Assessment	31
Heart of Texas Region	31
Area Trip Generators and Methodology	33
Commute Data.....	33
Literature Review.....	63
Chapter 4 Demographic Area Assessment	81
Heart of Texas Region	81
Bosque County.....	82
Falls County	83
Freestone County	84
Hill County	85
Limestone County.....	87
McLennan County.....	88
Chapter 5 Transportation Services Assessment	91
Transportation Service Profiles	91
Public Transportation Providers.....	91
Social Service Transportation Providers.....	102
Private Transportation Providers	104
Other Transportation Providers	106
Other Transportation Assistance	107



Chapter 6 Transportation Needs and Gaps Assessment.....	109
Transit Needs Index and Maps.....	109
Summary of Area Transportation Needs/Gaps and Methodology	117
Chapter 7 Goals, Strategies, and Projects.....	123
Documentation of Goals and Strategies.....	123
Coordination Overview	123
Regional Goals	125
Regional Coordination Strategies.....	127
Chapter 8 Priorities	135
Description of Prioritization/Rating Methodology	135
Documentation of Priorities.....	138
Chapter 9 Plan Approval.....	143
Documentation of Individuals Included in Plan Adoption [pending]	143
Steps Completed for RPTCP Adoption [pending]	143
Signature Page.....	145

Appendices A – I are provided as Volume 2.



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Table of Exhibits

Exhibit ES.1 Summary of transportation needs	x
Exhibit ES.2 Summary of transportation priorities	xxii
Exhibit ES.3 Prioritized list of coordination strategies	xxiv
Exhibit 3.1 Map of Heart of Texas Region.....	32
Exhibit 3.2 Bosque County trip generators	35
Exhibit 3.3 Bosque County job density	36
Exhibit 3.4 Bosque County work destinations	36
Exhibit 3.5 Bosque County commute distance	37
Exhibit 3.6 Bosque County work inflow/outflow	37
Exhibit 3.7 Falls County trip generators	39
Exhibit 3.8 Falls County job density	40
Exhibit 3.9 Falls County work destinations	40
Exhibit 3.10 Falls County commute distance	41
Exhibit 3.11 Falls County work inflow/outflow	41
Exhibit 3.12 Freestone County trip generators.....	43
Exhibit 3.13 Freestone County job density	44
Exhibit 3.14 Freestone County work destinations	44
Exhibit 3.15 Freestone County commute distance	45
Exhibit 3.16 Freestone County work inflow/outflow	45
Exhibit 3.17 Hill County trip generators.....	48
Exhibit 3.18 Hill County job density	49
Exhibit 3.19 Hill County work destinations	49
Exhibit 3.20 Hill County commute distance	50
Exhibit 3.21 Hill County work inflow/outflow	50
Exhibit 3.22 Limestone County trip generators	53
Exhibit 3.23 Limestone County job density.....	54
Exhibit 3.24 Limestone County work destinations.....	54
Exhibit 3.25 Limestone County commute distance	55
Exhibit 3.26 Limestone County work inflow/outflow	55
Exhibit 3.27 McLennan County trip generators	59
Exhibit 3.28 McLennan County trip generators – Waco area	60
Exhibit 3.29 McLennan County job density.....	61
Exhibit 3.30 McLennan County work destinations	61
Exhibit 3.31 McLennan County commute distance	62
Exhibit 3.32 McLennan County work inflow/outflow	62
Exhibit 4.1 Heart of Texas Region demographics.....	81
Exhibit 4.2 Bosque County demographics	82
Exhibit 4.3 Falls County demographics	83



Exhibit 4.4	Freestone County demographics	85
Exhibit 4.5	Hill County demographics	86
Exhibit 4.6	Limestone County demographics.....	87
Exhibit 4.7	McLennan County demographics	88
Exhibit 5.1	Blue Transit service area	92
Exhibit 5.2	McLennan Rural Transit service area	95
Exhibit 5.3	McLennan Rural Transit commuter routes	95
Exhibit 5.4	Waco Transit system map	98
Exhibit 5.5	Waco Transit ADA Paratransit/Demand-Response service area	99
Exhibit 5.6	Waco Transit Micro Dash service zones.....	100
Exhibit 5.7	Baylor University Shuttle system map	101
Exhibit 5.8	Baylor University Shuttle After Hours route	102
Exhibit 6.1	TNI ratings for Bosque County census tracts	110
Exhibit 6.2	TNI ratings for Falls County census tracts	111
Exhibit 6.3	TNI ratings for Freestone County census tracts	112
Exhibit 6.4	TNI ratings for Hill County census tracts	113
Exhibit 6.5	TNI ratings for Limestone County census tracts	114
Exhibit 6.6	TNI ratings for McLennan County census tracts	116
Exhibit 6.7	Transportation Needs	119
Exhibit 8.1	Prioritized list of transportation needs	136
Exhibit 8.2	Prioritized list of coordination strategies.....	139



Chapter 1 | RPTCP Content and Organization

Lead Agency Description and Contact

The Lead Coordination Agency for TxDOT Planning Region 11 (Heart of Texas), comprised of Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan counties, is the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG).

Established in 1966, the Heart of Texas Council of Governments is an organization of local governments working together voluntarily to solve mutual problems and plan for the future of the six county area. HOTCOG currently has over 80 member governments including counties, cities, school districts, community colleges, and special districts.

HOTCOG is located at 1514 S. New Road in Waco, Texas. Russell Devorsky serves as the Executive Director. The HOTCOG point of contact for the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan is Rep Pledger, Transportation Director.

RCC Representatives List

The Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Committee serves as the Regional Coordination Committee (RCC). The RCC is comprised of representatives from a variety of stakeholder organizations throughout the region. At the time of the preparation of this Plan, representatives included the following:

- Carey Amthor, Friends for Life
- Susan Baker, Bosque County Senior Services
- Judge Shane Brassell, Hill County
- April Cook, Hill County Indigent Healthcare
- Judge Richard Duncan, Limestone County
- Judge Jay Elliott, Falls County
- Judge Scott Felton, McLennan County
- Jefferson Gunn, Heart of Texas National Federation of the Blind
- Melissa Ingriola, Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOTILC)
- James Jarmon, Meals on Wheels Waco
- Commissioner Will Jones, McLennan County
- Dylan Kincaid, Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOTILC)
- Mukesh Kumar, Waco MPO
- Judge Lloyd Lane, Freestone County
- Katie Laubender, Baylor Center for Disabilities
- Donald McDonald, Limestone County Veterans Services
- Jonathan Mize, Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions (Individuals with Disabilities)
- Susanne Nemmer, McLennan County
- Brad Orban, Hill County
- Stephanie Overall, Freestone County Senior Center
- Sara Page, Veteran Affairs



- Frank Patterson, McLennan Community College
- Jason Pettegrow, Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network
- Rep Pledger, HOTCOG Transportation and Heart of Texas Rural Transportation District (RTD)
- Nora Roy, Waco MPO
- Greta Russell, Limestone County Senior Center
- Christine Schroeder-Morren, Friends for Life
- Meredith Stephens, Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions (Vocational Rehabilitation)
- Serena Stevenson, Waco Transit System, Inc. and McLennan County Rural Transit District
- Julie Talbert, Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions (Children and Transportation)
- Elizabeth Thomas, Waco Emergency Management
- Aaron Torres, Hill County Elections
- Heather Travers, McLennan County Health Services
- Danielle Utrera, Veteran Affairs
- Keith Vandiver, Bosque County Senior Services
- Judge Cindy Vanlandingham, Bosque County
- John Vorderkunz, HOTCOG Health and Human Services and Area Agency on Aging of the Heart of Texas (AAA)
- Susan Wilson, EOAC Waco (Head Start)

The Chair of the RCC for FY 2025/26 was Judge Jay Elliott (Falls County). The Vice-Chair position was vacant.

A full list of the stakeholders contacted with respect to the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan, which includes all members of the RCC, is provided in Appendix A. Organizations that responded by completing the stakeholder survey are detailed in Chapter 2.

RCC Vision, Mission, and Bylaws

Vision Statement

Our vision of public transportation for the Heart of Texas Region will be systems that coordinate with all service providers within and adjacent to our service area to create a seamless multimodal transportation network that assists in meeting the region's economic, environmental, and quality of life objectives.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Regional Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC) in the development and maintenance of our transportation plan is to serve people residing in, working in, or visiting the Heart of Texas region by providing reliable, safe, affordable, efficient and accessible public transportation through innovative and sustainable transportation practices.



Goals and Objectives

Goal # 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.

Goal # 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.

Goal # 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.

Goal # 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.

Goal # 5 – Network Safety and Security

Enhancement of safety and security measures which 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 manmade disasters and other emergencies are in place to decrease a negative impact on the transportation network.

Bylaws of the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

ARTICLE I – COMMITTEE NAME

The name of this Committee shall be the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (HOTRTAC), hereinafter called the Advisory Committee.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES

The Advisory Committee serves as a forum on efforts to improve coordination and connectivity between public transit services, private transportation services, and human services/health care transportation in the region. Activities of the Advisory Committee shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- A. Serve as the advisors for regional transportation coordination, including for updates of the Regional Transportation Coordination Plan.
- B. Serve as focal point for leadership on passenger, human service, and health care transportation issues in the region.
- C. Facilitate the collaboration of regional transportation coordination activities.
- D. Assess barriers to regional services and identify opportunities to improve coordination and connectivity.
- E. Advise on priorities for regional transportation coordination in the Heart of Texas region.
- F. Review and make recommendations as appropriate on the priorities for new or expanded services, purchases of equipment, training, communications, safety/security and other goods or services related to regional transportation coordination.
- G. Provide support for regional transit projects and proposals, when consistent with the goals, objectives and projects outlined in the Regional Transportation Coordination Plan.
- H. Promote public awareness of transportation services and issues, as well as programs, plans, and objectives, through frequent publicity, presentations to civic organizations and other interested groups.
- I. Identify and establish relationships with groups, agencies, and individuals providing transportation services.
- J. Review and discuss opportunities for coordinating transportation services with other regions in Texas to help expand mobility.



ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Composition of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee consists of elected officials, individuals representing local governments, government agencies, human service and health care providers or agencies and representatives who provide service or support related to public transportation in the Heart of Texas Region. The following 10 organizations will be represented:

- One representative from each county as designated by the County Judge
- One representative from each of the two transit systems
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Rural Planning Organization
- One human service/health care representative

Section 2. Membership

Each organization represented can select their designated representative. Each organization should determine who will represent the organization for any particular meeting. In the event of a vote, each organization represented will have one vote in total. There is no specific term limit for representatives – that will be up to each organization to determine.

Section 3. Attendance

Represented organizations' representatives are expected to attend all meetings. HOTCOG staff will maintain attendance records. Advisory Committee representative may attend in person or via video.

HOTCOG will monitor the attendance and proactively work with committee members that fail to send a representative for two quarterly meetings in a rolling 12-month period.

Section 4. Adding New Members

Additional representatives to the Advisory Committee may be added as either voting or non-voting members. Interested transportation stakeholders may request membership on the Advisory Committee. Membership requests will be put to a vote of the members present. A simple majority will allow for additional members

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

Section 1. Meeting Schedules

The Advisory Committee will meet at least quarterly. An annual schedule of meetings will be distributed to all Advisory Committee members. Special meetings may be called by HOTCOG. Notice of all special meetings will be provided to members at least two weeks prior. Public notices and meetings will be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Section 2. Voting

All representative organizations of the Advisory Committee (voting members) shall have one vote for all matters before the Advisory Committee. The vote of a majority (51%) of the members present shall decide any motion before the Advisory Committee.



ARTICLE V - CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Advisory Committee members shall not vote if they have a personal or business interest in any proposal being reviewed or voted on. An interest shall be considered to exist if a person has a financial interest through employment, contract, subcontract, or as a consultant, owner, board member or committee member related to the project being reviewed, proposed, or discussed.

ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS

Proposed by-law amendments can be made by Advisory Committee members and discussed at a regular meeting. If approved by the committee, the proposed amendment will be forwarded to HOTCOG. Proposed amendments become effective when approved by the HOTCOG Board of Directors.



Chapter 2 | Public Outreach and Community Engagement

While public engagement is an important component of any transportation planning project, it is absolutely essential for the development of a Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan. Given the goals, strategies, and projects arising from this Plan must be reflective of transportation needs and service gaps, extensive outreach must be conducted in order to accurately capture those needs and gaps. As the target populations for this Plan may be difficult to engage individually, outreach to stakeholders provides broader representative feedback as those organizations advocate for the needs of the populations they serve.

Within this chapter is a summary of the public outreach and community engagement conducted in support of this Coordination Plan. It details the initial public engagement plan, which is followed by summaries of all community and stakeholder engagement activities. These include community and stakeholder surveys, discussions with HOTCOG committees and individual stakeholders, and in-person pop-up events held throughout the six-county area. Appendices C, D, and E (provided separately in Volume 2) contain a full analysis of the data received via the surveys as well as samples of the materials used as part of the outreach activities.

Public Outreach Plan

Effective public engagement is foundational to preparation of a successful Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan (Plan). As such, Moore & Associates prepared a Public Engagement Plan (PEP) detailing opportunities to encourage and facilitate input from project stakeholders as well as individuals within each of the Coordination Plan's target demographic groups including older adults, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, persons living in zero-car households, youth, persons with limited English proficiency, veterans, clients of workforce agencies, and employment/job seekers. Ultimately, the PEP sought to identify target audiences, recruitment methods, events/activities, times, locations, special accommodations, feedback mechanisms, non-traditional outreach strategies, and proposed engagement materials.

Utilizing TxDOT's Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan Guidebook (February 2025) as a resource, the first step in creation of the PEP was stakeholder identification and recruitment. Fortunately, the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) had an established and active Regional Coordination Committee (RCC). The RCC is a voluntary group of nineteen citizens appointed by specific regional agencies and/or organizations to represent their constituencies concerning 1) public ground transportation matters, 2) to oversee the progress of the regional transportation coordination plan, and 3) provide information, insight, and direction in preparation of the region's submissions pertaining to TxDOT's Coordinated Call for Projects. The RCC makes recommendations in an advisory capacity to the HOTCOG Executive Committee and the HOTCOG Rural Transit District.

The approved Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan is the basic "blueprint" for public ground transportation initiatives the Heart of Texas COG's six-county service area: Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan counties.



The Plan is subject to modification as recommended by the RCC, approved by the HOTCOG Executive Committee, and ultimately by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

Target Audiences

There are three target audiences for this Coordination Plan:

- Community stakeholders (including members of the general public),
- Transportation providers (who are, by definition, also stakeholders), and
- Individual members of identified populations (a sub-set of the community at-large):
 - Seniors,
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Low-income residents,
 - Zero-car households,
 - Youth,
 - Residents with limited English proficiency,
 - Veterans,
 - Clients of workforce agencies, and
 - Employment/job seekers.

HOTCOG's established Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) includes representatives from each of the six counties (typically the County Judge) as well as from the following organizations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Area Agency on Aging of the Heart of Texas (AAAHOT) | • Hill County Elections |
| • Baylor Center for Disabilities | • Hill County Indigent Healthcare |
| • Friends for Life | • HOTCOG |
| • Health and Human Services Commission | • McLennan Community College |
| • Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOTILC) | • McLennan County Health Services |
| • Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network | • McLennan County Rural Transit District |
| • Heart of Texas Council of Governments | • Meals on Wheels Waco |
| • Heart of Texas Rural Transportation District | • Rural Planning Organization |
| • Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions | • Veterans Administration |
| | • Waco Emergency Management |
| | • Waco MPO |
| | • Waco Transit System, Inc. |

Development of the 2026 update of the Coordination Plan included the identification of additional stakeholders serving the target populations. Methods for identifying additional stakeholders to participate in the process included referrals from HOTCOG and/or RCC members, review of the prior Coordination Plan, and online research. Such additional stakeholders included:

- County governments,
- City/town governments,
- Healthcare providers,



- Social service organizations,
- Educational institutions,
- Veterans agencies,
- Workforce agencies,
- Food pantries/low-income outreach,
- Faith-based organizations providing community services,
- Youth services, and
- Senior services.

Concurrent with the identification of additional stakeholders was the identification of additional transportation providers. This included public transit providers as well as other public, private, non-profit, or for-profit entities operating a transportation service, contracting for transportation service, purchasing service from another agency, or providing a rider subsidy, as well as mobility management programs.

Events

Community and stakeholder engagement focused chiefly on two types of events: RCC meetings and workshops and pop-up (tabling) events.

RCC meetings/workshops

HOTCOG's Regional Coordination Committee has been active since the development of the prior Coordination Plan in 2022. RCC meetings are generally held on the third or fourth Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m., with lunch preceding at 12:30 pm. Meetings are held in person at the HOTCOG office, located at 1514 S. New Road in Waco. All meetings are open to the public.

Regular meetings of the RCC included an update on the Coordination Plan's progress, which was generally provided virtually. Two in-person workshops were also scheduled, which provided the opportunity for in-depth discussion and direction at key points in the Plan's development. The first workshop was held on January 15, 2026 during the RCC's regularly scheduled meeting. This workshop focused on prioritizing mobility needs and service gaps and the development of a methodology for prioritizing coordination strategies and projects. The second, to be held during the June 2026 RCC meeting, will review goals and strategies developed to address the mobility needs and service gaps, including prioritization of proposed projects.

Pop-up events

Pop-up events offer an informal approach and help engage community members where they already are. They can help overcome transportation barriers for individuals who may not be able to attend a scheduled focus group. These events can be hosted in high foot-traffic areas such as transit centers, grocery stores, social service offices, and libraries. Additionally, partnerships with community stakeholders may present further location opportunities or allow for collaboration by aligning with existing community events.

Thirteen in-person pop-up events were held across the six counties within the project area during October 2025. Each session was held in a different community so as to offer broad geographic coverage and attendance opportunities. These sessions were held at varying times of day, and locations were selected which aligned with the availability of public transportation so as to facilitate access to the events. The final locations included senior centers, stakeholder offices, public libraries, and county or municipal



facilities, etc. Interpretation was provided upon request. The community survey was promoted and made available at each pop-up event.

- Bosque County: Valley Mills, Walnut Springs
- Falls County: Golinda
- Freestone County: Fairfield, Teague
- Hill County: Hillsboro (2)
- Limestone County: Groesbeck, Mexia
- McLennan County: Waco (3)

Additional potential events (non-Plan-specific)

Coordination Plan information was also distributed by HOTCOG and stakeholders as part of existing events or outreach activities. While not formally part of the Public Engagement Plan, any entity wishing to distribute information about the Plan, particularly regarding the Coordination Plan website and community survey, was provided with appropriate materials to do so. This included promotion of the community survey by HOTCOG during back-to-school events taking place in early August 2025.

Materials

The following materials (physical and digital) were used to provide information about the Coordination Plan and gather input from stakeholders and the community:

- Bilingual project webpage (English and Spanish), inclusive of background information about the Coordination Plan, upcoming events, deliverables, community survey, etc.
- Community survey (digital and physical; bilingual English/Spanish)
- Stakeholder questionnaire (digital; English only)
- Transportation provider questionnaire (digital; English only)
- Signage for posting onboard transit/transportation vehicles (with key project information, QR code to the community survey, etc.)
- Online comment form
- RCC meeting and workshop materials:
 - MS PowerPoint presentations
 - Draft versions of surveys and questionnaires for review and comment
 - Comprehensive list of stakeholders and transportation providers
 - Display boards or printed information summaries
 - Project deliverables

Examples of materials used throughout the Plan are provided in this chapter as well as in Appendices B, C, D, E, and F.

Feedback Mechanisms

Individual members of target populations

While outreach to the community at-large is not a key component of the Coordination Plan, providing the general public with an opportunity to provide input on the Plan is a valuable activity. Not only was this intended to engage persons within the target populations who may not have participated in other



activities, but it would also raise awareness of the coordination planning process within the community at-large.

Two primary feedback mechanisms were available to the community and individual members of the target populations:

- Community survey and
- Bilingual project webpage.

The community survey (which was made available in both print and online via the project webpage) was promoted chiefly through HOTCOG communications channels, project stakeholders, transportation providers, member counties, and cities and towns, as well as via the bilingual project webpage. The survey was also promoted to current transit customers in lieu of a separate rider survey.

The primary purpose of the bilingual English/Spanish survey was twofold: First, to capture geographic and demographic information about respondents, determining where they reside and which of the target populations they represent. Second, to document sufficient information about issues individuals may have with respect to accessing essential trips.

All respondents had the option to take the survey anonymously. A first name and contact information (either phone number or email) was required to be eligible for a random drawing for a series of \$50 VISA gift cards. Printed and digital (.pdf) versions of the survey were made available to any organization or jurisdiction wishing to distribute the survey to its respective constituents.

A link to the community survey was also available on the bilingual (English/Spanish) project webpage (discussed in further detail under Non-traditional Engagement Techniques). The webpage also featured an online comment mechanism open to the general public.

[Stakeholders and transportation providers](#)

All identified stakeholders received an invitation to participate in the Coordination Plan process by completing the stakeholder questionnaire, which was initially distributed by email. Up to three outreach attempts were made (generally by email and phone) to each stakeholder. Stakeholders who did not complete the survey online had the opportunity to submit a scanned hard copy of the survey or take the survey over the phone.

Stakeholders who fell into the transportation provider category were also invited to complete a separate transportation provider survey. Similar to the stakeholder survey process, multiple attempts were made to obtain a completed survey. Respondents also had the option to submit additional documents (such as fleet inventories or service schedules) along with their completed surveys.

Initial outreach to stakeholders and transportation providers took place in September 2025, with follow-up activities continuing into October 2025.



Non-traditional Engagement Techniques

Non-traditional engagement techniques included:

- A bilingual (English/Spanish) project webpage which included general information about the Coordination Plan, focus group recruitment information, and details regarding RCC meetings and workshops. Interim project deliverables were posted to the website following review by the RCC. The project webpage was updated approximately every three weeks to ensure information regarding public engagement opportunities remained current. The webpage complied with standards for accessibility under WCAG 2.1.
- Links to surveys (URL/QR code) which were distributed to project participants/clients/etc.
- Digital content (URL/QR code to survey, graphics, narrative content) for posting on social media (Facebook, X, Instagram, etc.) and/or stakeholder websites. This messaging promoted upcoming project activities and participation opportunities, and served to notify the community at-large that the draft RPTCP was available for review and comment. Digital content was provided to stakeholders to encourage participation by their respective constituencies.
- A link to the online bilingual community survey on/from the bilingual (English/Spanish) project webpage.
- Inclusion of a comment mechanism on the bilingual (English/Spanish) project webpage.

Documentation and Reporting

All public engagement activities, materials, and surveys/questionnaires are documented within the final Coordination Plan. This is expected to include, at a minimum:

- Community survey:
 - Survey instruments (English and Spanish)
 - Methodology (including total number of responses)
 - Simple frequencies
 - Data cross-tabulations (including segregating responses by members of target populations where appropriate)
 - Tables, charts, and graphs (as appropriate)
 - Analysis of responses
 - Key findings/summary
- Stakeholder questionnaire:
 - Stakeholder questionnaire (English)
 - Methodology
 - Identified/invited entities
 - Participating entities
 - Simple frequencies
 - Data cross-tabulations (as appropriate)
 - Tables, charts, and graphs (as appropriate)
 - Analysis of responses
 - Key findings/summary
- Transportation providers questionnaire:
 - Transportation providers questionnaire (English)
 - Methodology



- Responding entities
 - Profiles of transportation provider
 - Tables, charts, and graphs (as appropriate)
 - Key findings/summary
- Pop-up events:
 - Documentation of event dates and times
 - Target populations reached
 - Number of interactions
 - Number of community surveys collected
 - Summary of discussion/comments
 - Photographs of events
- Additional (non-Plan) outreach activities:
 - Name of participating entity
 - Summary of event
- RCC meetings:
 - Documentation of event dates, times, and locations
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Summary of discussion
 - Meeting minutes (including attendee list)
- RCC workshops:
 - Documentation of event dates, times, and locations
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Informational materials distributed
 - Summary of discussion
 - Meeting minutes (including attendee list)
- Deliverables:
 - Project status meeting minutes
 - Public Engagement Plan (updated as needed)
 - Technical Memo #1: Summary of Stakeholder and Public Input
 - Technical Memo #2: Existing Conditions Analysis
 - Draft Interim Coordination Plan
 - Interim Coordination Plan
 - Technical Memo #3: Preliminary Goals and Strategies (including summary of how input shaped or helped prioritize unmet needs, strategies, and/or projects)
 - Draft Final Coordination Plan
 - Final Coordination Plan
 - Adopted Coordination Plan



RCC and Stakeholder Meetings

Meetings of the RCC and other stakeholder committees were held throughout the project period. Those meetings and key activities are described below.

HOTCOG Regional Coordination Committee Meetings

HOTCOG RCC meetings were held on the following dates:

- July 24, 2025
- August 21, 2025
- September 25, 2025
- October 23, 2025
- November 20, 2025
- January 15, 2026 (also RCC Workshop #1)
- February 19, 2026
- March 26, 2026
- April 23, 2026
- May 28, 2026
- June 18, 2026 (also RCC Workshop #2)

Full meeting minutes, presentations, and other materials are included as Appendix B. Comments regarding specific meetings are provided below. Individual RCC members also periodically participated in biweekly project status meetings with the consultant team.

HOTCOG Regional Coordination Committee Meeting (October 23, 2025)

On October 23, 2025, the RCC met with the consultant in-person to discuss the status of the project as well as key issues. The meeting included representation from HOTCOG, Moore & Associates, Waco Transit, Texas Workforce Solutions, and Waco Foundation for the Blind. The consultant provided an update on the status of the ongoing community engagement.

Members of the RCC were particularly interested in coordinating transportation with regions outside of the six-county service area. One committee member who relies on transit tried to plan a trip outside of the region, but was ultimately unable to coordinate the travel, relying instead on a family member to drive them. Such coordination could include working with neighboring providers (such as Brazos Transit District or The HOP) to identify a location where riders could transfer from one service to another. Coordination issues to take into account include reliability and time constraints as well as reimbursement (which will require consideration by TxDOT). There is also interest in considering a regional fare system so that riders can travel on different transit systems using a single fare medium. This is something that can be included as a need in the Coordination Plan, which will enable it to be prioritized and for solutions/strategies to be identified.

HOTCOG Health and Human Services Coordinating Council (October 23, 2025)

On October 23, 2025, the consultant met with HOTCOG's Health and Human Services Coordinating Council, which includes persons representing the needs of health and human services consumers including older persons, minority individuals, persons with disabilities, caregivers, advocates for health



and human service provider organizations, advocates for transportation provider organizations, advocates for support service organizations, local elected officials, and the general public. An update on the Coordination Plan was provided and all attendees were invited to complete a stakeholder survey if they had not already and provided with the consultant's contact information if they would like to submit comments. The discussion regarding the Plan was relatively short given other items on the agenda (which were concerned with the ongoing federal government shutdown).

HOTCOG Regional Coordination Committee Workshop #1 (January 15, 2026)

On January 15, 2026, the regular RCC meeting featured a presentation of Technical Memoranda #1 and #2 by the project team. In addition, the workshop included interactive activities to 1) prioritize the needs identified through public engagement and existing conditions assessment and 2) develop a prioritization methodology for evaluation of projects and strategies identified in the second half of the Plan development.

HOTCOG Regional Coordination Committee Meeting (February 19, 2026)

On February 19, 2026, the regular RCC meeting included a presentation of the final results of the needs prioritization and project prioritization methodology activities conducted during RCC Workshop #1.

HOTCOG Regional Coordination Committee Workshop #2 (June 18, 2026)

On June 18, 2026, the regular RCC meeting featured a presentation of Technical Memoranda #3 by the project team. In addition, the workshop included in-depth discussion of the goals and strategies presented within that document.

Summary of Pop-Up Events

In-person pop-up events were held throughout the six-county area during the week of October 20, 2025. Where possible, they were held at stakeholder locations to maximize access to target populations. In other communities, they were held at easily accessible locations typically frequented by members of target populations, such as local public libraries. A list of the events is provided below, along with a summary of each.

For each of the events, the outreach team utilized a table featuring community surveys in English and Spanish, a one-page information sheet about the Coordination Plan project in English and Spanish, comment cards in English and Spanish, business cards in English and Spanish with a QR code and link to the project webpage and community survey, transit information, and the HOTCOG Resource Guide. These materials are provided in Appendix C. Small bottles of water and a dish of wrapped candies were also offered to make the display more enticing.



Event #1: Hillsboro Public Library, 118 Waco St, Hillsboro (Hill County), 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Target population: Limited English proficient, all

Number of individuals engaged: 12 (6 in Spanish)

Number of community surveys collected: 6

Summary of discussion/comments: This event was timed to coincide with an English as a Second Language (ESL) class taking place at the library. A Spanish-speaking team member engaged students in Spanish as they exited the class. About six of the ESL attendees stopped at the table and several of them took the survey. One woman said she would take it at home and wanted her mother-in-law to fill one out, as she had been missing doctor's appointments. Several were not aware of the Blue Transit service. One indicated losing her space in a GED class due to a lack of transportation. Others said they were uncomfortable driving on the highways. Over



the rest of the event the team spoke with another six individuals and collected several more surveys. One of them advised that probationers have trouble getting from Whitney to Hillsboro to report in.

Event #2: Gibbs Memorial Library, 305 E Rusk St, Mexia (Limestone County), 4:00 pm – 5:15 pm

Target population: All

Number of individuals engaged: 12

Number of community surveys collected: 1

Summary of discussion/comments: The outreach team encountered 12 people, all of whom reported they owned a vehicle or had access to multiple vehicles. There was little interest in engaging or stopping to take the survey. One person expressed interest in driving for rural transit, so the team provided the Blue Transit phone number. The librarian recommended making contact with the Mexia senior center to identify mobility gaps and ensure they knew about transportation options. The team left some HOTCOG Resource Guides and Blue Transit info with the librarian.



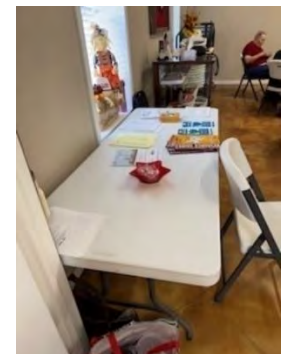
Event #3: Golinda Senior Activities Center, 7039 Golinda Dr, Lorena (Falls County), 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Target population: Seniors

Number of individuals engaged: 17

Number of community surveys collected: 12

Summary of discussion/comments: The team was able to engage attendees while they were seated eating lunch. Many of the individuals cited having a private vehicle, having access to a vehicle, or having someone (family/friend) who could take them where they needed to go (doctors, groceries, etc.). The majority of the folks engaged were able to get to their medical appointments but could see a use for on-demand transit service in the future if it was reliable, available, and served the locations where they needed to go. (Golinda is on the border of Falls and McLennan counties.)





One staffer told the outreach team she attempted to organize a group trip from the Golinda senior center to the local Wal-Mart using Blue Transit. When she called, however, she was told there was no service available during the summer and they were unable to fulfill her request, and to try back again in the Fall. The center would like to take group trips in the future.

There was a supply of HOTCOG Resource Guides and Blue Transit flyers on a table at the front of the center.



Event #4: Teague Public Library, 402 Main St, Teague (Freestone County), 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Target population: All

Number of individuals engaged: 2

Number of community surveys collected: 2

Summary of discussion/comments: The only person at the library when the outreach team arrived was the librarian. The table was set up in a seating area adjacent to the entry so it did not block the entry. The librarian, who was a resident of Teague, completed both a community survey and a stakeholder survey. The team interviewed one patron. He was in his 80s and mostly deaf, but he was willing to take the survey as long as someone filled it out for him. He said a lot of the questions did not apply because he did not have trouble getting around. He said he still drives – and drives well, according to him – though he does not like to drive on the highways. For those trips, he typically rides with his younger sister. He used Blue Transit a few times (over the past 20 years) when he could not drive due to surgery. He was very impressed by the service when he used it. He liked the vehicles and the way the driver picked him up at his house. He did cite having some trouble making a reservation a few times (though he has not tried to do so recently). He commented that they used to have a taxi in Teague that you could call and they would come pick you up in five minutes. He noted that maybe it would be more efficient to just have the drivers take calls and serve the community directly.

Before leaving, the team left several copies of the HOTCOG Resource Guide (they already had a couple there) as well as some of the Blue Transit cards (which they did not have) and left a few of the one-pagers with the project webpage URL and QR code.

Event #5: Hillsboro Interfaith Ministry, 214-A E Elm St, Hillsboro (Hill County), 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Target population: Low-income, seniors, limited English proficient

Number of individuals engaged: 20

Number of community surveys collected: 10

Summary of discussion/comments: The outreach team was able to engage attendees as they waited in line to check in at the food bank. Some individuals did not want to engage but there were others who were interested in obtaining more information about Blue Transit and elected to complete a survey.

The contact at the food bank indicated he used to drive for Blue Transit. He was recently told by a client that her trip needed to be approved by insurance before Blue Transit would schedule a ride. However, he thought the client might be confused on who she was speaking to (not Blue Transit). He was interested in more details about the current service (cost, qualifiers, availability, reliability, etc.). The team had a good



conversation with him and left a supply of the English/Spanish Blue Transit cards and HOTCOG Resource Guides. He said he would be in contact if he needs additional supplies in the future.

Event #6: Bosque County Senior Services, 101 W Avenue E, Valley Mills (Bosque County), 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Target population: Seniors

Number of individuals engaged: 9

Number of community surveys collected: 2

Summary of discussion/comments: Seven attendees indicated taking the survey online the previous week. Two people came specifically for the pop up and to get more information on available transportation where they live (Clifton).

The group expressed interest regarding information for the on-demand Blue Transit, including costs and reservation info. One person said they tried to make appointment with Blue Transit and was told they only make trips on Tuesday and Thursday. Another gentleman said he called a few times and got different answers at the call center about when to call to make ride request and what is available. One person claimed “there is no available transportation in Valley Mills.” The team shared the Blue Transit information card with him.

A man from City Hall said he saw Blue Transit Vehicle 288 the previous Monday; it was not driving safely and almost ran over the crossing guard (who also happens to be the mayor). He said he called the call center to report the driver and vehicle.

One man was looking for a ride to his eye appointment in late December. When he recently called Blue Transit, they told him he needs to bring someone with him but he does not have anyone else to go with him. He said he is able to get on and off the bus himself. The team confirmed he had the phone number to the Blue Transit call center and suggested he give them a call when he knows the date, time, duration, and location of appointment.

Most of the group agreed they will probably need help with transportation in the future when they can no longer drive or have someone who can drive them. The team left Blue Transit cards and HOTCOG Resource Guides with the senior meal helpers. They also visited City Hall and filled a rack with HOTCOG Resource Guides and confirmed their supply of Blue Transit cards.

Event #7: Estella Maxey Community Center, 1809 JJ Flewellen Rd, Waco (McLennan County), 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Target population: Low-income

Number of individuals engaged: 73

Number of community surveys collected: 19

Summary of discussion/comments: This pop-up event had been scheduled to coincide with a laptop giveaway sponsored by AT&T and Transformation Waco, so there were a lot of families present. The director of Transformation Waco introduced the outreach team at the end of her remarks and invited everyone to take a survey after they’d picked up their laptops (one per family). She also announced that taking a survey would enter you for a chance to win a \$50 VISA gift card, which was a big draw.





Nineteen people completed the survey. Very few people asked questions or provided comments. One woman indicated her biggest challenge was getting her kids from school to childcare. State Representative Pat Curry was one of the people in attendance at the event. Staff at the location were very friendly and helpful. All of the attendees our team interacted with were friendly as well.

Event #8: Heart of Texas Veterans One Stop, 2010 LaSalle Ave, Suite A, Waco (McLennan County), 10:30 am – 12:40 pm

Target population: Veterans

Number of individuals engaged: 18 (While there were many more attendees at the lunch, the team directly engaged with about 18.)

Number of community surveys collected: 4

Summary of discussion/comments: The team set up in a conference room directly off the room where the meal was taking place, as there was no room to set up in the lunch room. At the beginning of the lunch, they were given an opportunity to introduce the project and invite people to take a survey or provide a comment.



There were several people that wound up eating in the conference room, so the team interacted with all of them and had a number of them fill out surveys. Toward the end, when the noise level was a little lower, they went into the dining room and stopped at several of the tables and gave out some of the business cards and talked to some other attendees about the project. One of the lunch volunteers brought one gentleman over as he was a regular Waco Transit rider. They went into the conference room because it was a little quieter and a team member completed a survey on his behalf. He was a Waco transit rider, used a walker, did not currently use paratransit, and relied on his reduced senior fare card. The primary place he had trouble accessing was Hillcrest Hospital because the bus doesn't quite go far enough. Another woman the team spoke with said she drives, but her husband has Alzheimer's and he can't drive, and she recently had a back injury that impacted her ability to drive. They were getting services from the Alzheimer's Association as far as transportation. Our team gave her one of the HOTCOG Resource Guides because it seemed to be more along the lines of what she needed. Another couple said they have one car that is shared among their household, which includes an adult daughter. She took an extra survey and one of the business cards to get her daughter to respond to the survey too. She said they live in Robinson and the bus doesn't come that far out.

Another gentleman said he lived in the Mart/Riesel area and there is virtually no transportation. Even emergency services take at least 25 minutes to get there. He said a lot of the veterans and seniors are moving out from Waco into these more rural areas because it is more affordable, but then they can't get services. He said everything in McLennan County tends to be very Waco-centric. Even their emergency services have to come out from Waco. He said the demographics have shifted. In some cases, they have had to rely on home health more than actually getting to a healthcare provider. He said he believes there is not enough support for rural communities, and that the only transportation is for seniors and takes significant effort to get qualified. Mart has a housing authority and their biggest complaint is "where are the buses?"



Event #9: Kate Ross Community/Senior Center, 1115 Cleveland Ave, Waco (McLennan County), 10:00 am – 11:00 am

Target population: Low-income

Number of individuals engaged: 2

Number of community surveys collected: 2

Summary of discussion/comments: One person informed the team that they and their family use Waco Transit. The point of contact apologized for the lack of people. The team was able to leave community surveys and postage-paid envelopes at the center. They also left a supply of HOTCOG Resource Guides and Waco Transit service materials.

Event #10: Bosque Senior Services, 152 4th St, Walnut Springs (Bosque County), 12:15 pm – 1:00 pm

Target population: Seniors

Number of individuals engaged: 17

Number of community surveys collected: 15

Summary of discussion/comments: During the team's visit, they spoke with Albert Hunter, who was a previous candidate for the Texas House of Representatives' District 13. He said he appreciates the work they were doing. Of the group at the lunch, many still drive or have a friend/family member who drives them. There was some confusion among the group about where and when Blue Transit runs. They claimed there was no reliable round-trip service option available from Bosque County into Waco. One gentleman cited getting services through the VA, sometimes including transportation. The location had an ample supply of HOTCOG Resource Guides and Blue Transit cards.



Event #11: Groesbeck Housing Authority, 407 N Leon, Groesbeck (Limestone County), 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Target population: Low-income

Number of individuals engaged: 6

Number of community surveys collected: 6

Summary of discussion/comments: Many of those who attended currently take transit or have taken transit in the past. They used to ride Limestone County Transit. Several have tried to take Blue Transit unsuccessfully. Many are able to book transportation through their insurance provider United Health, which will take them to/from doctor's appointments and other medical appointments.



With respect to Blue Transit, there was confusion about who to call to take them into Waco. Depending on where you live there is a different phone number to call. There was also confusion about how far ahead you have to book an appointment. Most indicated they felt Blue Transit was not reliable. The current Blue Transit card does not have enough information – service days, hours, cost, etc. They said folks are looking for a service that runs on the weekends from Groesbeck to Waco.



Event #12: Rosebud Senior Center, 336 Main St, Rosebud (Falls County), 10:00 am – 11:00 am

Target population: Seniors

Number of individuals engaged: 13

Number of community surveys collected: 12

Summary of discussion/comments: Most members of this group were not in need of transit right now and many were not interested in engaging with the outreach team during the game play. A few individuals took Blue Transit cards. One gentleman said he would share Blue Transit info with his neighbor who may need the service. They left copies of the HOTCOG Resource Guide at the center.



Event #13: Freestone County Senior Services 201 N Bateman Rd, Fairfield (Freestone County), 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Target population: Seniors

Number of individuals engaged: 35

Number of community surveys collected: 13

Summary of discussion/comments: At the beginning of the lunch, the outreach team was given the opportunity to introduce the project and let everyone know what they were doing. They circulated through the room, left survey forms for each individual, answered questions, and sat down and talked to several of the attendees. Several of the attendees said they could not really fill out the survey because the questions did not really apply to them because they drive. However, the ones team members spoke with generally either had needs that couldn't be fulfilled by Blue Transit or knew someone who had issues using Blue Transit.



After they finished speaking with the program attendees, they sat down with the director and she gave them some additional information about transportation challenges she was aware of. The team left a supply of Blue Transit cards and the remaining HOTCOG Resource Guides with the director.

Issues brought up during conversations with the director and other attendees:

- One attendee was concerned that homebound seniors, who are Meals on Wheels clients, are not aware of the transportation service available. She felt that many of the homebound seniors would come to the congregate meal if they had transportation. The director later clarified that everyone who receives services from Meals on Wheels has been made aware of Blue Transit at some point, though it is possible some have forgotten about it. She recently distributed the HOTCOG Resource Guide to all meal recipients, which has a full-page advert for Blue Transit. In the past she had also distributed Blue Transit cards along with meals.
- One attendee cited having a paralyzed friend who used a motorized wheelchair. She would use Blue Transit to go to the Walmart in Mexia to do her shopping. This gave her a valuable sense of independence. However, the last time she used it, the driver complained about having to load her groceries onto the bus and then take them up to her porch. (He did not take them inside, nor did she ask him to.) As a paralyzed wheelchair user, the rider was unable to handle all of her own



bags. It is unclear as far as what the driver's role in this situation should be. This incident occurred last year.

- One attendee said he works with the Freestone County Veterans Group, and that there is a large population of veterans here. He would like to be able to use Blue Transit to get to the VA Hospital in Waco (where he could receive treatment or get the VA bus from Waco to Temple) or get to the VA clinic in Palestine. He felt a lot of the veterans in the area are unaware of using Blue Transit to get to Waco. He said he still drives but doesn't like to drive into Waco anymore because of the congestion.
- The director cited an instance of a rider who had scheduled a ride to a local mammogram appointment in Fairfield. The bus never showed up.
- The director has heard from people in Teague that they can't get any rides unless someone from Fairfield already has a ride scheduled for that day. This occurred as recently as two days prior to the event.
- At one time, the director was getting complaints that riders were not allowed to bring their walkers onboard the bus and had to leave them at the curb.
- A long time ago, the director heard about folks that were able to get rides to Tyler or Waco, but no return trip was provided, stranding them there.
- There is one rider who has a subscription trip scheduled to travel to the senior center for congregate meals. There is another rider who would like to use Blue Transit to attend the congregate meals. Even though the second rider is located on the way from the pick-up location of the subscription rider to the destination, the second rider was told they could not ride because the first rider was a subscription rider. This is a recent issue.

Additional Events

In addition to the pop-up events, HOTCOG and stakeholder staff promoted the Coordination Plan and the community survey at the following locations:

- Bi-Stone Back to School Bash, Bi-Stone Family Resource Center (Mexia), August 4, 2025
- Rosebud City Hall Medicare event (Rosebud), September 4, 2025
- Hill County Resource Expo (Hillsboro), September 30, 2025
- Bosque County Health Fair, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (Meridian), October 2, 2025.
- Annual Health and Wellness Fair, Freestone Medical Center (Fairfield), October 10, 2025.
- Waco Family Medicine Healthy Families Expo (Waco), November 8, 2025.

Stakeholder Survey

In September 2025, a self-administered survey was distributed to nearly 300 community stakeholders. The stakeholder engagement included outreach to a wide array of service providers including public, private, and non-profit transportation providers; human services providers; healthcare organizations; advocates of individuals with disabilities, seniors, low-income and unhoused persons, and veterans; workforce agencies; educational institutions; and faith-based organizations.

To facilitate the survey's distribution, the project team compiled a database of community stakeholders located within the six-county project area: Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan counties. The greatest population is located within McLennan County, which includes the city of Waco.



Multiple attempts were made via email, first class mail, phone, and discussion at HOTCOG's regular Regional Coordination Committee meetings to encourage survey participation. Responses were received between September 4, 2025 and October 30, 2025. This analysis reflects responses/data received from one hundred respondents representing 91 entities, including:

1. Adult Protective Services
2. Amada Senior Care
3. AVIR Health Group
4. Baylor Center for Developmental Disabilities
5. Bosque County Judge
6. Bosque County Senior Services
7. Bosque County Senior Services – Meals on Wheels
8. Boys and Girls Club of Hill County
9. CASA of Hill County
10. Chilton Independent School District
11. City of Blum
12. City of Carls Corner
13. City of Clifton
14. City of Fairfield
15. City of Golinda
16. City of Iredell
17. City of Lacy Lakeview
18. City of Malone
19. City of Streetman
20. City of Teague
21. City of Tehuacana
22. City of Thornton
23. City of Valley Mills
24. City of Walnut Springs
25. City of Whitney
26. City of Woodway
27. City of Wortham
28. Clifton Housing Authority
29. Communities in Schools of the Heart of Texas
30. Crawford Independent School District
31. Dew Independent School District
32. Encompass Health
33. Fairfield Independent School District
34. Falls County Commissioner
35. Falls County Judge
36. Freestone County (3)
37. Freestone County Senior Services
38. Freestone Medical Center
39. Golden Age Health Plans
40. Goodall Witcher Healthcare
41. Groesbeck Housing Authority
42. Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center
43. Heart of Texas Area Agency on Aging
44. Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network (Adult)
45. Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network (Youth)
46. Heart of Texas Veterans One Stop
47. Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions
48. Hill County 66th District Judge
49. Hill County Community Supervision & Corrections Department (CSCD)
50. Hill County Elections Administration
51. Hill County Indigent Healthcare
52. Hill County Veterans Office
53. Hill Regional Hospital (2)
54. Hillsboro County Library
55. Hillsboro Interfaith Ministries
56. Hubbard Housing Authority
57. Iredell Independent School District
58. Kopperl Independent School District
59. Limestone Medical Center
60. Lorena Independent School District
61. Lott Housing Authority
62. Marlin Civic Center
63. Mart Independent School District
64. McLennan County Health Services
65. Meals on Wheels Waco
66. Mexia Housing Authority
67. Morgan Independent School District
68. Mount Calm Independent School District
69. Navarro College – Mexia
70. REACH Across Hill County (2)
71. Red Door Food and Hygiene Pantry
72. Rosebud Housing Authority



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| 73. Sul Ross Senior Center at Dewey | 82. Tri-Cities Ministries |
| 74. Teague Housing Authority | 83. Trinity Lutheran Church, ELCA |
| 75. Teague Public Library | 84. VA Medical Center |
| 76. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Bosque County | 85. Waco Housing Authority |
| 77. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Freestone County | 86. Waco Independent School District – Transportation |
| 78. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – McLennan County | 87. Waco-McLennan Office of Emergency Management |
| 79. Texas Area Health Education Center (AHEC) East – Waco Region | 88. Waco Shepherds Heart Inc. |
| 80. Texas Veteran Commission | 89. Waco Transit System |
| 81. Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2) | 90. Walnut Springs Independent School District |
| | 91. Wortham Independent School District |

A full list of the stakeholders included in the outreach effort is provided as Appendix A.

The survey sought to gain first-hand insight into the specific offerings/programs provided by the individual respondent organization, the core functions of the respondent, approximate size of the client base, location (i.e., which county) where most of the respondent’s clientele reside, ability to meet current transportation needs (as well as barriers to same), specifics as to client mobility/transportation needs, most significant transportation challenges, and preferred (greatest) transportation enhancements.

Key findings from the survey are presented below.

Summary of key findings:

- “Government” accounted for more than half (50.5 percent) of all survey respondents.
- Most common core functions included education (21.1 percent), information/referral (21.1 percent), City or County government/services (17.8 percent), social services (13.3 percent), and healthcare (general) (13.3 percent).
- With respect to “client/member base”, organizational size varied considerably, with one-quarter citing 100 to 149 individuals and 22.8 percent citing 1,000 to 4,999 individuals.
- Four demographic cohorts stood out with respect to populations served: “older adults” (67 percent), “low-income individuals” (62 percent), “non-ambulatory adults with a physical disability” (49 percent), and “ambulatory adults with a physical disability” (48 percent).
- Respondent organizations serve individuals in all six counties within the project area. The two counties with the highest number of responses were Hill (34.3 percent) and McClennan (30.3 percent).
- Twenty percent of respondents directly transport clients while 37.8 percent provide no transportation service or support, either directly or indirectly.
- With respect to other forms of transportation assistance, 36.7 percent refer clients to transportation guides or websites and 23.3 percent provide transportation guides or schedules, while an additional 22.2 percent use 211 Texas to provide their clients with transportation information.



- Respondents indicated having clients who encounter challenges (sometimes often) accessing four relatively common travel destinations: medical (64.6 percent), shopping (51.2 percent), work and/or school (46 percent), and veterans' services (44 percent).
- Lack of knowledge about available services and/or how to use them represented one of the most common barriers to use of public transportation.
- The most significant challenges respondents cited with respect to providing transportation services were lack of transportation services in the areas served (39.1 percent), lack of operating funding (27.5 percent), insufficient staffing (23.2 percent), and lack of capital funding (vehicle purchases) (21.7 percent). More than 39 percent of stakeholders said transportation was not part of their organization's core mission.
- Stakeholder organizations are most interested in learning about or participating in coordinated outreach/public engagement (23.8 percent).

Stakeholders were also given ample opportunity to provide open-ended responses. Several of the issues identified by stakeholders are cited below.

1. Lack of capacity on Blue Transit to meet the demand for trips (riders cannot get trips for months, in some cases).
2. Being told trips are only provided on certain days and times.
3. Clients don't have the funds to afford public transportation. (This is based on the out-of-pocket cost to the client, not the total cost to the transportation provider to deliver the trip. It is likely many riders and stakeholders do not have a solid understanding as to the true cost of a customer trip.)
4. Insurance plan only covers a certain number of trips per year, and a round trip counts as two trips.
5. Inconsistent service schedule or having to use multiple transportation services.
6. Bus stops in Waco that don't offer any shelter.
7. Lack of knowledge about available transportation programs.
8. Lack of access to medical appointments (both local and specialists), which results in missed appointments and impacts the quality of medical care.
9. Lack of communication about changes to schedules.
10. Long wait times for some disabled clients.
11. Lack of information about how to use the transit network (bus routes in Waco, transfers, making a reservation, etc.).
12. Long travel times for out-of-county trips.
13. Issues with eligibility in Golinda since the city straddles McLennan and Falls counties.
14. Clients with mental illness and veterans with PTSD may have trouble using transit due to anxiety and other issues.
15. Would like to see more of an Uber or taxi model, especially for seniors who tire easily and cannot be on a bus all day.

A discussion of each survey question, along with the complete survey instrument, is provided in Appendix D.



Community Survey

In February 2025, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) released its guidebook which communicates the goals, objectives, and methodology for preparation of Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plans such as that prepared on behalf of the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG). Included within the guidebook is clear direction as to recommended public engagement activities and processes. The community transportation survey is one of the engagement tactics discussed therein.

A 17-question survey instrument was designed to capture a basic profile of the individual survey respondent (e.g., age, preferred language, presence of disability impacting mobility), current mobility behavior and patterns, perceived transportation barriers to accessing day-to-day activities (e.g., work, shopping, healthcare, etc.), and identification of potential motivators/enhancements which could impact/influence future use of the current or enhanced regional transportation network.

The community survey was available August 18 through October 30, 2025. In total, 261 valid responses were received. The survey was available online via the bilingual project webpage and at community events throughout the project area (August, September, and October). This included the 13 pop-up events hosted in each of the six counties between October 20 and October 24, 2025, as well as seven additional events attended by HOTCOG staff.

The survey instrument was produced in both Spanish and English to encourage the broadest possible participation. Of 261 valid responses, only 2.3 percent were completed in Spanish. Further, depending upon the nature/scope of the community event, Spanish-speaking project representatives were available to assist with survey completion/participation.

Lastly, to encourage survey participation, each person completing a survey in advance of the participation deadline was entered into a random drawing for one of several \$50 VISA gift cards.

Key takeaways:

- Survey participation was spread across all six counties with the greatest participation in McLennan county. This is not surprising given McLennan county is home to Waco, the city with the greatest population.
- The RCTP is particularly focused on the mobility needs of historically transportation-disadvantaged individuals including older adults, low-income individuals, and persons with disabilities. While there was some duplication across these demographic cohorts, 37.9 percent self-identified as age 65 or older, 30.3 percent as low-income, and 21.1 percent as having a disability which impacts their mobility.
- Nearly 72 percent of respondents who indicated what types of transportation they used noted driving their own vehicle, while 26.5 percent indicated reliance on family and/or friends. Nearly one-quarter indicated reliance on public transit/transportation.
- Public transit ridership was spread across Waco Transit (50 percent), HOTRTD Blue (40.9 percent), and McLennan Rural Transit (22.7 percent).
- Nearly 40 percent identified a lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing common day-to-day activities, the most common being access to healthcare.



- The most commonly cited transportation challenges were a lack of transportation service to the desired destination, lack of knowledge about how to get/obtain information about transportation services, and transportation services not being available when riders need to travel.
- Travel between an individual's home community and areas within the six-county region was the most frequently cited challenge (28.1 percent of those who indicated having trouble making some types of trips). Specified locations included McLennan, Hill, and Limestone counties.
- Challenges specific to accessing healthcare was the most commonly cited transportation need.
- In terms of travel outside the six-county region, access to destinations in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex was (by far) the most frequently cited need. The most common trip purpose for out-of-area trips was healthcare.

A discussion of each survey question, along with the complete survey instrument in English and Spanish, is provided in Appendix E.

Summary of Observations and Findings from Public Engagement

Throughout the community and stakeholder engagement, the project team encountered several reoccurring themes with respect to transportation challenges. The following is a list of observations based on stakeholder and community survey responses, conversations with individuals and stakeholders, and discussions with HOTCOG staff and committees.

1. The most frequently-cited issue was a lack of available transportation service in the rural counties (Blue Transit service area). We identified a number of challenges specific to this issue:
 - Requested trips were unable to be booked due to a lack of capacity. This was particularly acute earlier this year when Blue Transit experienced a significant reduction in its budget. During that time, Blue Transit had to serve the trips that were already scheduled and was not booking new trips for that time, but for a couple of months out. Numerous individuals and stakeholders cited being told that no trips were available for when they were needed.
 - One stakeholder cited a specific instance of riders in Teague not being able to get a ride unless Blue Transit was already serving riders in Fairfield. While this is one instance, it is not inconsistent with other anecdotal feedback that no public transportation exists in certain parts of the six-county region.
 - While Blue Transit officially provides service into the surrounding counties, many out-of-area trips are denied because there is no driver available to make this trip. This gives riders the false hope that they will be able to access their out-of-area appointment or destination when the likelihood of that happening with the current budget and staffing is low.
 - Some scheduling decisions do not seem to make sense. For example, one stakeholder cited a congregate meal attendee with a subscription trip to the senior center. There is another rider who lives between the attendee and the senior center, but their ride request has been refused. The second rider was apparently informed that Blue Transit cannot schedule a non-subscription rider on the same trip as a subscription rider, even though they are going to the same place. While Blue Transit's reason for the scheduling may have had a solid basis (and staff said they do not provide many congregate meal trips), this was the message that was



- received by the rider, and it reinforces the perception that Blue Transit service cannot provide enough service.
- Having Blue Transit operations centralized in Waco makes it harder to serve rural areas.
2. As mentioned above, there are significant challenges associated with traveling out of the six-county region. While neighboring counties are technically served by Blue Transit, the ability to provide those trips is restricted by driver availability, especially under the reduced budget. The RCC expressed an interest in facilitating transfers to transit operators in other jurisdictions. Transit operators serving the surrounding counties include the following, though none offer connections to the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex:
 - Brazos Transit District (Leon and Robertson counties)
 - The HOP (Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties)
 - Community Transit Service (Ellis and Navarro counties)
 - East Texas Council of Governments/GoBus (Anderson and Henderson counties)
 - City/County Transportation (Johnson County)
 - City and Rural Rides (CARR) (Erath and Hamilton counties)
 3. There were numerous comments about insurance-provided transportation being unreliable, including leaving riders stranded. However, most Medicaid trips are provided by a broker, and decisions about service are out of the hands of the public transportation providers. Clients may inform the broker when they schedule their ride what service they prefer.
 4. There appears to be a significant knowledge gap regarding the Blue Transit service. There is confusion about what trips it can be used for and who can use it. There is also confusion about when the service is available in different counties and communities, as riders are told service is not provided on certain days of the week.
 5. There is confusion/frustration about travel into Waco, as travel beyond the initial destination must be made via Waco Transit. Many riders do not appear comfortable with this.
 6. The impact of these transportation gaps, including missed healthcare appointments, lack of access to jobs and education, inability to get essential supplies, missed probation reporting, etc., have real and significant impacts on people's lives, more than just not being able to go somewhere. Missing doctor's appointments can keep people sick or keep chronic conditions uncontrolled. Missing appointments with the Department of Family and Protective Services can keep families apart. Lack of transportation to a job or school can limit current and future income.
 7. Access to medical providers is often determined by which one they can get transportation to. Several individuals cited wanting to go to another doctor for their medical care, but they could not get there.
 8. Despite the issues, there have been some successes. Coordination between Blue Transit and veterans' transportation was able to ensure veterans traveling from the VA facility in Temple would have a connection to return to their homes in the rural area.



9. There is some desire for earlier morning/late afternoon service on weekdays and service on weekends. Expanded weekday service would provide more options for doctor appointments as well as enable access to jobs and school. Weekend service, especially into Waco, would provide an opportunity for shopping and other activities.
10. One stakeholder noted there is a gap for transportation through the insurance provider. For non-emergent appointments, the ride must be scheduled 72 hours ahead. If an appointment is inside that time frame, the client has to call for an ambulance even though it's not an emergency.
11. Long wait times are a concern for some clients, especially those who are elderly. Others, such as veterans with PTSD or anxiety, have trouble with the environment onboard the bus.
12. There is a lack of shelters at Waco Transit stops, especially in East Waco. Since the routes operate on an hourly basis, longer waits may be required, which can be uncomfortable when there is no shade. (It is also worth considering that Waco Transit also operates on a flag stop system, and riders can board the bus at any safe intersection along the route. As a result, some popular boarding locations may not be established bus stops.)
13. Cost is a concern for some clients, and stakeholder organizations cannot always help. Some organizations receive donations or other funds that can be used to subsidize bus passes, but these may be sporadic and are not a budgeted line item.
14. Stakeholders are primarily interested in coordinated outreach and public engagement. This could be as simple as sharing other organizations' relevant information during outreach activities, or including resource links on a website.
15. Lack of funding appears to be a significant issue. Blue Transit's budget was reduced this year, and many of the stakeholders do not have any funding available for transportation.
16. While many individuals rely on driving a personal vehicle, there were a number of seniors who indicated they did not like driving into Waco or were cognizant that they were approaching a time in their lives when they might need other transportation options. Such foresight is good, as it helps raise the value of public transportation among those who do not currently use it.



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Chapter 3 | Geographic Area Assessment

The purpose of this chapter is to provide geographical context for the project area. It looks at the physical location of counties and communities and key trip generators located therein, commute characteristics, primary highways and interstates, and cities located just outside of the region's boundaries.

Heart of Texas Region

The project area for the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) 2026 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan included a six-county region: Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan counties.

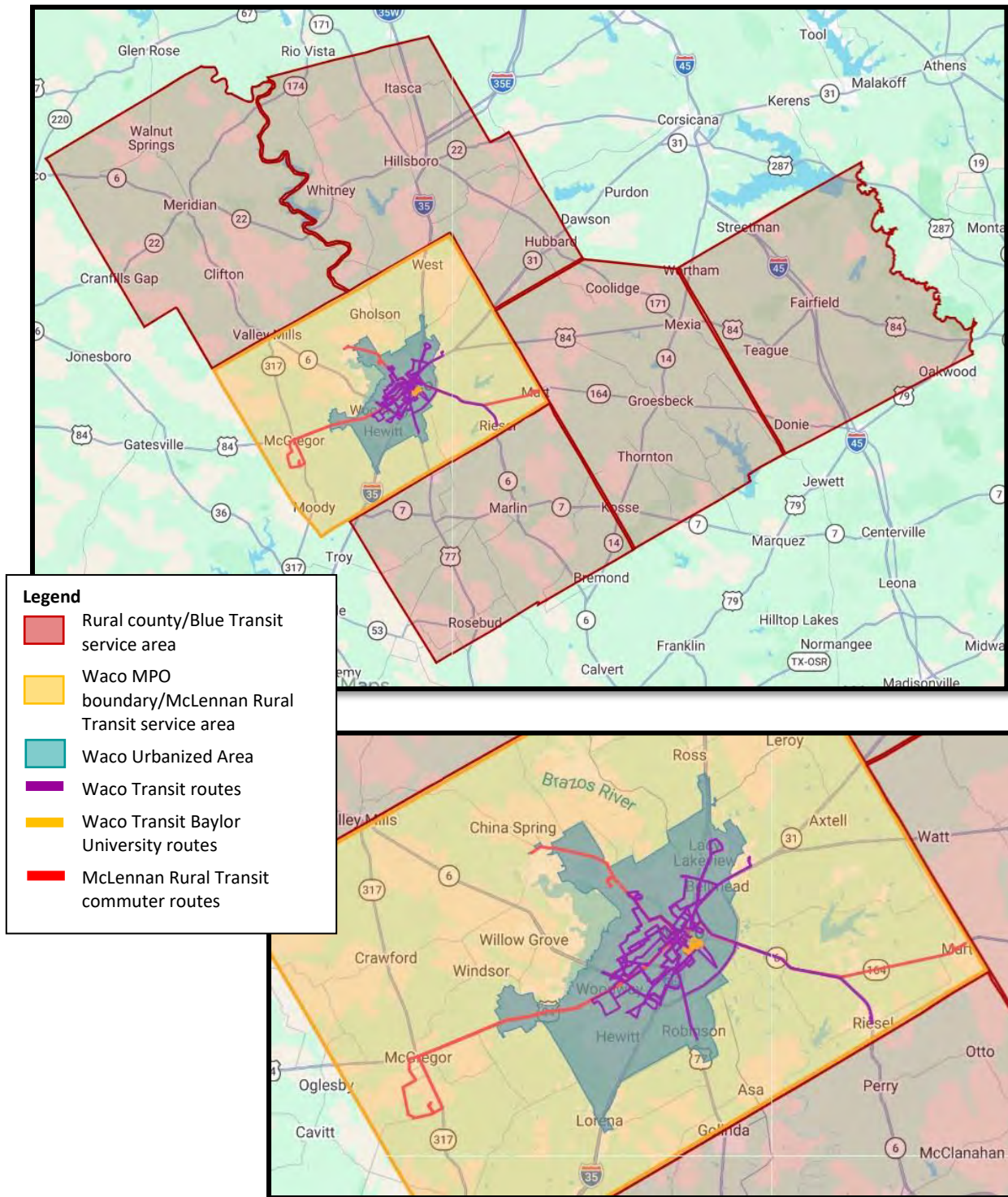
The sub-region is characterized by mostly flat terrain, gently sloping elevations, and large undeveloped land area. Agriculture, ranching, oil and natural gas production form the economic base across the counties.

McLennan County, which includes the city of Waco (population: 140,000) has a resident population more than twice that of the five other counties combined. Of the other five counties, Falls County (17,000) has the fewest number of residents and Hill County (35,874) the most. Household sizes across the region are similar, ranging from 2.48 to 2.65 persons.

Land area also varies considerably, from 774 square miles in Falls County to 1,060 in McLennan. Income levels differ across the region, with Hill, McLennan, and Bosque counties posting relatively higher household incomes, and Falls, Freestone, and Limestone reporting lower average household incomes. Poverty rates range from 9.17 percent in Bosque County to 17.8 percent in Limestone County.



Exhibit 3.1 Map of Heart of Texas Region



Transit routes detail



Area Trip Generators and Methodology

Trip Generator Methodology

Trip generators were identified based on destinations common to the target populations included in this Coordination Plan. The following categories were used to identify trip generators within each county. There were some differences between the trip generators in the urbanized area versus the rural counties; these are described below. Criteria for selection of trip generators included:

- Community centers, including city and county community and recreation centers.
- Disability services, including independent living centers and other programs providing services to persons with disabilities.
- Educational institutions such as colleges, universities, and post-secondary technical schools.
- Food resources such as grocery stores and food pantries; in communities with few or no grocery stores, dollar stores were also identified.
- Medical facilities including hospitals, emergency clinics, and dialysis clinics; individual doctor offices are not listed unless they represent the only medical facility in a community.
- Municipal housing authorities.
- Organizations providing a variety of human and social services not covered under another category.
- Major employers in each county.
- Locations serving seniors, including senior centers and senior apartments.
- Veterans services providers such as the VA Medical Center, Veterans One Stop, and local Veterans Services Officers.
- Workforce development organizations such as Workforce Solutions.
- Youth/children's services such as Head Start, Boys and Girls Clubs, CASA, and other organizations that provide services or advocacy for children.

Commute Data

Commute data is provided to illustrate both the density of jobs within each county and to identify key employment destinations for residents within each county. Exhibits labeled "work destinations" illustrate the top most common commute destinations for persons living within that county (note that this refers to a commute, not a job, and as such does not include work that is solely remote). Exhibits labeled "commute distance" illustrate the one-way commute distance of workers living in the county; however, it does not identify how frequently they make that commute. Exhibits labeled "work inflow/outflow" illustrate how many workers living within the county also work within the county, how many residents leave the county to work elsewhere, and how many non-resident workers come into the county to work.

Bosque County

Bosque County is a predominantly agrarian area located northwest of Waco. Characterized by rolling hills, the county spans 1,003 square miles and has a population of 18,235. The county seat is Meridian, while the largest city is Clifton.

While there are no institutions of higher education in Bosque County, the county is experiencing the emergence of a "growing restaurant community," contributing to local service-industry growth.

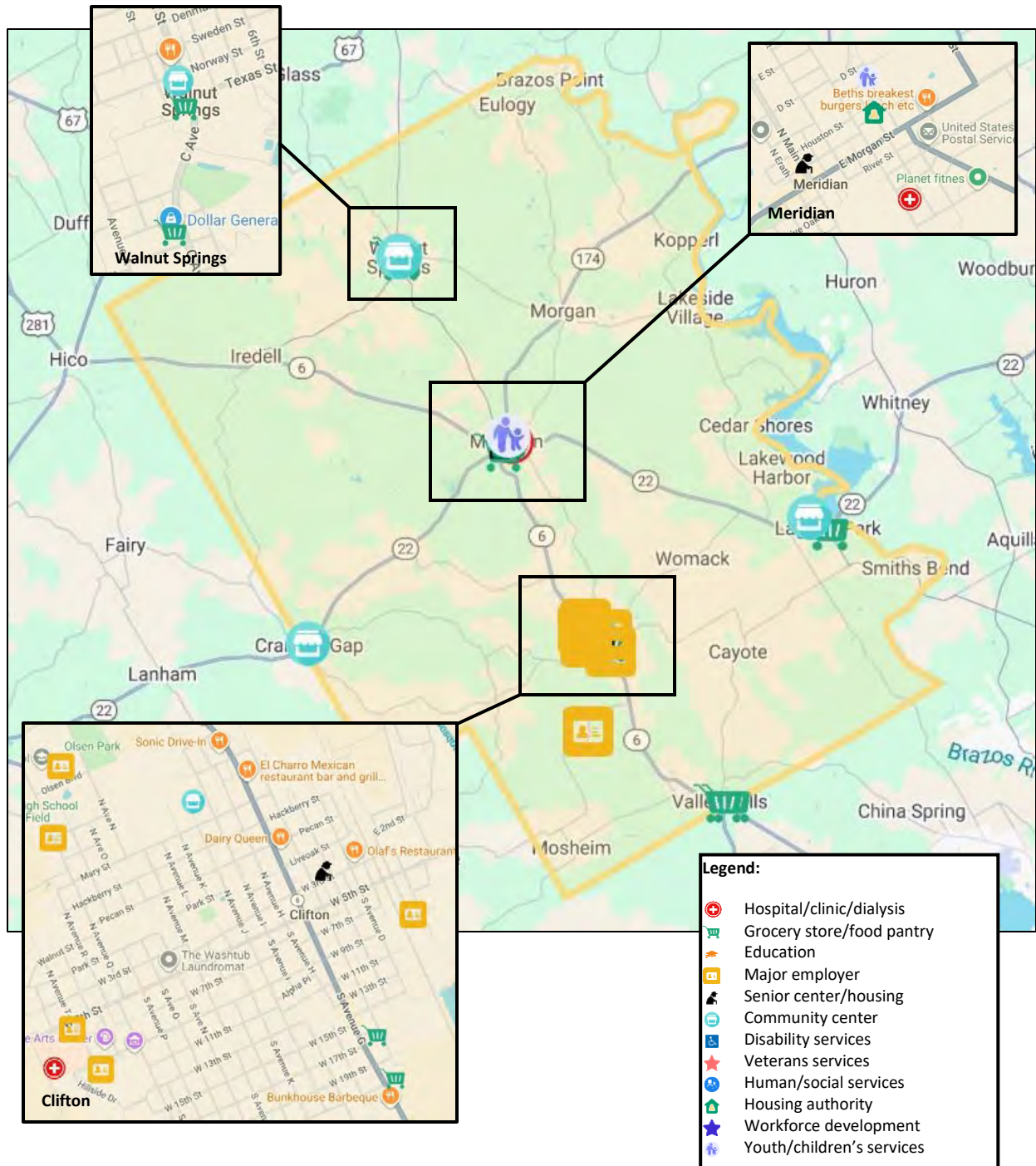


Trip generators identified for Bosque County include:

- Community centers
 - Community Center, Laguna Park
 - Silas Community Center, Clifton
 - Walnut Springs Community Center, Walnut Springs
 - Cranfills Gap Community Center, Cranfills Gap
- Grocery stores/food pantries
 - Big John Grocery and Food, Walnut Springs
 - Bosque Valley Food Pantry, Valley Mills
 - Brookshire Brothers, Clifton and Meridian
 - Brookshire Brothers Express, Valley Mills
 - David's, Clifton
 - DG Market, Clifton
 - Dollar General, Walnut Springs
 - Dollar Tree, Clifton
 - Family Dollar, Clifton
- Hospitals/clinics/dialysis
 - Goodall Witcher Hospital, Clifton
 - Dr. Sheila D. Mundy Family Practice, Meridian
- Housing authorities
 - Housing Authority of Meridian, Meridian
- Major employers
 - Clifton Independent School District, Clifton
 - Clifton Moulding Corporation, Clifton
 - Gearench, Clifton
 - Goodall Witcher Hospital, Clifton
 - Lhoist, Clifton
 - Lutheran Sunset Ministries, Clifton
 - Texas-New Mexico Power Company, Clifton
- Senior centers/housing
 - Bosque County Senior Services, Clifton
 - Meridian Senior Center, Meridian
- Youth/children's services
 - Head Start, Meridian



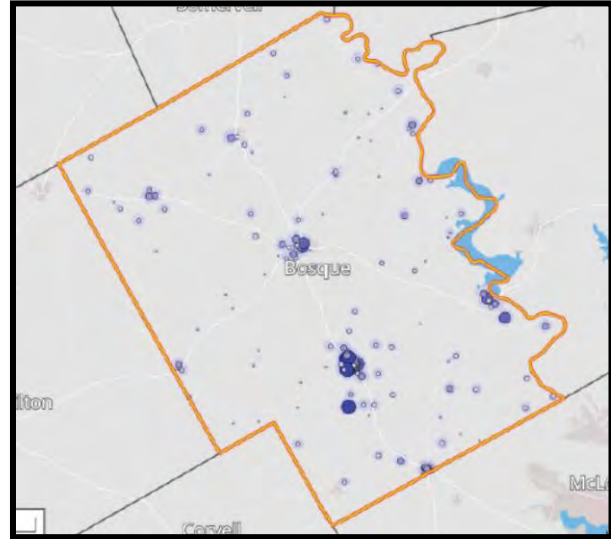
Exhibit 3.2 Bosque County trip generators





The greatest concentrations of jobs in Bosque County are in Clifton and Meridian.

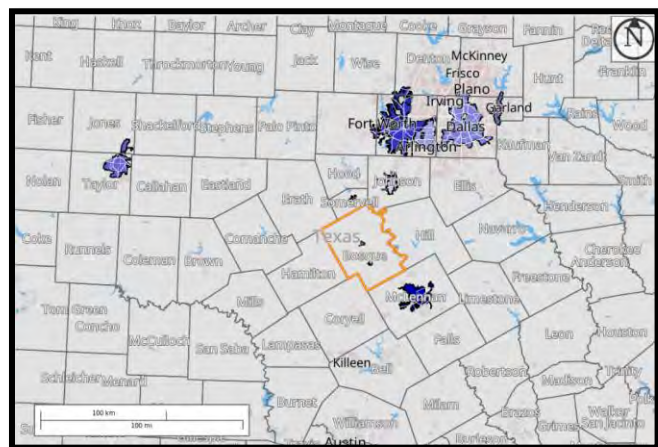
Exhibit 3.3 Bosque County job density



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

There are 7,933 workers living in Bosque County. The top employment locations within Bosque County are Clifton (831 jobs, or 10.5 percent) and Meridian (276 jobs, or 3.5 percent). Outside the county, Waco is the destination with the greatest number of Bosque County resident jobs (900 jobs, or 11.3 percent), followed closely by the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex (881 jobs, or 11.1 percent). Other common destinations include Abilene (263 jobs, or 3.3 percent), Glen Rose (161 jobs, or 2.0 percent), Cleburne (142 jobs, or 1.8 percent), and Austin (123 jobs, or 1.6 percent).

Exhibit 3.4 Bosque County work destinations

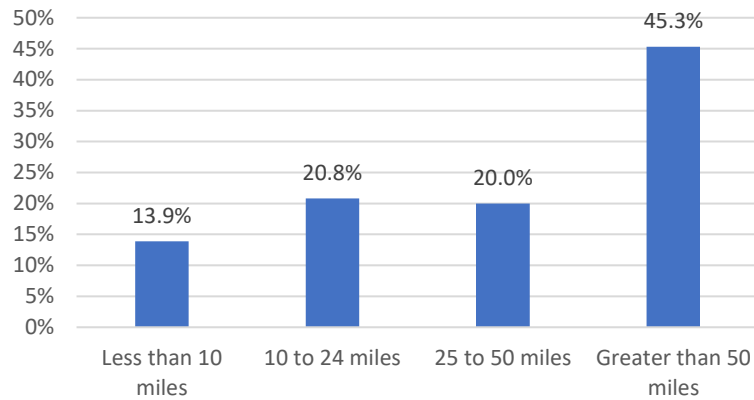


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Nearly two-thirds of Bosque County workers travel more than 25 miles for work.

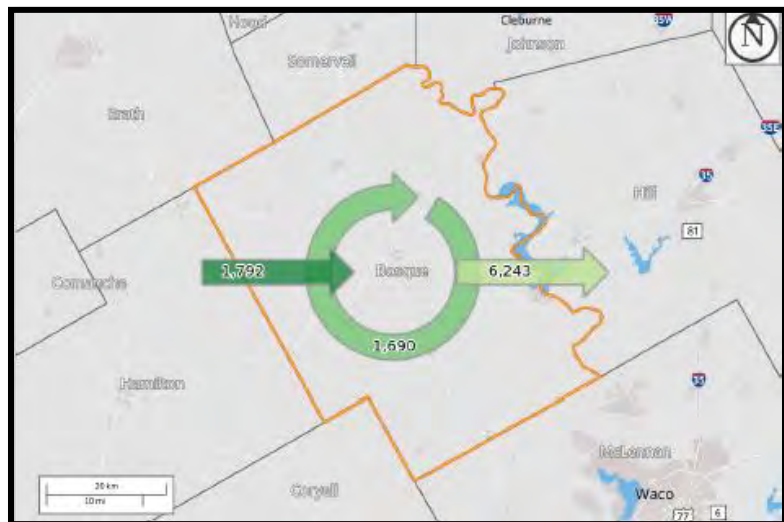
Exhibit 3.5 Bosque County commute distance



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

Of the 7,933 workers living in Bosque County, 78.7 percent are employed outside the county. Of the 3,482 jobs in Bosque County, fewer than half (48.5 percent) are filled by persons who also live in Bosque County. All other employed persons commute in from outside the county.

Exhibit 3.6 Bosque County work inflow/outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



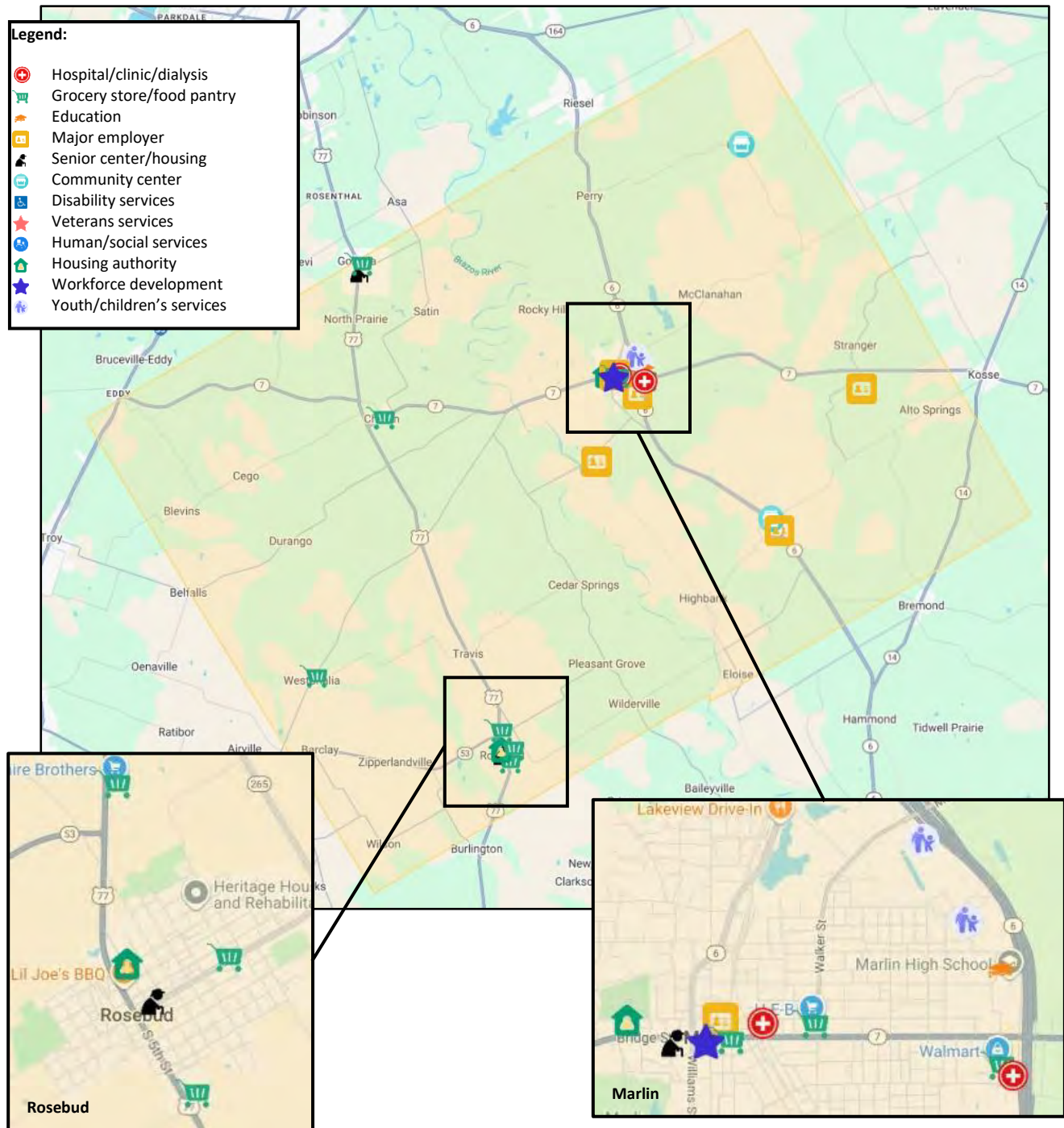
Falls County

Falls County is part of the Waco Metropolitan area, located just 25 miles south of the city. With broad flat lands and low elevations, the county is predominantly agricultural and spans 774 square miles. The county seat and largest city is Marlin with a population of 5,500 persons.

Trip generators identified for Falls County include:

- Community centers
 - Otto Community Center, Otto
 - Reagan Community Center, Reagan
- Education
 - Marlin Area Professional School, Marlin
- Grocery stores/food pantries
 - Brookshire Brothers, Rosebud
 - Dollar General, Lorena and Rosebud
 - Falls County Samaritan House Food Distribution Center, Marlin
 - Family Dollar, Chilton
 - H-E-B, Marlin
 - Rosebud Community Food Pantry, Rosebud
 - Walmart, Marlin
 - Westphalia Market, Lott
- Hospitals/clinics/dialysis
 - Falls Community Hospital, Marlin
 - Fresenius Kidney Care Falls County, Marlin
- Housing authorities
 - Housing Authority of Marlin, Marlin
 - Rosebud Housing Authority, Rosebud
- Major employers
 - Marlin Independent School District, Marlin
 - Marlin Unit, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Marlin
 - Texas Pneumatic Tools, Inc., Reagan
 - U.S. Silica, Kosse Plant
 - William P. Hobby Unit, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Marlin
- Senior centers/housing
 - Golinda Senior Center, Golinda
 - Marlin Senior Center, Marlin
 - Rosebud Senior Center, Rosebud
- Workforce development
 - Falls County Workforce Solutions, Marlin
- Youth/children's services
 - Boys and Girls Clubs of Falls County, Marlin
 - Head Start, Marlin

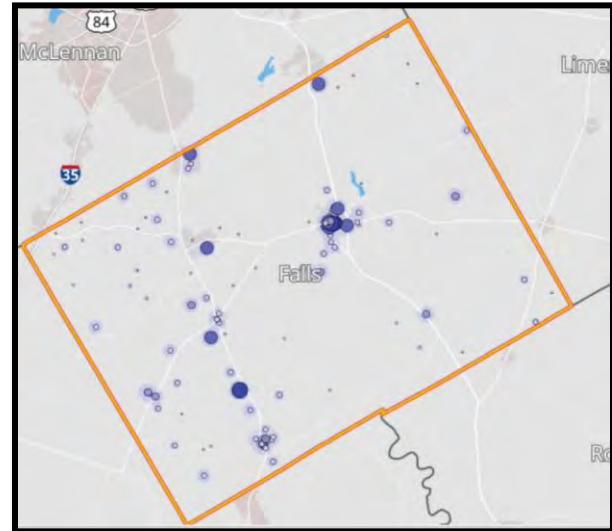
Exhibit 3.7 Falls County trip generators





The greatest concentration of jobs in Falls County is in Marlin.

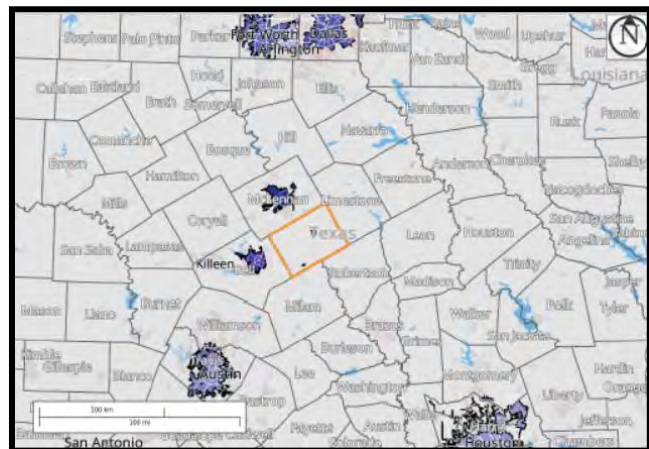
Exhibit 3.8 Falls County job density



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

There are 7,171 workers living in Falls County. The top employment locations within Falls County are Marlin (507 jobs, or 7.1 percent) and Rosebud (81 jobs, or 1.1 percent). Outside the county, Waco is the destination with the greatest number of Falls County resident jobs (1,310 jobs, or 18.3 percent), followed closely by the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex (635 jobs, or 8.9 percent). Other common destinations include Temple (505 jobs, or 7.0 percent), Austin (174 jobs, or 2.4 percent), Houston (170 jobs, or 2.4 percent), and San Antonio (91 jobs, or 1.3 percent).

Exhibit 3.9 Falls County work destinations

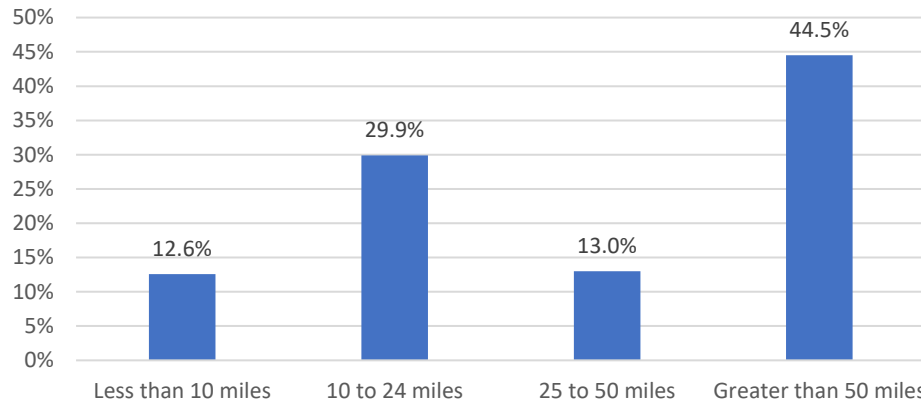


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Nearly 45 percent of Falls County workers travel more than 50 miles for work, while nearly 30 percent travel 10 to 24 miles.

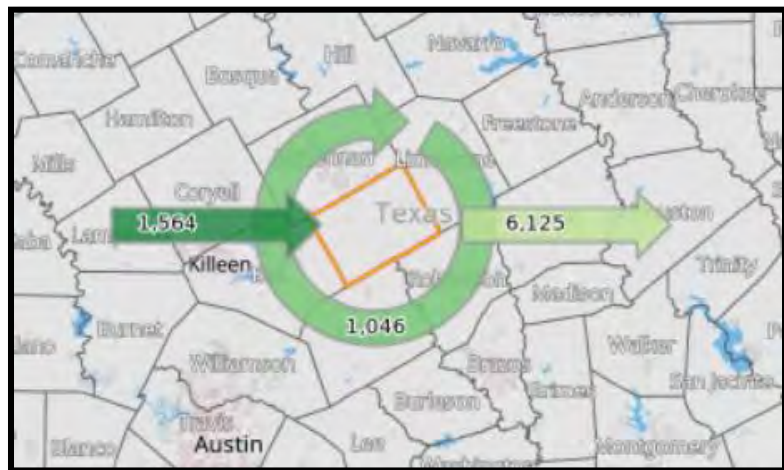
Exhibit 3.10 Falls County commute distance



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

Of the 7,171 workers living in Falls County, 85.4 percent are employed outside the county. Of the 2,610 jobs in Falls County, fewer than half (40.1 percent) are filled by persons who also live in Falls County. All other employed persons commute in from outside the county.

Exhibit 3.11 Falls County work inflow/outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Freestone County

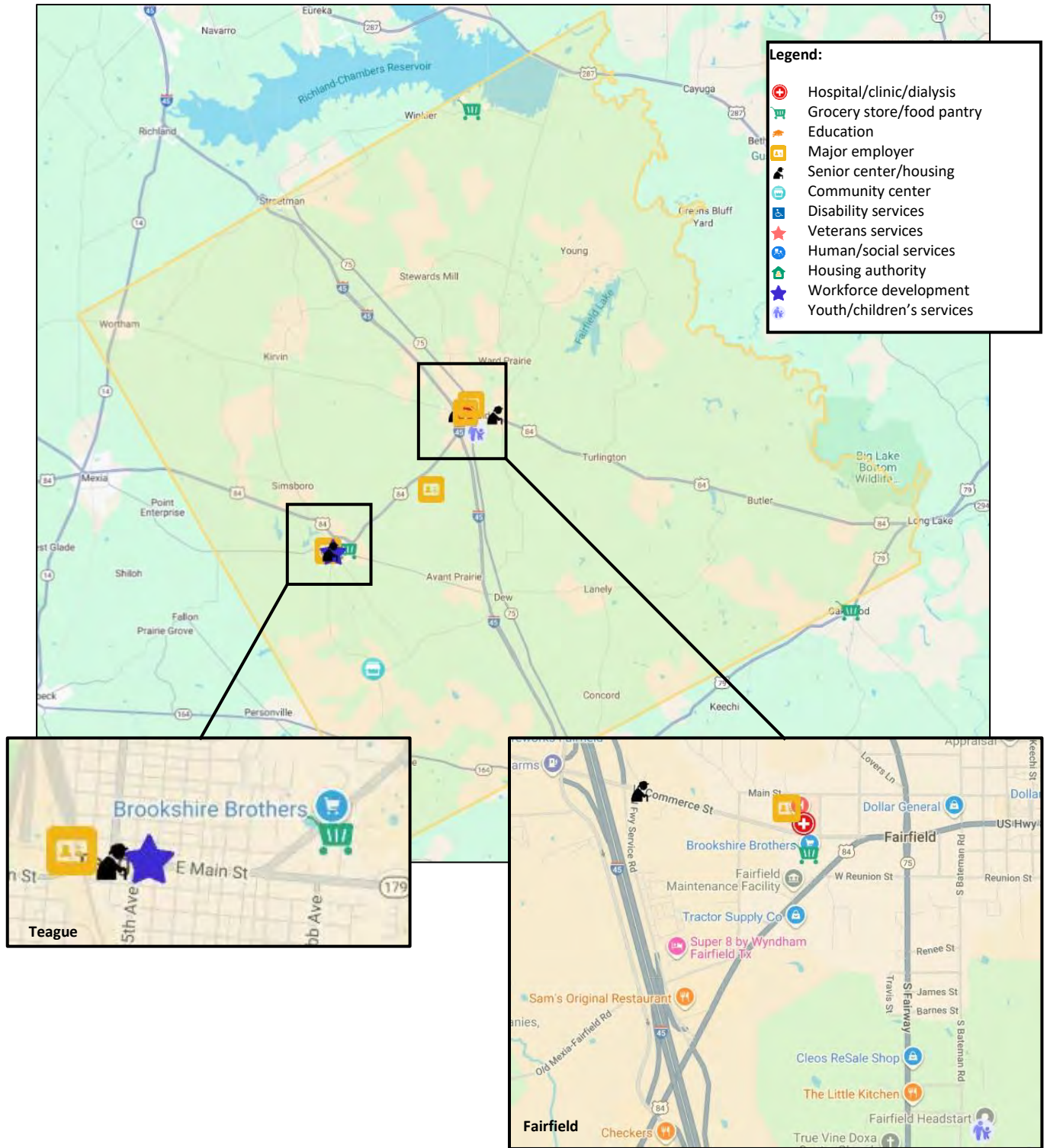
Freestone County located 80 miles southeast of Dallas is characterized by coastal plain and gently sloping elevations. The area reflects an agrarian economy, oil and natural gas production, beef cattle ranching, hay and corn production. Freestone County spans 892 square miles, with its county seat as Fairfield. The largest city is Teague.

Trip generators identified for Freestone County include:

- Community centers
 - Freestone Community Center, Teague
- Grocery stores/food pantries
 - Brookshire Brothers, Fairfield and Teague
 - Family Dollar, Oakwood and Streetman
- Hospitals/clinics/dialysis
 - Freestone Medical Center, Fairfield
- Major employers
 - BNSF Railway Company, Teague
 - Boyd Unit, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Teague
 - Fairfield Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Fairfield
 - Freestone Medical Center, Fairfield
- Senior centers/housing
 - Butler Senior Citizens Center, Fairfield
 - Fairfield Retirement Apartments
 - Over 55 Center, Teague
- Workforce development
 - Freestone County Workforce Solutions, Teague
- Youth/children's services
 - Head Start, Fairfield



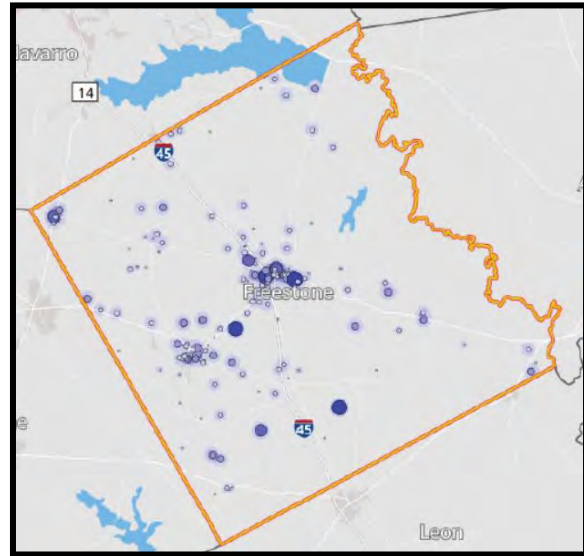
Exhibit 3.12 Freestone County trip generators





The greatest concentrations of jobs in Freestone County are in Fairfield and Teague.

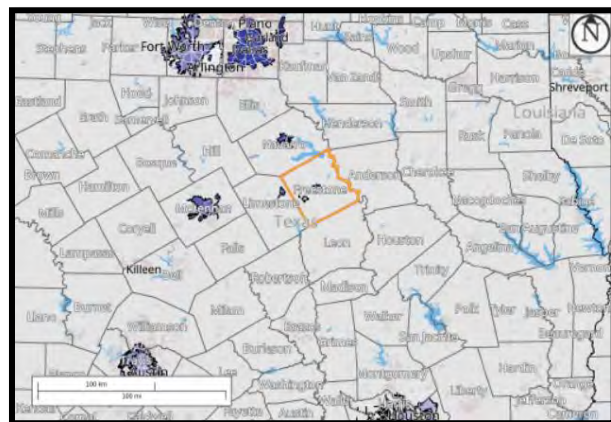
Exhibit 3.13 Freestone County job density



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

There are 8,407 workers living in Freestone County. The top employment locations within Freestone County are Fairfield (1,058 jobs, or 12.6 percent) and Teague (176 jobs, or 2.1 percent). Outside the county, the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex is the destination with the greatest number of Freestone County resident jobs (1,068 jobs, or 12.7 percent). Other common destinations include Corsicana (353 jobs, or 4.2 percent), Mexia (329 jobs, or 3.9 percent), Waco (301 jobs, or 3.6 percent), Austin (198 jobs, or 2.4 percent), and Houston (193 jobs, or 2.3 percent).

Exhibit 3.14 Freestone County work destinations

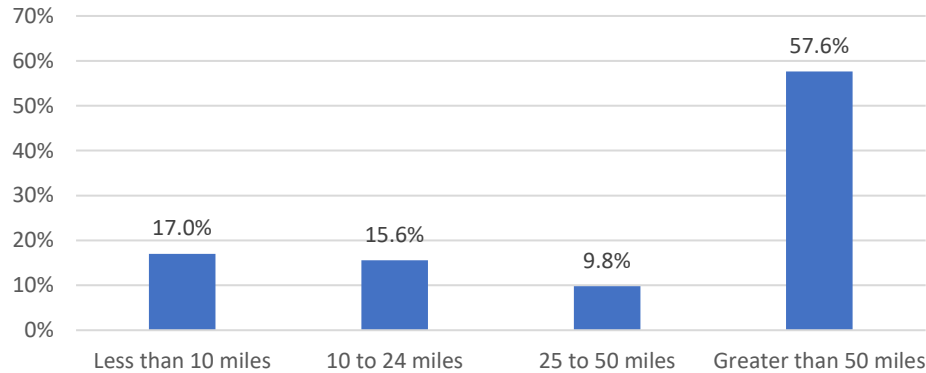


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

Nearly 58 percent of Freestone County workers travel more than 50 miles for work.



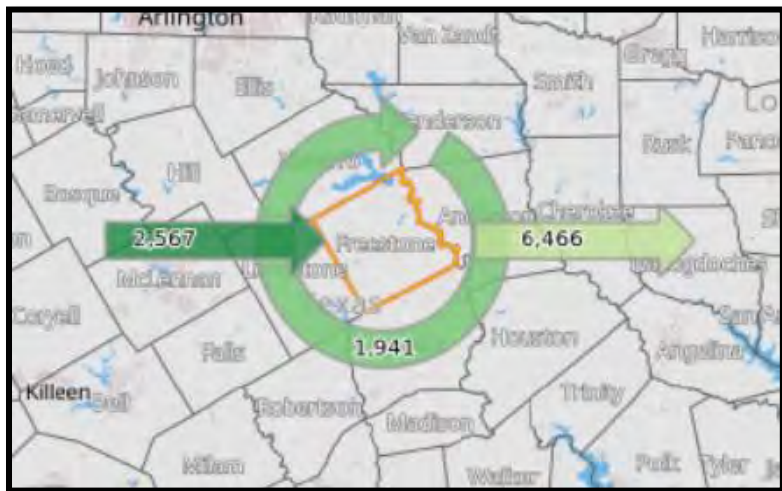
Exhibit 3.15 Freestone County commute distance



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

Of the 8,407 workers living in Freestone County, 76.9 percent are employed outside the county. Of the 4,508 jobs in Freestone County, fewer than half (43.1 percent) are filled by persons who also live in Freestone County. All other employed persons commute in from outside the county.

Exhibit 3.16 Freestone County work inflow/outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Hill County

Located 55 miles southwest of Fort Worth and 35 miles north of Waco is Hill County. With its levels plains and gentle rolling hills, the county encompasses 986 square miles.

Trip generators identified for Hill County include:

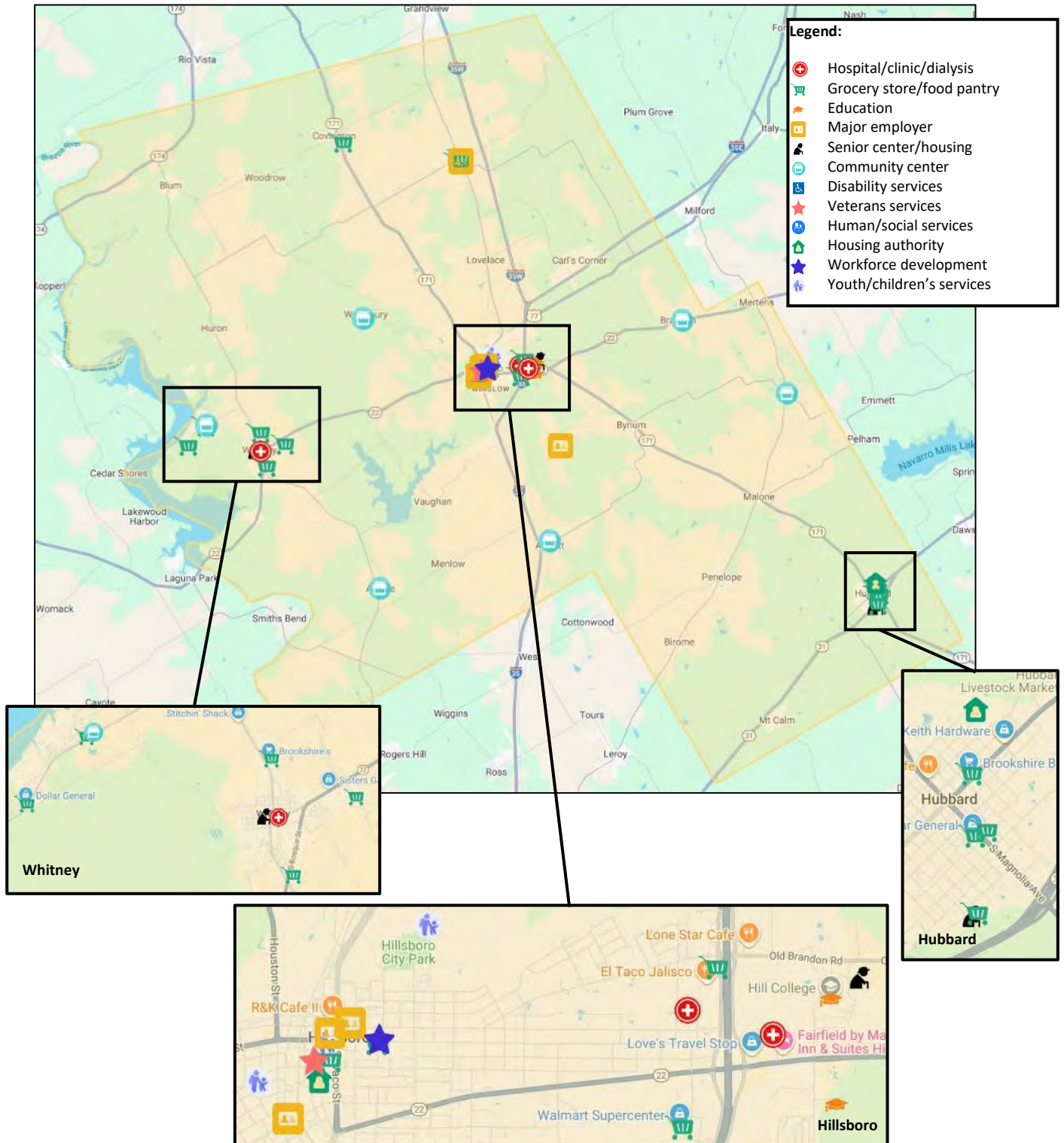
- Community centers
 - Abbott Community Center, Abbott
 - Aquilla Community Center, Aquilla
 - Brandon Community Center, Brandon
 - Irene Community Center, Irene
 - McCown Valley Community Center, Whitney
 - Woodbury Community Center, Hillsboro
- Disability services
- Education
 - Hill College, Hillsboro
- Grocery stores/food pantries
 - Braum's Ice Cream and Dairy Store, Hillsboro
 - Brookshire Brothers, Hillsboro, Hubbard, and Whitney
 - David's, Itasca and Whitney
 - Dollar General, Covington, Hubbard, and Whitney
 - Family Dollar, Hubbard and Whitney
 - Hillsboro Interfaith Ministry Food Pantry, Hillsboro
 - Old Towne Country Store, Itasca
 - Walmart, Hillsboro
 - Wheatley Recreation Center Food Pantry, Hubbard
 - Whitney Food Bank, Whitney
- Hospitals/clinics/dialysis
 - Fresenius Kidney Care, Hillsboro
 - Health Now Urgent Care, Whitney
 - Hill Regional Hospital, Hillsboro
- Housing authorities
 - Hill County Section 8, Hillsboro
 - Hubbard Housing Authority, Hubbard
- Human/social services
- Major employers
 - Bobcat Contracting, Hillsboro
 - Brandom Manufacturing, Hillsboro
 - Hilco Electric Co-Op, Itasca
 - Hillsboro Independent School District
 - Hill County
- Senior centers/housing
 - Hillsboro Senior Center, Hillsboro
 - Hubbard Senior Center, Hubbard



- o Whitney Silver Circle, Whitney
- Veterans services
 - o Hill County Veterans Services Center, Hillsboro
- Workforce development
 - o Hill County Workforce Solutions, Hillsboro
- Youth/children's services
 - o Boys and Girls Club of Hill County, Hillsboro
 - o CASA of Hill County, Hillsboro
 - o Hill County Juvenile Probation, Hillsboro



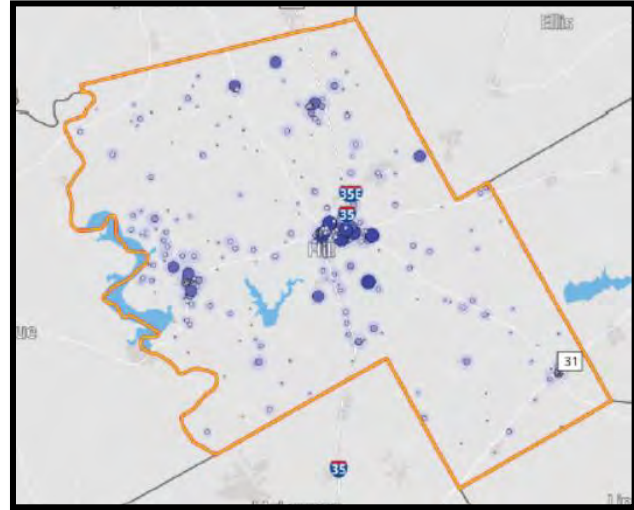
Exhibit 3.17 Hill County trip generators





The greatest concentration of jobs in Hill County is in Hillsboro.

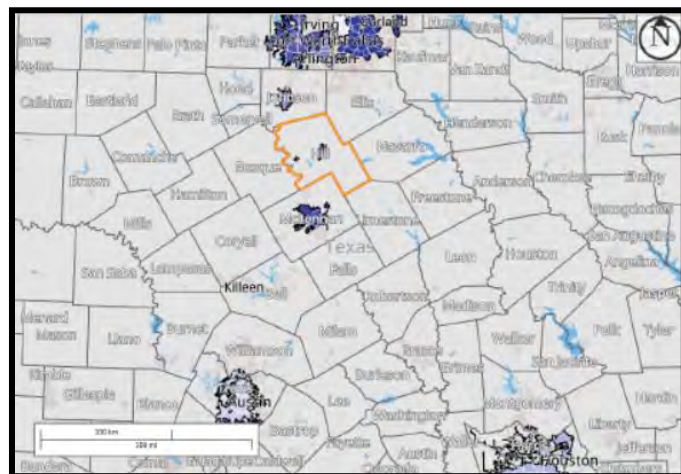
Exhibit 3.18 Hill County job density



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

There are 15,364 workers living in Hill County. The top employment locations within Hill County are Hillsboro (1,720 jobs, or 11.2 percent) and Whitney (489 jobs, or 3.2 percent). Outside the county, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex is the destination with the greatest number of Hill County resident jobs (2,647 jobs, or 17.2 percent), followed by Waco (1,005 jobs, or 6.5 percent). Other common destinations include Cleburne (360 jobs, or 2.3 percent), Houston (347 jobs, or 2.3 percent), and Austin (323 jobs, or 2.1 percent).

Exhibit 3.19 Hill County work destinations

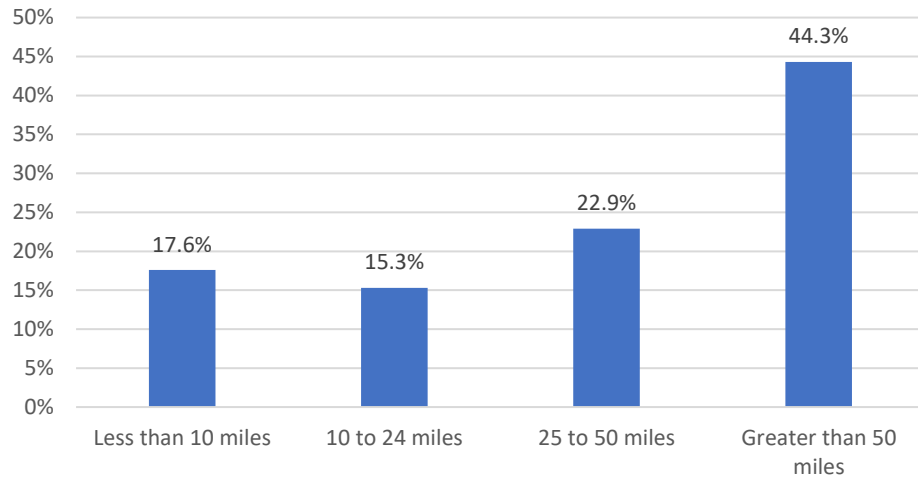


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



More than two-thirds of Hill County workers travel more than 25 miles for work, with the majority traveling more than 50 miles.

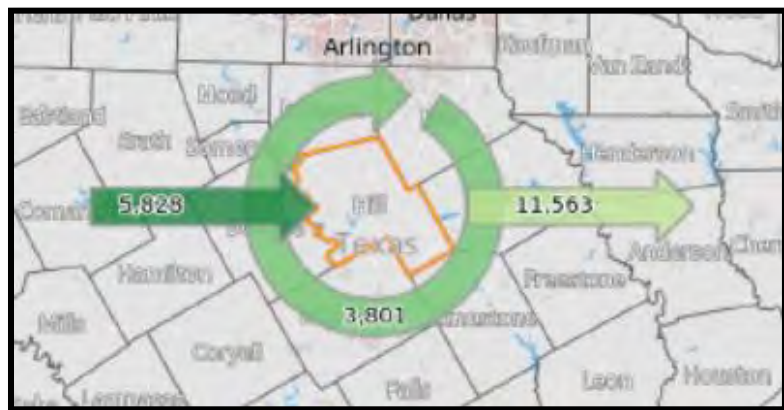
Exhibit 3.20 Hill County commute distance



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

Of the 15,364 workers living in Hill County, 75.3 percent are employed outside the county. Of the 9,629 jobs in Hill County, 39.5 percent are filled by persons who also live in Hill County. All other employed persons commute in from outside the county.

Exhibit 3.21 Hill County work inflow/outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Limestone County

Limestone County is located 30 miles east of Waco and is in the backlands prairie region. The terrain is nearly level and produces clays, kaolin, limestone, oil and natural gas. The 933 square miles houses 7,900 households. The county seat is Groesbeck and the largest city is Mexia.

Trip generators identified for Limestone County include:

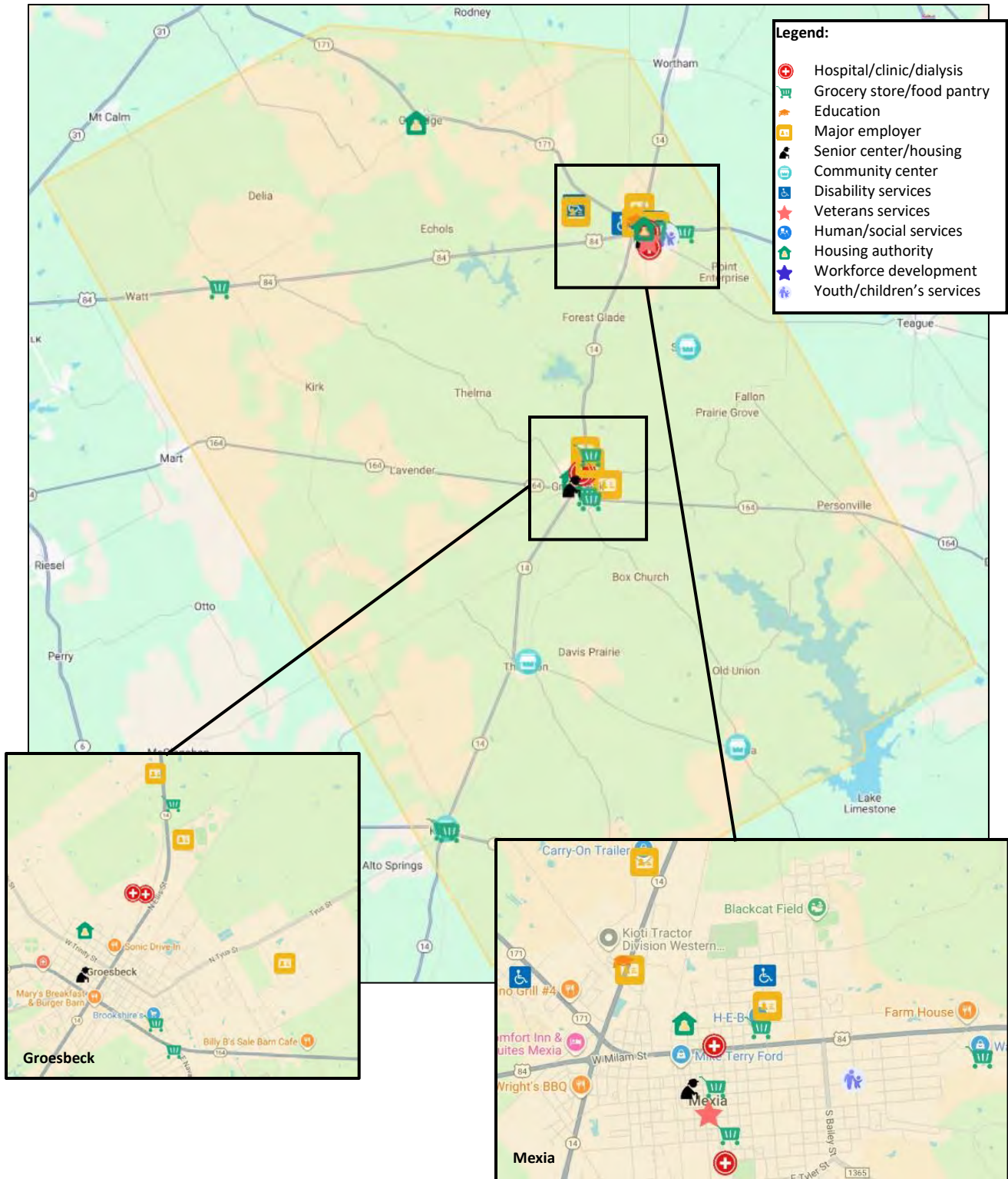
- Community centers
 - Kosse Community Center, Kosse
 - Mary Helen Nance Community Center, Thornton
 - Oletha Community Center, Oletha
 - Shiloh Community Center, Mexia
- Disability services
 - CenTex ARC, Mexia
 - Mexia State-Supported Living Center, Mexia
- Education
 - Navarro College, Mexia
- Grocery stores/food pantries
 - Bonham Grocery Mart, Mexia
 - Branded Market, Kosse
 - Brookshire's, Groesbeck
 - Caritas Food Pantry, Mexia
 - Dollar General, Groesbeck
 - Family Dollar, Kosse
 - Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry, Groesbeck
 - H-E-B, Mexia
 - Main Street Market/Grocery, Prairie Hill
 - Walmart, Mexia
- Hospitals/clinics/dialysis
 - Family Medicine Center, Groesbeck
 - Limestone Medical Center, Groesbeck
 - Parkview Regional Hospital, Mexia
 - Tejas Urgent Care, Mexia
- Housing authorities
 - Coolidge Housing Authority, Coolidge
 - Groesbeck Housing Authority, Groesbeck
 - Mexia Housing Authority, Mexia
- Major employers
 - Carry-On Trailer, Mexia
 - Fibrix, Mexia
 - Groesbeck Independent School District, Groesbeck
 - Kleen-Air, Groesbeck
 - Limestone County Detention Center, Groesbeck
 - Mexia Independent School District



- Mexia State-Supported Living Center, Mexia
- Senior centers/housing
 - Groesbeck Senior Citizens Center, Groesbeck
 - Limestone County Senior Services, Mexia
- Veterans services
 - Veterans Service Office, Mexia
- Youth/children's services
 - Mexia Head Start, Mexia



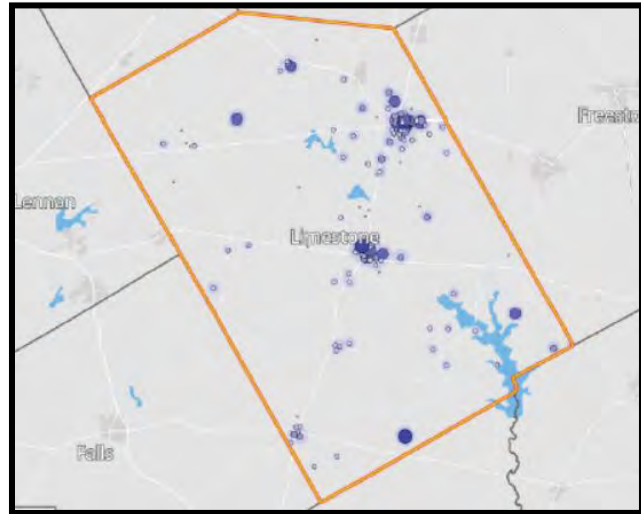
Exhibit 3.22 Limestone County trip generators





The greatest concentrations of jobs in Limestone County are in Mexia and Groesbeck.

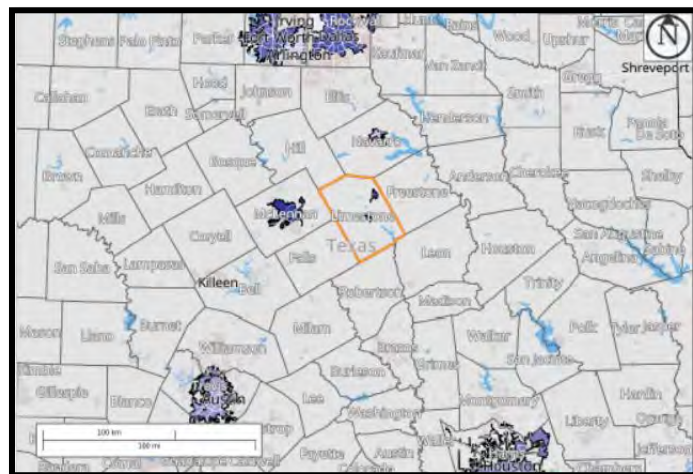
Exhibit 3.23 Limestone County job density



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

There are 9,783 workers living in Limestone County. The top employment locations within Limestone County are Mexia (1,470 jobs, or 15 percent) and Groesbeck (767 jobs, or 7.8 percent). Outside the county, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex is the destination with the greatest number of Limestone County resident jobs (1,350 jobs, or 13.8 percent), followed by Waco (788 jobs, or 8.1 percent). Other common destinations include Houston (227 jobs, or 2.3 percent), Austin (225 jobs, or 2.3 percent), and Corsicana (189 jobs, or 1.9 percent).

Exhibit 3.24 Limestone County work destinations

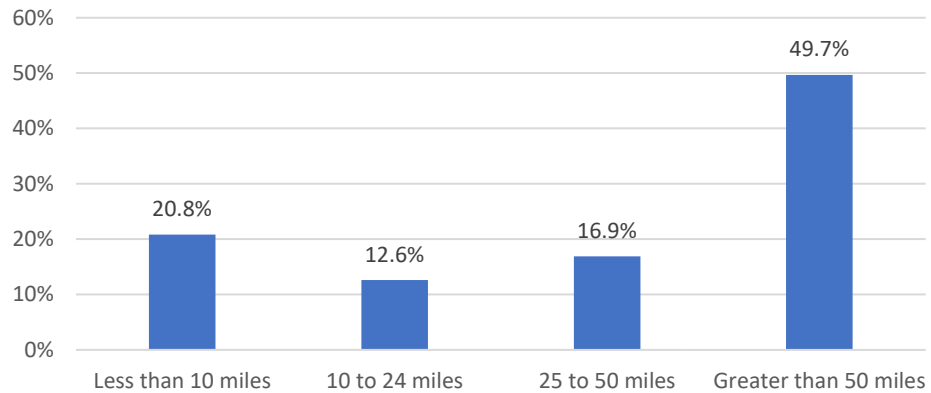


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Nearly half of Limestone County workers travel more than 50 miles for work.

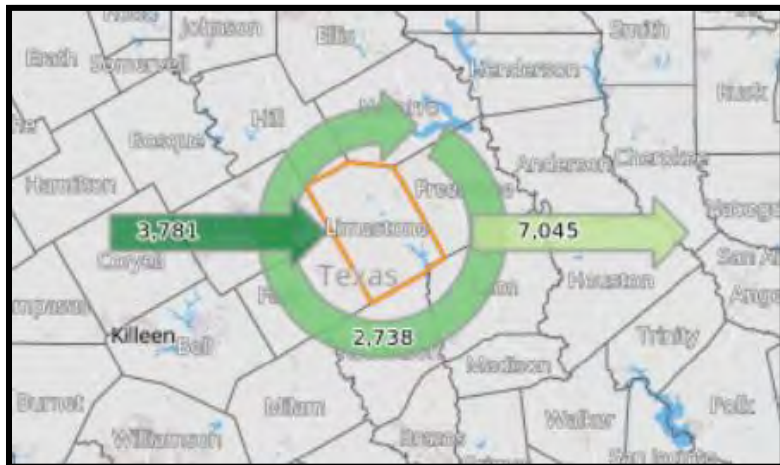
Exhibit 3.25 Limestone County commute distance



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

Of the 9,783 workers living in Limestone County, 72 percent are employed outside the county. Of the 6,519 jobs in Limestone County, 42 percent are filled by persons who also live in Limestone County. All other employed persons commute in from outside the county.

Exhibit 3.26 Limestone County work inflow/outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



McLennan County

McLennan County is the largest county in the project area, spanning 1,060 square miles. Waco is the county seat and largest city.

The county hosts several institutions of higher education including Baylor University, McLennan Community College, and Texas State Technical College, as well as campuses of Tarleton State University and Texas Tech University.

Trip generators identified for McLennan County include:

- Community centers
 - Beverly Hills Community Center, Waco
 - Bledsoe-Miller Community Center, Waco
 - Dewey Park Recreation Center, Waco
 - Doris Miller Community Center, Waco
 - South Waco Community Center, Waco
 - West Community/Senior Center, West
- Disability services
 - Baylor CARE Clinic, Waco
 - Heart of Texas Center for Independent Living, Waco
 - The Arc of McLennan County, Waco (2)
- Education
 - Baylor University, Waco
 - McLennan Community College, Waco
 - Tarleton State University, Waco
 - Texas State Technical College, Waco
 - Texas Tech University, Waco
- Grocery stores/food pantries
 - Brookshire Brothers, McGregor, Moody, and Robinson
 - Caritas of Waco Food Pantry, Waco
 - Community Grocery and Market, West
 - DG Market, Axtell
 - Dollar General, China Spring, Crawford, Elm Mott, McGregor, Moody, Riesel, Waco, and West
 - Family Dollar, Eddy
 - H-E-B, Bellmead, Waco (2), and Woodway
 - Robinson Food Pantry, Robinson
 - Shepherd's Heart Food Pantry, Waco
 - St. Francis Food Distribution Center, Waco
 - Walmart, Hewitt and Waco (3)
 - West Food Mart, West
- Hospitals/clinics/dialysis
 - Ascension Providence Hospital, Waco
 - Baylor Scott and White Medical Center, Waco



- o Fresenius Kidney Care, Waco (3)
 - o VA Medical Center, Waco
 - o Waco Family Medicine, Waco (3) and McGregor
 - o West Medical Surgical Clinic, West
- Housing authorities
 - o Housing Authority of the City of Moody, Moody
 - o McGregor Housing Authority, McGregor
 - o Waco Housing Authority, Waco (3)
- Human/social services
 - o Caritas of Waco, Waco
 - o Texas Health and Human Services, Waco
 - o Mission Waco, Waco (2)
- Major employers
 - o AbbVie, Inc., Waco
 - o American Income Life Insurance Company, Waco
 - o BC Materials, Lorena
 - o Brazos Masonry, Inc., Woodway
 - o Cargill, Waco
 - o Clayton Homes, Waco
 - o Howmet Fastening Systems, Waco
 - o L3Harris Technologies, Waco
 - o Magnolia Market, Waco
 - o Mars Wrigley Confectionery, Waco
 - o McLennan County, Waco
 - o Pilgrim's Pride, Waco
 - o Refresco Beverages, Waco
 - o Sanderson Farms, Bellmead
 - o Sherwin-Williams Distribution Center, Waco
 - o Space X Rocket Development, McGregor
 - o Tractor Supply Company Distribution Center, Waco
 - o VA Medical Center, Waco
 - o Versalift, Waco
 - o Vestis (formerly Aramark), Waco
 - o Waco Independent School District, Waco
- Senior centers/housing
 - o Central Texas Senior Ministry, Waco
 - o Crawford Senior Center, Crawford
 - o Forever Young Senior Center, Woodway
 - o Fountainview Apartments Senior Living, Robinson
 - o Harrison Senior Center, Waco
 - o McGregor Senior Apartments, McGregor
 - o McGregor Senior Center, McGregor
 - o Robinson Senior Center, Robinson
 - o South Waco Senior Center, Waco
 - o Sul Ross Seniors at Dewey Park Recreation Center, Waco



- o Tri-Cities-Bellmead Senior Center, Waco
 - o West Community/Senior Center, West
- Veterans services
 - o VA Medical Center, Waco
 - o VA Regional Office, Waco
 - o Veterans One Stop, Waco
- Workforce development
 - o Heart of Texas Goodwill Industries
 - o McLennan County Workforce Solutions, Waco
 - o Texas Workforce Commission, Waco
- Youth/children's services
 - o Baylor CARE Clinic, Waco
 - o Head Start, Moody
 - o Head Start, Waco (4)
 - o The Cove, Waco
 - o VOICE, Waco



Exhibit 3.27 McLennan County trip generators

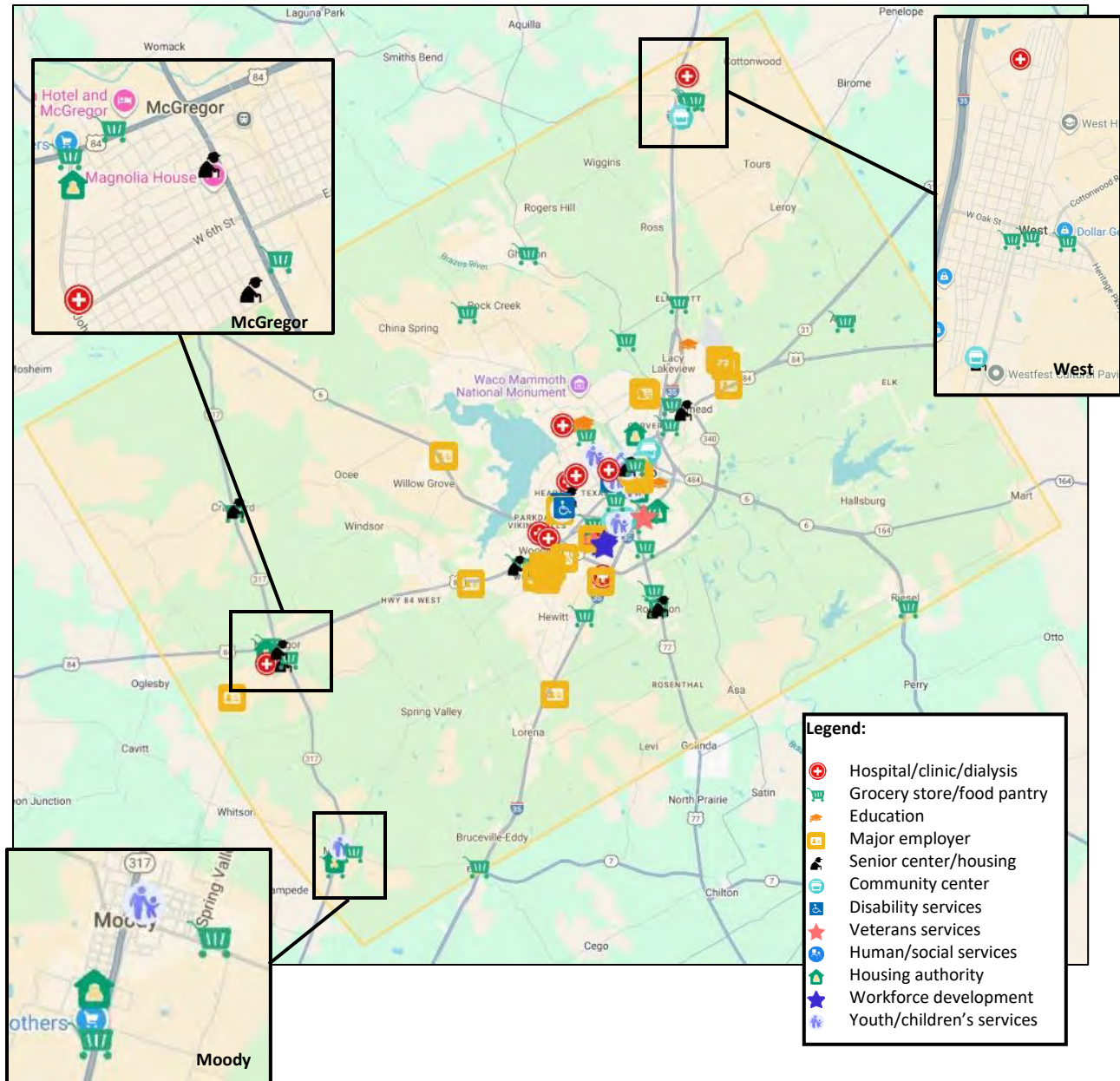
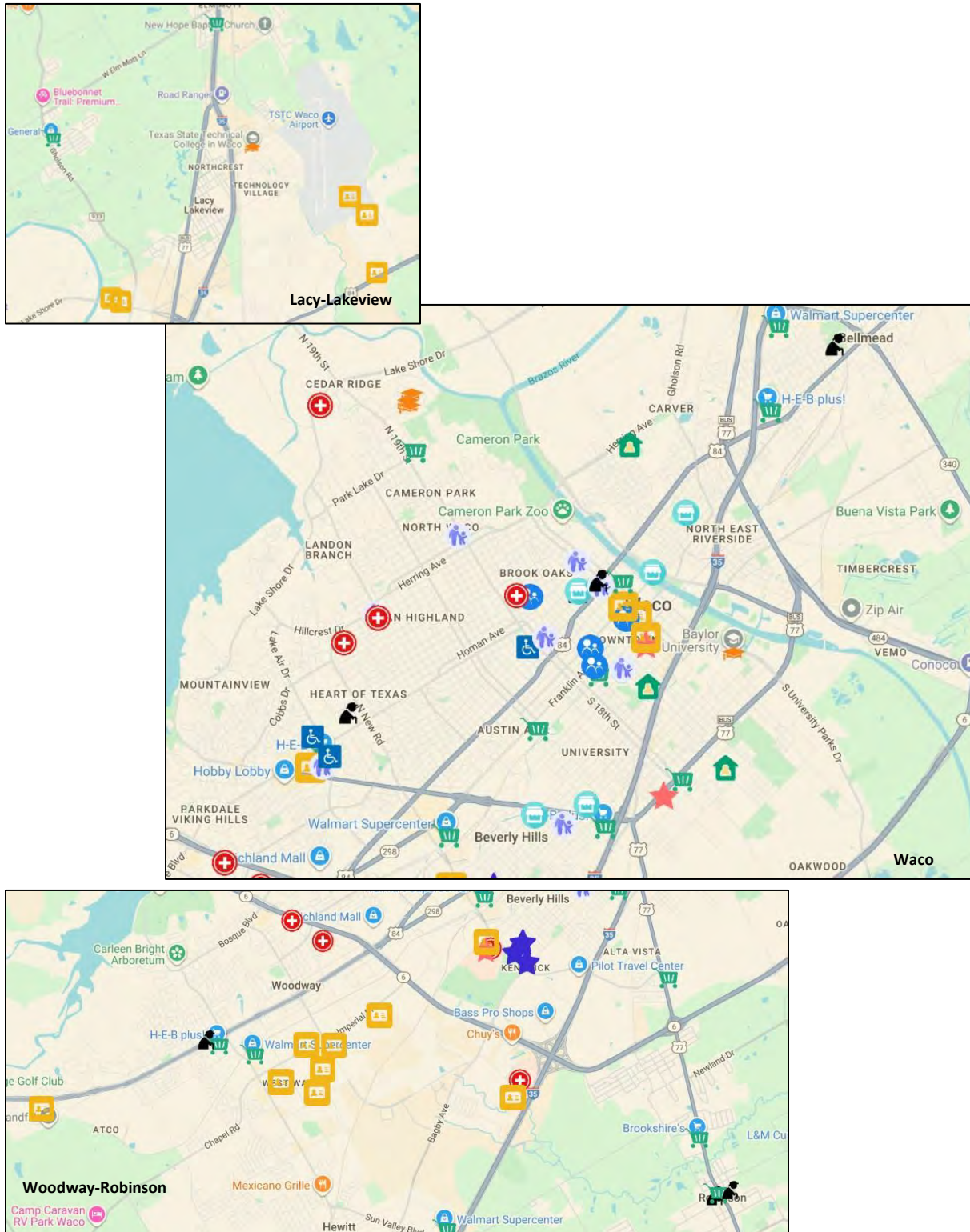




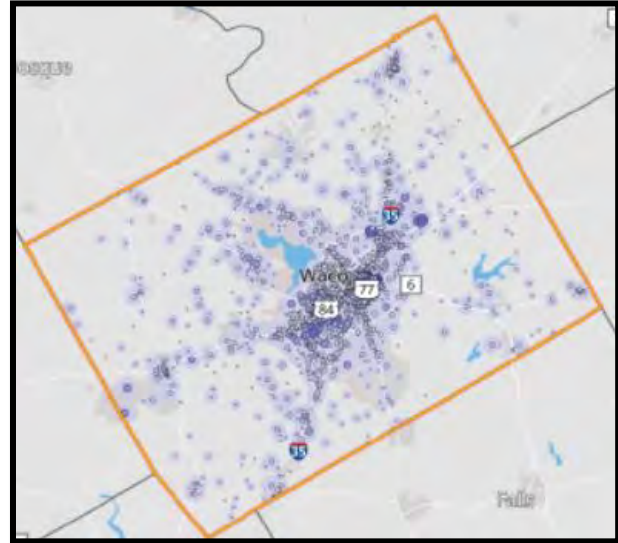
Exhibit 3.28 McLennan County trip generators – Waco area





Not surprisingly, the greatest concentration of jobs in McLennan County is in the Waco Urbanized Area.

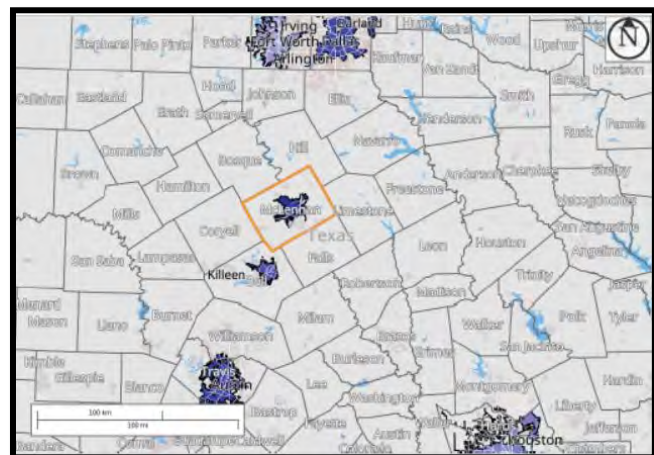
Exhibit 3.29 McLennan County job density



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

There are 114,706 workers living in McLennan County. The top employment locations within McLennan County are Waco (52,369 jobs, or 45.7 percent), Woodway (3,019 jobs, or 2.6 percent), Bellmead (1,918 jobs, or 1.7 percent), Hewitt (1,729 jobs, or 1.5 percent), and Lacy-Lakeview (1,383 jobs, or 1.2 percent). Outside the county, Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex is the destination with the greatest number of McLennan County resident jobs (5,647 jobs, or 4.9 percent), followed closely by Austin (4,570 jobs, or 4.0 percent). Other common destinations include Temple (3,104 jobs, or 2.7 percent) and Houston (2,366 jobs, or 2.1 percent).

Exhibit 3.30 McLennan County work destinations

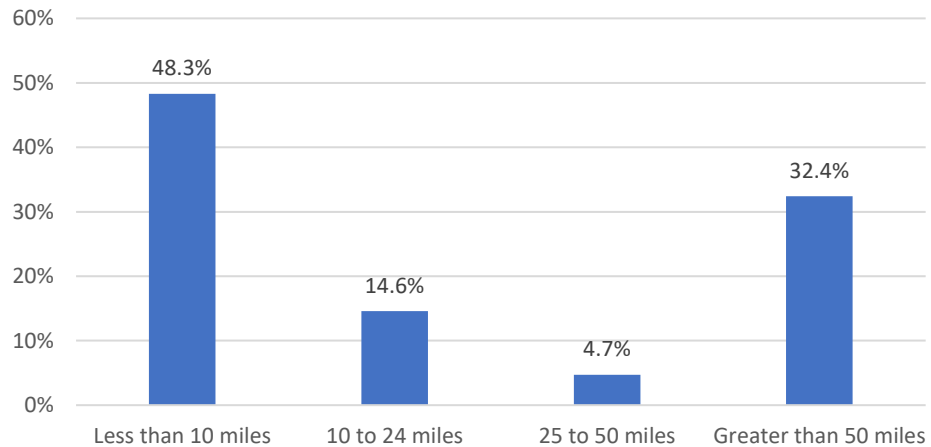


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Nearly half of workers in McLennan County have a commute distance of less than 10 miles. Another nearly one-third commutes more than 50 miles. Relatively few employed persons have a commute between 10 and 50 miles.

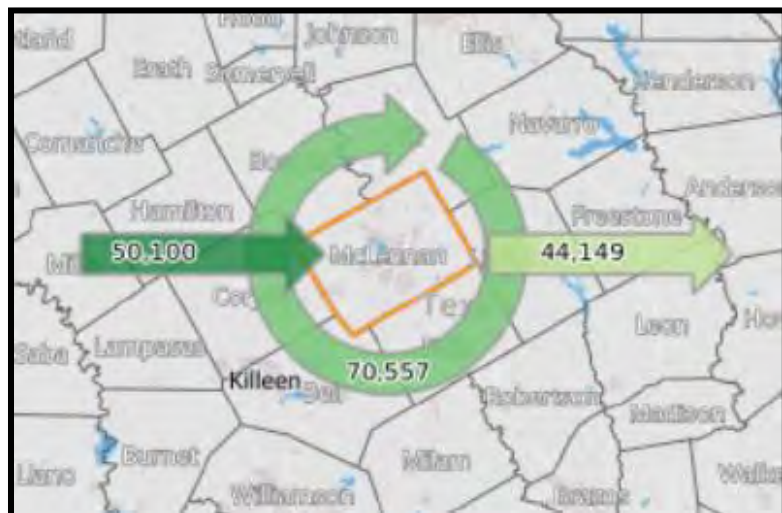
Exhibit 3.31 McLennan County commute distance



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).

Of the 114,706 workers living in McLennan County, only 38.5 percent are employed outside the county. Of the 120,657 jobs in McLennan County, 58.5 percent are filled by persons who also live in McLennan County. All other employed persons commute in from outside the county.

Exhibit 3.32 McLennan County work inflow/outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2022).



Literature Review

The purpose of the Literature Review is to evaluate completed and ongoing studies and plans to ensure that mobility- and coordination-related recommendations are appropriately considered for inclusion within the updated Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan. A summary of each document is provided, along with the sponsoring organization, the year it was completed, and the geographic area represented by the study or plan. Each entry also reflects key findings and recommendations identified within the Plan with respect to their applicability to transportation and mobility within the HOTCOG region.

The documents included within this literature review include:

Statewide Plans:

1. Texas Triangle Multimodal Strategic Plan (in progress 2026)
2. Texas Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan 2050 (draft plan October 2025)
3. Statewide Active Transportation Plan (2025)
4. Connecting Texas 2050 (Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (2024)

Local/Regional Plans:

1. Convey 2050 Waco Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2025)
2. Waco Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) (2024)
3. City of Waco 25th Street Corridor Implementation Plan (2024)
4. Limestone Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment (2025)
5. Waco-McLennan County Community Health Improvement Plan (2025)
6. Baylor Scott & White Health Waco-McLennan Region Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2025)
7. Freestone Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2024)
8. Bosque County Hospital District/Goodall-Witcher Healthcare Community Health Needs Assessment (2024)
9. Falls Community Hospital and Clinic Community Health Needs Assessment (2024)
10. Waco-McLennan County Community Health Needs Assessment (2023)



Statewide Plans

Texas Triangle Multimodal Strategic Plan (expected completion 2027)

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Geographic area: “Triangle” area bounded by Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas/Fort Worth

Summary:

The Texas Triangle Multimodal Strategic Plan (TTMSP) is being developed to evaluate current and future mobility needs, challenges, and opportunities within the large “triangle” region generally defined by the I-35, I-45, and I-10 corridors connecting Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas/Fort Worth. With the region home to the majority of Texas residents and accounting for 80 percent of Texas’ gross domestic product, keeping people and goods moving is critical to the state’s economy.

Preliminary findings and recommendations:

While the Plan is still in progress as of Summer 2026, several themes have been identified regarding access to transportation. These include:

- Increasing congestion, which is expected to lengthen travel times, especially along major corridors.
- Declining reliability and rising costs.
- Limited first- and last-mile connections, which make it more difficult to connect people to jobs and essential services.
- Workforce access challenges due to longer and less reliable commutes.
- Population and job growth patterns that shift outward, reducing access to multimodal options.

At the time of this report, the TTMSP was in Phase 2, which included the development of trends, forecasts, and future transportation scenarios; sought to assess existing and future multimodal needs; and continued stakeholder engagement. Work on the TTMSP, including development of the final plan, finalizing recommendations and strategies, and creating actionable next steps, is expected to continue through mid-2027.



Texas Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan 2050 (2026)

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Geographic area: Statewide

Summary:

The Texas Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan (SMTP) represents the state's vision for transit development over the next 24 years. It seeks to address the current challenges of rising operating costs, workforce shortages, declining local revenues, metropolitan area growth beyond current service boundaries, changing travel patterns and travel demand, and an increasing need for transportation in rural and small urban areas. The SMTP builds on existing local, regional, and statewide plans to recommend transit-specific strategies to sustain and expand transit's role in achieving goals, such as those set forth in the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Statewide Active Transportation Plan (SATP).

Findings and recommendations:

The SMTP included a series of goals supported by multiple strategies, all intended to improve mobility within the state of Texas. Areas of focus for the plan were safety and security, asset preservation, mobility, connectivity, economic vitality, and stewardship.

With respect to urban and rural transit services, the plan focused on growing urban areas; transit access to economic opportunities; congestion driven by growth; rural and small urban area general mobility networks; and workforce recruitment, training, and retention. TxDOT identified three strategies related to these issues:

1. Identify priority corridors and estimate minimum levels of service.
2. Integrate all transit modes and mobility options with other transportation modes.
3. Establish institutional and organizational partnerships to promote comprehensive workforce development.

Intercity connectivity was also examined in the SMTP. Key strategies in this area included identification of a statewide route and hub network, development of a governance framework for statewide and regional intercity services, and implementation of technology to enable seamless travel statewide.

Widely varying coordination, planning, and design practices across the state were also an area of focus. Key strategies in this area included researching and documenting statewide transit benefits; integrating transit through local, regional, and statewide planning; incorporating transportation technology; prioritizing safety and resiliency; and enhancing research, reporting, and knowledge sharing.

One of the most critical areas addressed in the plan was funding for public transit services. The primary challenges with respect to funding were:



1. Upgrading, maintaining, and replacing critical service delivery assets.
2. Needing to maintain and expand service levels in the face of escalating costs, inflation, and supply chain issues.
3. Funding for new and improved service, which cannot be implemented within current projected funding.
4. Funding challenges and constraints, such as the risks of relying heavily on a single funding source, funding disparities in FTA formula grant programs for rural area, over-reliance on federal funding to maintain assets, siloes funding sources, insufficient and/or unreliable sources of local match to support rural and urban service areas, and funding gaps for intercity connectivity.

Funding-related strategies set forth in the SMTP fell into three categories:

1. Maximize use of existing funding.
 - a. Technology and design
 - b. Improved data collection and analysis
 - c. Asset management plans
 - d. Reducing/eliminating transportation funding silos
 - e. More formula and less discretionary federal funding
 - f. Statewide cooperative purchasing program
 - g. Federal program consolidation
2. Expand sources, flexibility, and levels of funding
 - a. Support transportation funding increases in conjunction with flexibility of use, including transit
 - b. Support innovative institutional and private sector partnerships
3. Tie funding to growth and performance
 - a. Mitigating decennial census impacts on rural and urban transit
 - b. Increase funding levels and tie to growth and performance

Finally, the SMTP developed six initial priority steps based on feedback from working groups and stakeholders; identification of more than 250 potential strategies; and aligning potential strategies with goals, gaps, challenges, and needs. Those initial priority steps are:

1. Establish a Community of Practice (CoP) to address small urban and rural transit challenges (TxDOT-led).
2. Develop a statewide transit network and hub plan (TxDOT-led and -facilitated).
3. Develop flexible statewide transit planning and design guidelines (TxDOT-facilitated).
4. Develop success metrics, enhance and broaden data collection, and develop consistent reporting (TxDOT-facilitated).
5. Identify options to increase flexibility of funding sources and identify new and innovative funding sources to maintain and expand transit (TxDOT-supported).
6. Formalize a plan for regular outreach and education on the benefits of transit (TxDOT-led and -facilitated).



Statewide Active Transportation Plan (2026)

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Geographic area: Statewide

Summary:

The Statewide Active Transportation Plan (SATP) represents the state's vision for active transportation – including walking, biking, and other mobility devices – over the next 24 years. Active transportation modes plan an important role in addressing individual transportation needs by facilitating mobility and connectivity, increasing access to opportunities, and creating safe and active communities. Goals developed for the SATP were:

- Improve safety, comfort, and accessibility;
- Enhance connectivity;
- Address community needs;
- Support economic vitality; and
- Promote healthy communities.

Active transportation modes currently used across the state include biking, walking, micromobility (such as e-bikes or e-scooters). Modes tied closely with active transportation include transit, ferries, and cross-border active transportation.

Findings and recommendations:

Numerous challenges were identified repeatedly through outreach. Reoccurring themes included congestion, lack of funding, safety, not prioritizing active transportation, limited connectivity, limited integration into land-use and infrastructure planning, and a lack of understanding of the economic benefits of active transportation. Nine key strategies were defined in the SATP:

1. Improve active transportation safety.
2. Prioritize more active transportation infrastructure.
3. Integrate active transportation with other travel modes.
4. Integrate active transportation early in project planning and scoping.
5. Address physical barriers in the active transportation networks.
6. Implement and integrate optimal designs to improve the travel experience.
7. Develop and expand active transportation networks statewide.
8. TxDOT to work with partners and communities to develop plans, increase awareness, and implement active transportation.
9. Improve infrastructure conditions through maintenance and repair.

Finally, the SATP developed five priority actions to accelerate implementation of the plan. Those priority actions are:



1. Identify and invest in statewide active transportation networks.
2. Lead an active transportation awareness and education campaign with partnerships.
3. Develop design examples and train for the consistent application of active transportation.
4. Enhance data collection and reporting.
5. Effectively leverage resources for active transportation.

Progress toward the goals of the SATP will be measured using three progress measure areas: active transportation fatalities and serious injuries, active transportation mode share, and amount of active transportation infrastructure constructed.



Connecting Texas 2050 (Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan) (2024)

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Geographic area: Statewide

Summary:

The Statewide Long Range Transit Plan (SLRTP), Connecting Texas 2050, provides an overview of and vision for multimodal transportation across the state, including roadways, bridges, railroads, public transit systems, sidewalks and bikeways, airport, seaports and waterways, and border crossings. It seeks to improve safety, promote preservation of vital infrastructure and services, enhance mobility, improve connectivity, strengthen economic vitality, and promote stewardship. The SLRTP integrates with prior plans as well as serves as the foundation for plans prepared in the future (including the Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan and Statewide Active Transportation Plan).

The vision for the SLRTP is to “create an innovative multimodal transportation system that safely and efficiently moves people and freight and supports future growth.” It includes strategic recommendations supporting that vision.

Key findings and recommendations:

Strategies were organized under eight key themes as “continued and/or expanded efforts” and “additional opportunities.”

The key themes were:

1. Strengthen the safety and resilience of the state’s transportation system.
2. Expand the use of transportation technology and innovation to enhance system performance.
3. Promote freight infrastructure and intermodal connectivity for a prosperous future.
4. Optimize investment in the multimodal transportation system to accommodate future growth.
5. Enhance cross-border connectivity and operations.
6. Support workforce connections to jobs and develop and retail a skilled transportation workforce to meet future needs.
7. Adapt the long-term planning process to better address evolving transportation challenges and leverage opportunities.
8. Enhance public and stakeholder collaboration and engagement to achieve the state’s transportation vision and goals.



Local/Regional Plans

Convey 2050 Waco Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2025)

Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization

Geographic area: McLennan County (Waco MPO area)

Summary:

The Waco Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a long-range plan designed to support the transportation needs of and vision for McLennan County across a 25-year horizon. The MTP establishes a clear regional vision for mobility, outlines achievable goals, provides a framework for project selection, and identifies performance measures to use in gauging progress. Guiding principles for the MTP include safety, reliability, state of good repair, and equity.

Key findings and recommendations:

The MTP identified 10 criteria to be used in prioritizing projects, each weighted according to importance. The weighted criteria were determined through a collaborative process by the MTP Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and Policy Board. The criteria and their individual weights are as follows:

1. Non-motorized path elements (such as curb alignment, path width, and safety features) (5.59 percent)
2. Comprehensive mobility solutions (such as land use integration, accessible mobility, watershed impact, and air quality considerations) (7.96 percent)
3. Conflict point resolution (which focuses on minimizing potential collision points) (12.32 percent)
4. Transit operations and/or access improvements (which prioritize transit mobility and safety alongside first- and last-mile options) (7.6 percent)
5. Facilitates connectivity (by emphasizing operational efficiency, eliminating bottlenecks, and improving traffic movement) (10.55 percent)
6. Transportation resiliency (by addressing system disruptions, emergency response times, evaluation routes, and responses to natural disasters) (11.11 percent)
7. Access to underserved populations (which emphasizes Justice40 goals, intergenerational equity, and asset management) (10.96 percent)
8. Economic development (which prioritizes current and future business needs through supporting transportation infrastructure) (14.02 percent)
9. Regional impact (which emphasizes collaboration among local government agencies) (12.65 percent)
10. Tourism-related traffic (which prioritizes safety for non-local drivers while enhancing access to medical, shopping, and entertainment opportunities) (7.22 percent)



Waco Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (2024)

Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization

Geographic area: McLennan County (Waco MPO area)

Summary:

The purpose of the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) was to create a safer transportation system in McLennan County. It analyzed crash data, identified high-risk areas, and developed a prioritized list of countermeasures, and created a plan to secure funding for implementation. The CSAP is intended to help the Waco MPO reduce crashes and move toward the goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

Key findings and recommendations:

The CSAP included recommendations for individual communities within the Waco MPO planning area. Projects were divided into three categories:

- Planning projects, which require further planning and feasibility studies;
- System projects, which focus on a single category of enhancements across an entire city or county (such as a streetlight or signage inventory); and
- Design projects, which are location-specific safety initiatives focusing on a specific corridor or intersection.

Criteria used to prioritize design projects included safety benefits, benefit to vulnerable road users, school safety impact, equity impact, public engagement, and ease of implementation.

The CSAP also recommended high-level policy and process updates that could be broadly applied across multiple jurisdictions. These included:

- Corridor planning,
- Uniform school speed limit,
- Transit-oriented development,
- Access management,
- Complete Street and context-sensitive street design,
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM), and
- Multimodal street planning.

The highest-priority projects were distributed throughout McLennan County, including corridor safety improvements (Bellmead, Hewitt, Lacy Lakeview, Robinson, Waco, Woodway); Main Street safety improvements (McGregor); intersection signalization and/or safety improvements (Hewitt, McGregor, Robinson); Complete Streets multimodal project (Waco); and pedestrian connectivity improvements (unincorporated McLennan County).



City of Waco 25th Street Corridor Implementation Plan (2024)

City of Waco

Geographic area: 25th Street Corridor between Maple Ave and Franklin Ave in Waco

Summary:

The 25th Street Corridor Implementation Plan provides a roadmap for the City and its stakeholders to achieve its preferred vision for 25th Street in the downtown Waco area. The Plan recommends mobility, parking, aesthetic, and safety improvements across short-, mid-, and long-term horizons.

Key findings and recommendations:

The Plan identified three mobility concepts for the corridor designed to address key issues including speeding concerns, multimodal operations, parking, and connectivity.

- Concept 1: Traffic lane reduction with parallel parking.
- Concept 2: Opposing traffic lanes with parallel parking.
- Concept 3: Opposing traffic lanes with dual parallel parking.

Priority themes for the Plan included pedestrian comfort, traffic safety and flow, character, and multimodal connectivity. Recommendations within each of these themes included:

- Pedestrian comfort: sidewalk repair and construction, ADA compliance (curb cuts and ramps), enhanced pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, and improved lighting.
- Traffic safety and flow: convert from one-way to opposing traffic lanes, consistent street lighting, upgraded traffic signals, speed feedback signage, speed limit enforcement, and traffic calming measures.
- Character: gateway features at each end of the corridor, installing trees and other vegetation, installing street furniture, explore partnerships with local organizations and businesses for community clean-ups, explore grants to upgrade building facades, and construct public gathering spaces to enhance placemaking.
- Multimodal connectivity: Expand sidewalks to better accommodate bikes and pedestrians, install a bicycle lane on 26th Street that connects to sidewalks on 25th Street, and convert the space around the gateways into a community space.



Limestone Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment (2025)

Limestone Medical Center

Geographic area: Limestone County Hospital District service area

Summary:

Limestone Medical Center is one of two hospitals serving Limestone County. Every three years, as required by the IRS for non-profit (501(c)(3)) hospitals, Limestone Medical Center prepares a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to collect and use data to identify community assets and priorities that can improve community health and well-being, primarily in south Limestone County.

Three primary methods were used in the preparation of the CHNA: community health survey, public data sources, and focus groups with diverse members of the community.

Key findings and recommendations:

Limestone County's overall health and health factors rankings fell below both the state and national averages for health and well-being and community conditions.

Transportation- and access-related comments noted during the community outreach included the following:

- Transportation to clinic or other medical appointments is an issue for some patients (noted that two vans have recently been purchased for the LMC Foundation to provide transportation).
- Dialysis is a medical specialty not currently available in the community that is one of the most needed. At the time of the report, there was a vacant dialysis center one block from the hospital in Groesbeck, but there was no provider to operate it.
- Blue Transit is a good public resource for regional medical appointments, but scheduling difficulties limit utilization. Blue Transit was also identified as an opportunity for potential collaboration.
- Transportation was identified as a priority issue.

Transportation- and access-related recommendations arising from the needs assessment included a call for a collaborative community network to improve social and environmental factors that impact health. Transportation was cited as an issue constraining the ability of some individuals, especially those in outlying areas of the county, to access medical care or other essential services that impact well-being. Other issues cited included a lack of livable-wage employment opportunities and a need for sidewalks and safe walking paths.



Waco-McLennan County Community Health Improvement Plan (2025)

Waco-McLennan County Public Health District

Geographic area: Waco/McLennan County region

Summary:

The Waco-McLennan County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was developed through a collaborative effort by the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District (WMPH) in partnership with United Way of Waco-McLennan County and a broad range of other local organizations and agencies. The CHIP builds on insights from the 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Key findings and recommendations:

Four priority areas were identified in the CHIP: mental and behavioral health, healthcare services, women's health, and non-medical drivers of health (e.g., social determinants of health). Access to healthcare was a theme that spanned all four priority areas. The CHIP identified goals, strategies, and actionable objectives to address the community healthcare needs. All of these objectives have an implementation timeline of no later than December 31, 2026.

- Goal 1: Strengthen the foundation for coordinated community action.
 - Strategy 1.1: Map the landscape of services.
 - Strategy 1.2: Build consensus on community well-being indicators.
- Goal 2: McLennan County residents have access to equitable, affordable, and timely healthcare and services.
 - Strategy 2.1: Improve accommodation.
 - Strategy 2.2: Improve affordability.
 - Strategy 2.3: Improve availability.
- Goal 3: McLennan County community partners connect with residents.
 - Strategy 3.1: Improve reach.
 - Strategy 3.2: Improve engagement.

While transportation was not specifically mentioned in the CHIP, as a social determinant of health, it is an inherent component of access to healthcare.



Baylor Scott & White Health Waco-McLennan Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2025)

Baylor Scott & White Health

Geographic area: Waco/McLennan County region

Summary:

Baylor Scott & White Health operates Baylor Scott & White Medical Center – Hillcrest, which serves Waco and McLennan County. Every three years, as required by the IRS for non-profit (501(c)(3)) hospitals, BSW Health prepares a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to collect and use data to identify community assets and priorities that can improve community health and well-being. This Community Health Improvement Plan is the implementation plan for the 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Four primary methods were used in the preparation of the CHNA: examination of more than 200 public health indicators, community focus groups, community surveys, and interviews.

Key findings and recommendations:

One of the areas reviewed in the CHNA was access to care. One of the challenges cited by participants was “lack of transportation for patients.” In fact, the percentage of households in the Waco-McLennan Region with no vehicle available was slightly higher than the state as a whole, while in some areas of Waco the incidence was as high as 18 percent. Rural areas of McLennan County also had higher percentages of households with no vehicle available.

Transportation challenges were cited in other areas as well.

- Transportation was a barrier for the senior population with respect to behavioral health.
- Surgeries may be limited due to limited transportation options as part of the built environment. The Waco-McLennan region had a walkability index of just 6.87 out of 20.
- Lack of transportation to grocery stores and healthcare appointments limits access to healthy and affordable food, compounding food insecurity.

The two most significant priorities for the subsequent implementation plan were behavioral health and maternal and child health. Proposed strategies for both priorities sought to increase access to healthcare and supportive services, though transportation was not specifically called out (in some cases, increased access was provided through virtual provider visits).



Freestone Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2024)

Freestone Medical Center

Geographic area: Freestone County

Summary:

Freestone Medical Center, located in Fairfield, serves Freestone County. While not required by the IRS to prepare a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) as it is not a non-profit (501(c)(3)) hospital, Freestone Medical Center elected to collect and use data to identify community assets and priorities that can improve community health and well-being, thereby ensuring it responds to the primary health needs of its residents.

Key findings and recommendations:

Freestone County's overall health outcomes and health factors rankings fell below the state averages for length of life, quality of life, health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.

Lack of transportation was frequently noted as a potential barrier to accessing and receiving care. More than three percent of households had no vehicle. It was also listed as a barrier to care for the aging population, both in terms of a lack of awareness and additional assistance needed for seniors with mobility issues. Populations listed as most at risk, due in part to transportation barriers, were youth, seniors, low-income/working poor, and veterans. Transportation played a contributing role in two of the final priorities of the assessment: 1) Access to mental and behavioral health care services and providers, and 2) Continued focus on reducing health disparities among specific populations (elderly and youth).



Goodall-Witcher Healthcare Community Health Needs Assessment (2024)

Bosque County Hospital District

Geographic area: Bosque County

Summary:

Goodall-Witcher Hospital is the critical access hospital serving Bosque County. It also operates two primary care clinics and one specialty clinic. Every three years, as required by the IRS for non-profit (501(c)(3)) hospitals, Goodall-Witcher Healthcare prepares a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to collect and use data to identify community assets and priorities that can improve community health and well-being.

Three primary methods were used in the preparation of the CHNA: community health survey, public data sources, and focus groups with diverse members of the community.

Key findings and recommendations:

Several of Bosque County's overall health and health factors rankings fell below both the state and national averages for health and well-being and community conditions, including poor mental and physical health days, child mortality, adult smoking, and drug overdose deaths. The ratio of residents to healthcare providers was significantly worse, especially among dentists and mental health providers.

Transportation- and access-related comments noted during the community outreach included the following:

- Transportation can be limiting for those in the far reaches of the county.
- Medical transportation was frequently mentioned as a community need, impeding the ability of those who do not drive or living in outlying areas of the county to travel to appointments.
- Blue Transit was cited as a good public transportation service, but was limited to weekdays only and there can be scheduling difficulties.

The CHNA recommended collaborative efforts be made to include cross sections of the community to identify and address opportunities to improve social determinants of health (including transportation) that impact the population.



Falls Community Hospital and Clinic Community Health Needs Assessment (2024)

Falls Community Hospital and Clinic

Geographic area: Falls County

Summary:

Falls Community Hospital and Clinic (FCHC) provides primary and specialty healthcare in Falls County. Every three years, as required by the IRS for non-profit (501(c)(3)) hospitals, FCHC prepares a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to collect and use data to identify community assets and priorities that can improve community health and well-being.

Three primary methods were used in the preparation of the CHNA: public data sources, a written questionnaire, and focus groups interviews with diverse members of the community.

Key findings and recommendations:

Several of Falls County's overall health and health factors rankings fell below both the state and national averages for health and well-being and community conditions, including poor mental and physical health days, child mortality, adult smoking, food insecurity, alcohol-related driving deaths, teen births, adult obesity, and physical inactivity. The ratio of residents to healthcare providers in all categories was significantly worse, with just one primary care physician per more than 17,000 residents.

Transportation- and access-related comments noted during the community outreach included the following:

- Access to primary care is limited for some due to location of residence or transportation.
- Focus group participants indicated transportation in the county has improved since the prior CHNA (2021).
- Transportation services provided by Blue Transit were generally thought to be satisfactory with improved scheduling and availability.

The CHNA recommended collaborative efforts be made to include cross sections of the community to identify and address opportunities to improve social determinants of health (including transportation) that impact the population.



Waco-McLennan County Community Health Needs Assessment (2023)

Waco-McLennan County Public Health District

Geographic area: Waco/McLennan County region

Summary:

Waco and McLennan County are served by the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District as well as healthcare providers such as Waco Family Medicine, Ascension Providence Hospital, and Baylor Scott & White Medical Center - Hillcrest. The Waco-McLennan County Public Health District prepared a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to collect and use data to identify community assets and priorities that can improve community health and well-being across the region.

Four primary methods were used in the preparation of the CHNA: a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER), community survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews.

Key findings and recommendations:

In three of the four methods, transportation was only modestly cited as a barrier to healthcare access. In fact, 18 percent of the respondents in the CASPER assessment cited access to public transportation as a strength of their neighborhood community. However, 17 percent of respondents also indicated they would like to see improvements to transportation in their neighborhood or community. Just six percent of participants in the community survey said they had an issue going to the doctor due to transportation. Twenty-six percent of participants cited access to public transportation as a strength of their neighborhood community, while one percent indicated it was one of the biggest challenges, and 14 percent said they would like to see transportation options improved.

During the focus groups, a participant from McGregor indicated not being able to afford transportation out of town to access healthcare made it difficult to be healthy. People would wind up walking to the doctor's office and did not have access to specialists. Other participants cited limited transportation options as well, especially for older adults and individuals without personal transportation. Some noted the Waco Transit fixed-route service was difficult to use, and several said the situation was worse in rural areas. Some suggested a need for free transportation service to healthcare supported by county funds or other sources.

Key informants included the McLennan County Local Health Authority, Cooper Foundation, McLennan County Indigent Health Care, Waco Family Medicine, and Waco Independent School District. These interviews also cited lack of access to care as a top health issue. Eliminating barriers that hinder access to care, such as limited transportation options, was a vital concern.



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Chapter 4 | Demographic Area Assessment

Heart of Texas Region

Nearly 70 percent of the region’s population resides in McLennan County, and nearly 80 percent resides within the Waco Metropolitan Area. Youth under age 18 comprise nearly a quarter of residents, while seniors age 65 and older make up just under 17 percent. More than seven percent of residents in the region are veterans, and nearly 15 percent have a disability. Nearly 16 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level. Fewer than nine percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), although more than 18 percent speak a language other than English at home. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language.

Exhibit 4.1 Heart of Texas Region demographics

Category	Number	Percentage
Total population	381,705	
Age		
Youth population (under 18)	89,401	23.4%
Adult population (18 to 64)	227,093	59.5%
Senior population (65 and older)	65,211	17.1%
Race/ethnicity		
White alone	235,051	61.6%
Black alone	49,362	12.9%
Native American/Alaska Native alone	1,615	0.4%
Asian alone	6,185	1.6%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	129	0.0%
Some other race	16,535	4.3%
Two or more races	72,828	19.1%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	96,994	25.4%
Veterans		
Civilian population 18 years and over	292,096	100.0%
Veterans	21,733	7.4%
Disability		
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	373,051	100.0%
Persons with disabilities	55,349	14.8%
Poverty		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	366,908	100.0%
Below federal poverty level	57,832	15.8%
Language		
Population 5 years and over	358,631	100.0%
Speak English only at home	293,201	81.8%
Speak Spanish at home	57,981	16.2%
Speak another language besides Spanish at home	7,449	2.1%
Speak English less than “very well”	31,341	8.7%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 five-year estimates.



Regional population is expected to increase to 402,360 by July 2030.¹ This reflects a 5.4 percent increase over the population cited in the ACS 2024 five-year estimate.

Bosque County

Youth under age 18 make up 20.8 percent of Bosque County residents, while seniors age 65 and older comprise just under 26 percent. This is different from the region as a whole, where youth represent a greater portion of the population than seniors. More than nine percent of residents in the county are veterans and nearly 17 percent have a disability, which is higher than the region as a whole. Just over nine percent of residents live below the federal poverty level, which is significantly lower than the region as a whole. Four percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), and less than 14 percent speak a language other than English at home. This is also lower than the region as a whole. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language.

County population is expected to increase to 19,190 by July 2030.² This reflects a 2.7 percent increase over the population cited in the ACS 2024 five-year estimate.

Exhibit 4.2 Bosque County demographics

Category	Number	Percentage
Total population	18,687	
Age		
Youth population (under 18)	3,882	20.8%
Adult population (18 to 64)	10,020	53.6%
Senior population (65 and older)	4,785	25.6%
Race/ethnicity		
White alone	14,409	77.1%
Black alone	230	1.2%
Native American/Alaska Native alone	41	0.2%
Asian alone	81	0.4%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%
Some other race	1,104	5.9%
Two or more races	2,822	15.1%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	3,576	19.1%
Veterans		
Civilian population 18 years and over	14,776	100.0%
Veterans	1,368	9.3%
Disability		
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	18,337	100.0%
Persons with disabilities	3,105	16.9%

¹ Texas Demographic Center (2024). Projections of the Total Population of Texas and Counties in Texas, 2020-2060 (Mid Migration Scenario). Retrieved June 25, 2026, from <https://demographics.texas.gov/Projections/>.

² Texas Demographic Center (2024). Projections of the Total Population of Texas and Counties in Texas, 2020-2060 (Mid Migration Scenario). Retrieved June 25, 2026, from <https://demographics.texas.gov/Projections/>.



Category	Number	Percentage
Poverty		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	18,292	100.0%
Below federal poverty level	1,700	9.3%
Language		
Population 5 years and over	17,746	100.0%
Speak English only at home	15,348	86.5%
Speak Spanish at home	2,274	12.8%
Speak another language besides Spanish at home	124	0.7%
Speak English less than "very well"	717	4.0%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 five-year estimates.

Falls County

Youth under age 18 make up 21 percent of Falls County residents, while seniors age 65 and older comprise 19.3 percent. More than eight percent of residents in the county are veterans, while nearly 17 percent have a disability, both of which are slightly higher than the region as a whole. Nearly 15 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level, which is close to the average for the region as a whole. Less than five percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), although nearly 16 percent speak a language other than English at home. This is slightly lower than the region as a whole. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language.

County population is expected to decrease to 17,106 by July 2030.³ This reflects a 1.1 percent decrease from the population cited in the ACS 2024 five-year estimate.

Exhibit 4.3 Falls County demographics

Category	Number	Percentage
Total population	17,291	
Age		
Youth population (under 18)	3,627	21.0%
Adult population (18 to 64)	10,323	59.7%
Senior population (65 and older)	3,341	19.3%
Race/ethnicity		
White alone	10,009	57.9%
Black alone	3,230	18.7%
Native American/Alaska Native alone	69	0.4%
Asian alone	961	5.6%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%
Some other race	571	3.3%
Two or more races	2,451	14.2%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	4,324	25.0%

³ Texas Demographic Center (2024). Projections of the Total Population of Texas and Counties in Texas, 2020-2060 (Mid Migration Scenario). Retrieved June 25, 2026, from <https://demographics.texas.gov/Projections/>.



Category	Number	Percentage
Veterans		
Civilian population 18 years and over	13,664	100.0%
Veterans	1,132	8.3%
Disability		
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	15,350	100.0%
Persons with disabilities	2,596	16.9%
Poverty		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	15,293	100.0%
Below federal poverty level	2,250	14.7%
Language		
Population 5 years and over	16,331	100.0%
Speak English only at home	13,727	84.1%
Speak Spanish at home	2,336	14.3%
Speak another language besides Spanish at home	268	1.6%
Speak English less than "very well"	770	4.7%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 five-year estimates.

Freestone County

Youth under age 18 make up 22.6 percent of Freestone County residents, while seniors age 65 and older comprise 20.1 percent. As in the region as a whole, youth represent a greater portion of the population than seniors, albeit only slightly. More than seven percent of residents in the county are veterans, which is consistent with the region as a whole. Nearly 19 percent have a disability, which is higher than the region as a whole. More than 12 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level, which is lower than the region as a whole. Less than three percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), the smallest LEP population in the region, although 12 percent speak a language other than English at home. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language.

County population is expected to increase to 20,504 by July 2030.⁴ This reflects a 2.3 percent increase over the population cited in the ACS 2024 five-year estimate.

⁴ Texas Demographic Center (2024). Projections of the Total Population of Texas and Counties in Texas, 2020-2060 (Mid Migration Scenario). Retrieved June 25, 2026, from <https://demographics.texas.gov/Projections/>.



Exhibit 4.4 Freestone County demographics

Category	Number	Percentage
Total population	20,049	
Age		
Youth population (under 18)	4,531	22.6%
Adult population (18 to 64)	11,481	57.3%
Senior population (65 and older)	4,037	20.1%
Race/ethnicity		
White alone	13,164	65.7%
Black alone	2,908	14.5%
Native American/Alaska Native alone	92	0.5%
Asian alone	44	0.2%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%
Some other race	615	3.1%
Two or more races	3,226	16.1%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	3,455	17.2%
Veterans		
Civilian population 18 years and over	15,518	100.0%
Veterans	1,164	7.5%
Disability		
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	18,586	100.0%
Persons with disabilities	3,493	18.8%
Poverty		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	18,582	100.0%
Below federal poverty level	2,285	12.3%
Language		
Population 5 years and over	19,052	100.0%
Speak English only at home	16,772	88.0%
Speak Spanish at home	2,167	11.4%
Speak another language besides Spanish at home	113	0.6%
Speak English less than "very well"	529	2.8%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 five-year estimates.

Hill County

Youth under age 18 make up 23.1 percent of Hill County residents, while seniors age 65 and older comprise 20.4 percent. As in the region as a whole, youth represent a greater portion of the population than seniors. Nearly eight percent of residents in the county are veterans, which is consistent with the region as a whole. More than 18 percent have a disability, which is higher than the region as a whole. Nearly 15 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level, which is only slightly lower than the region as a whole. Five percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), although 15.8 percent speak a language other than English at home. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language.



County population is expected to increase to 39,839 by July 2030.⁵ This reflects a 6.7 percent increase over the population cited in the ACS 2024 five-year estimate.

Exhibit 4.5 Hill County demographics

Category	Number	Percentage
Total population	37,328	
Age		
Youth population (under 18)	8,638	23.1%
Adult population (18 to 64)	21,070	56.4%
Senior population (65 and older)	7,620	20.4%
Race/ethnicity		
White alone	28,005	75.0%
Black alone	2,093	5.6%
Native American/Alaska Native alone	300	0.8%
Asian alone	285	0.8%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%
Some other race	3,338	8.9%
Two or more races	3,307	8.9%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	8,635	23.1%
Veterans		
Civilian population 18 years and over	28,690	100.0%
Veterans	2,189	7.6%
Disability		
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	36,760	100.0%
Persons with disabilities	6,763	18.4%
Poverty		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	36,541	100.0%
Below federal poverty level	5,363	14.7%
Language		
Population 5 years and over	35,197	100.0%
Speak English only at home	29,632	84.2%
Speak Spanish at home	5,073	14.4%
Speak another language besides Spanish at home	492	1.4%
Speak English less than "very well"	1,758	5.0%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 five-year estimates.

⁵ Texas Demographic Center (2024). Projections of the Total Population of Texas and Counties in Texas, 2020-2060 (Mid Migration Scenario). Retrieved June 25, 2026, from <https://demographics.texas.gov/Projections/>.



Limestone County

Youth under age 18 make up 22.4 percent of Limestone County residents, while seniors age 65 and older comprise 20.9 percent. As in the region as a whole, youth represent a greater portion of the population than seniors. Nearly eight percent of residents in the county are veterans, which is consistent with the region as a whole. Nearly 19 percent have a disability, which is higher than the region as a whole. More than 17 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level, which is the highest of the six counties. More than six percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), although 18 percent speak a language other than English at home. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language.

County population is expected to decrease to 22,030 by July 2030.⁶ This reflects a 1.1 percent decrease over the population cited in the ACS 2024 five-year estimate.

Exhibit 4.6 Limestone County demographics

Category	Number	Percentage
Total population	22,283	
Age		
Youth population (under 18)	4,987	22.4%
Adult population (18 to 64)	12,639	56.7%
Senior population (65 and older)	4,657	20.9%
Race/ethnicity		
White alone	13,176	59.1%
Black alone	3,811	17.1%
Native American/Alaska Native alone	16	0.1%
Asian alone	219	1.0%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%
Some other race	478	2.1%
Two or more races	4,583	20.6%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	5,243	23.5%
Veterans		
Civilian population 18 years and over	17,296	100.0%
Veterans	1,314	7.6%
Disability		
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	21,680	100.0%
Persons with disabilities	4,049	18.7%
Poverty		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	21,500	100.0%
Below federal poverty level	3,669	17.1%

⁶ Texas Demographic Center (2024). Projections of the Total Population of Texas and Counties in Texas, 2020-2060 (Mid Migration Scenario). Retrieved June 25, 2026, from <https://demographics.texas.gov/Projections/>.



Category	Number	Percentage
Language		
Population 5 years and over	20,999	100.0%
Speak English only at home	17,210	82.0%
Speak Spanish at home	3,510	16.7%
Speak another language besides Spanish at home	279	1.3%
Speak English less than “very well”	1,365	6.5%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 five-year estimates.

McLennan County

Youth under age 18 make up 24 percent of McLennan County residents, while seniors age 65 and older comprise 15.3 percent. This represents the greatest gap between the youth and senior populations. Just over seven percent of residents in the county are veterans, which is consistent with the region as a whole. More than 13 percent have a disability, which is slightly lower than the region as a whole. Nearly 17 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level, which is the second-highest of the six counties. More than ten percent of residents are considered limited English proficient (LEP), although 19.6 percent speak a language other than English at home. Spanish is the most common non-English spoken language. There is a higher percentage of individuals who speak a non-English language other than Spanish, which may be attributable to the presence of several colleges and universities.

County population is expected to increase to 283,691 by July 2030.⁷ This reflects a 6.6 percent increase over the population cited in the ACS 2024 five-year estimate.

Exhibit 4.7 McLennan County demographics

Category	Number	Percentage
Total population	266,067	
Age		
Youth population (under 18)	63,736	24.0%
Adult population (18 to 64)	161,560	60.7%
Senior population (65 and older)	40,771	15.3%
Race/ethnicity		
White alone	156,288	58.7%
Black alone	37,090	13.9%
Native American/Alaska Native alone	1,097	0.4%
Asian alone	4,595	1.7%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander alone	129	0.0%
Some other race	10,429	3.9%
Two or more races	56,439	21.2%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	71,761	27.0%

⁷ Texas Demographic Center (2024). Projections of the Total Population of Texas and Counties in Texas, 2020-2060 (Mid Migration Scenario). Retrieved June 25, 2026, from <https://demographics.texas.gov/Projections/>.



Category	Number	Percentage
Veterans		
Civilian population 18 years and over	202,152	100.0%
Veterans	14,566	7.2%
Disability		
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	262,338	100.0%
Persons with disabilities	35,343	13.5%
Poverty		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	256,700	100.0%
Below federal poverty level	42,565	16.6%
Language		
Population 5 years and over	249,306	100.0%
Speak English only at home	200,512	80.4%
Speak Spanish at home	42,621	17.1%
Speak another language besides Spanish at home	6,173	2.5%
Speak English less than "very well"	26,202	10.5%

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 five-year estimates.



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Chapter 5 | Transportation Services Assessment

Transportation Service Profiles

This section provides information about transportation providers in the region. Per the Coordination Plan Guidebook published by the Texas Department of Transportation, a transportation provider is defined as an entity that operates or contracts for such a service, purchases service from another agency, or provides a subsidy to a rider. Data was obtained through a transportation provider survey, individual transportation provider websites, phone calls, and NTD Transit Agency Profiles.

There are three public transportation providers operating in the region. The Heart of Texas Council of Governments operates Blue Transit, which serves five rural counties (Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone). The Waco Transit System provides service within the Waco Urbanized Area. It also operates McLennan Rural Transit, which serves the non-urbanized portions of McLennan County. Additional transportation service is provided by social service providers and private non-profit and for-profit companies.

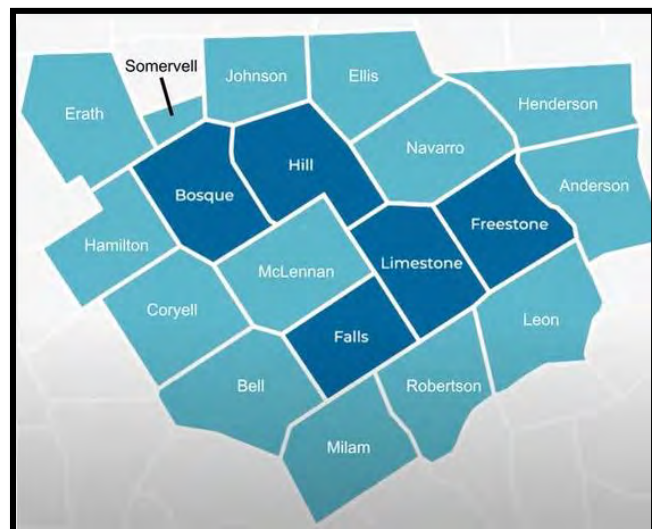
Public Transportation Providers

Transportation Provider:	Heart of Texas Council of Governments/Heart of Texas Rural Transit District (Blue Bus)
Type of transportation provider:	Public
Geographic area served:	Primary service area: Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties Secondary service area (travel to/from primary service area): Anderson, Bell, Coryell, Ellis, Erath, Hamilton, Henderson, Johnson, Leon, McLennan, Milam, Navarro, Robertson, and Somervell counties
Service modes provided:	Demand-response (Dial-A-Ride), Flex transit (route deviation)
Type of operation:	Directly operated
Operating days and hours:	Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Fares for service:	\$1.00 one-way in county; \$2.00 one-way outside origin county.
Service policies/eligibility:	No eligibility requirements. Customers reserve rides via a phone call. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance. Same-day reservations are accommodated on a space-available basis. No subscription trips. Drivers assist passengers in and out of the vehicle as well as with a limited number of bags.
Mobility management programs:	None stated.
Fleet information:	22 vehicles (2 minivans and 20 cutaway buses); all but one of which are wheelchair-accessible. Average age of the minivan fleet is 8.5 years. Average age of the cutaway fleet is four years.
Technologies in use:	Shah Software (booking, scheduling, and dispatch)
Drivers and training:	Four full-time and three part-time drivers



Transportation Provider:	Heart of Texas Council of Governments/Heart of Texas Rural Transit District (Blue Bus) (continued)
Ridership:	30,235
Vehicle service hours operated:	31,138
Vehicle service miles operated:	692,494
Operating expenses:	\$1,588,822 (transportation is 21% of the agency's total budget)
Operating revenues:	- Fares (3.0%) - State government appropriations (39%) - FTA Section 5311 (56%) - FTA Planning Grants (2.0%)
Perceptions of met/unmet needs:	Blue Transit is not able to accommodate all requests from riders due to insufficient funding to meet the demand as well as limited service area and service hours.
Existing coordination efforts:	- Regional transportation authority's project advisory committee. - Information and referral.
Most needed coordination efforts:	- Greater coordination among providers. - More funding for operations. - Longer hours and/or more days of service. Specifically, coordinating trips outside the service area, accommodating weekend trips, accommodating trips after 5 p.m., and perception of limited community awareness. - More/consistent public outreach and more on-demand service options.
For more information:	Website: Phone: (254) 292-1873 Physical address: 1514 S. New Rd, Waco, TX 76711

Exhibit 5.1 Blue Transit service area



Dark blue = primary service area. Light blue = secondary service area.



Transportation Provider:	McLennan County Rural Transit
Type of transportation provider:	Municipal
Geographic area served:	McLennan County outside the Waco Urbanized Area; will provide service into Waco and Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties
Service modes provided:	Demand-response, commuter
Type of operation:	Directly operated and contracted (Central Texas Senior Ministries)
Operating days and hours:	Monday through Friday, 5:15 a.m. – 7:15 p.m. Saturday, 6:15 a.m. – 8:15 p.m.
Fares for service:	Demand-response: • \$3.00 each way within McLennan County • \$5.00 each way same-day trips • \$5.00 each way to adjacent counties Commuter routes: • \$3.00 each way
Service policies/eligibility:	Demand-response: Travel anywhere in McLennan or adjacent counties, as long as the trip begins or ends at a rural address in McLennan County. Demand-response rides may be reserved by phone or through arrangements by a third party (Modicare and SafeRide). Rides may be reserved up to 14 days in advance. Same-day reservations will be accommodated on a space-available basis.
Mobility management programs:	Services for individuals with disabilities or seniors (e.g., travel training)
Fleet information:	(Combined Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit) Sedans (6) 15-passenger vans (2) 8-14 seat vehicles (40) Transit buses (22)
Accessibility:	All McLennan Rural Transit vehicles are ADA accessible and are equipped with either a wheelchair lift or ramp.
Technologies in use:	Spare (demand-response), cell phones, two-way radios, mobile data terminals, tablets
Drivers and training:	(Combined Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit) 45 full-time drivers; 55 part-time drivers Drivers must complete classroom, behind-the-wheel, first aid, and defensive driving training.
Ridership:	27,808 (2025) Demand-response: 20,200 (2024) Commuter: 6,284 (2024)
Vehicle service hours operated:	Demand-response: 17,922 (2024) Commuter: 4,277 (2024)
Vehicle service miles operated:	Demand-response: 398,705 (2024) Commuter: 63,178 (2024)



Transportation Provider:	McLennan County Rural Transit (continued)
Operating expenses:	\$1,558,883 (2024)
Operating revenues:	(Combined Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit) • Passenger fares (6%) • Third-party tickets/fares (12%) • Reimbursements for services (5%) • City funds (7%) • State funds (9%) • FTA Section 5307 (44%) • FTA Section 5310 (2%) • Other revenues (7%)
Perceptions of met/unmet needs:	• Unable to accommodate all ride requests due to insufficient number of vehicles and driver recruitment/retention challenges. • Barriers due to inconvenient or lengthy paths of travel.
Most needed coordination efforts:	• More funding for equipment (excluding vehicles), communications, or outreach. • More drivers and vehicles. • Technology for scheduling or dispatching (e.g., CAD/ADL). • There is a lack of qualified operators and vehicles to meet demand. • Coordination would most benefit under-banked or underserved residents needing access to public transportation.
For more information:	Website: www.waco-texas.com/Departments/Transit-System/Transportation/Rural-Transportation Phone: (254) 750-1620 or (877) 875-7433 Email: wtscomments@wacotx.gov Physical address: 301 S. 8 th St, Suite 100, Waco, TX 76701

In addition to demand-response service, McLennan Rural Transit operates three commuter routes departing from the downtown Waco Transit Terminal twice per day:

- Mart (including service to McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility) (5:15 a.m. and 5:15 p.m.),
- McGregor (including four local stops in McGregor and one in Woodway) (6:15 a.m. and 6:15 p.m.), and
- China Spring/Airport (including service to Waco Regional Airport, local high schools, and the senior center) (7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.).

Transportation to Waco Regional Airport is also available from anywhere in McLennan County via the demand-response service. Trips must be reserved at least two weeks in advance.



Exhibit 5.2 McLennan Rural Transit service area

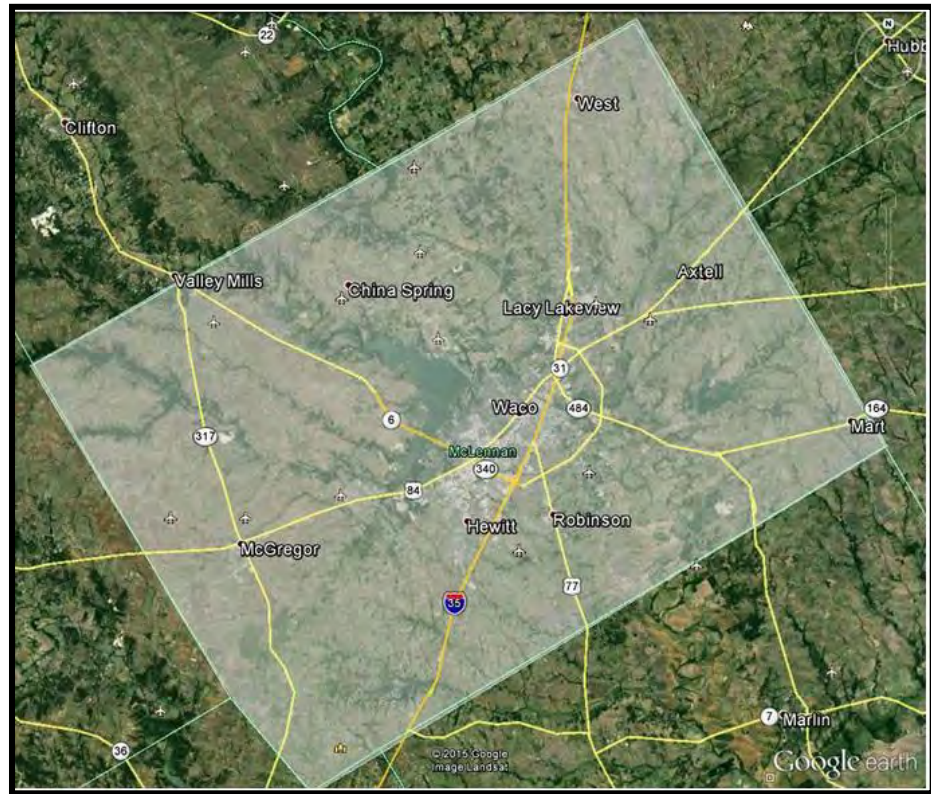
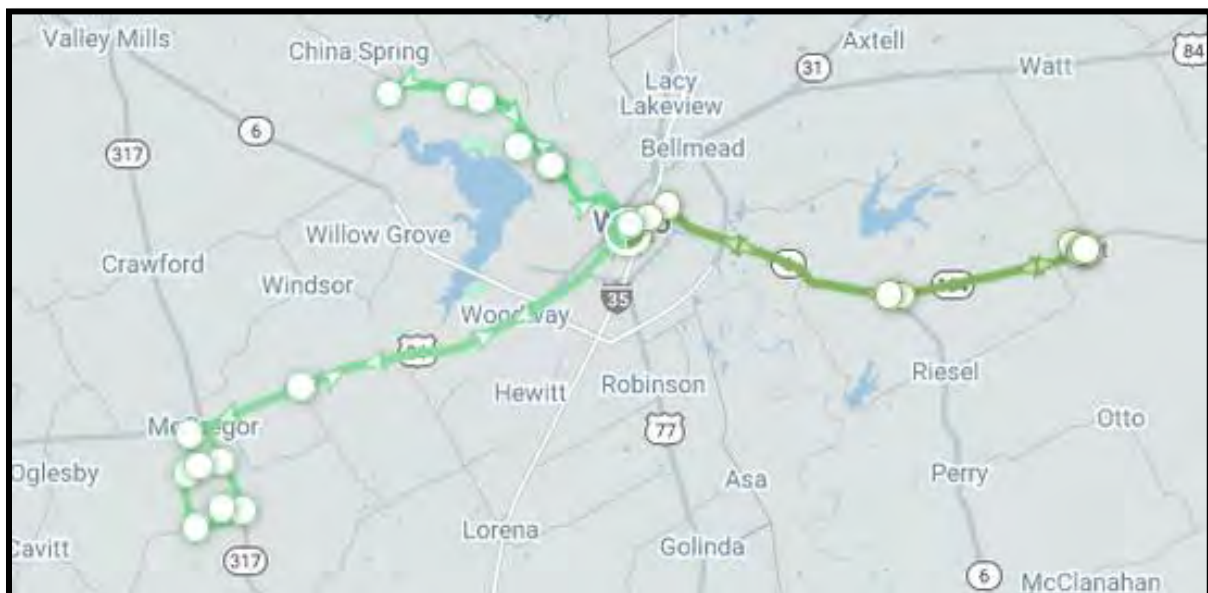


Exhibit 5.3 McLennan Rural Transit commuter routes





Transportation Provider:	Waco Transit System
Type of transportation provider:	Municipal
Geographic area served:	Waco Urbanized Area
Service modes provided:	Fixed-route, ADA complementary paratransit, demand-response, microtransit
Type of operation:	Directly operated
Operating days and hours:	Monday through Friday, 5:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Micro Dash: Monday through Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Fares for service:	Fixed-route: • Full fare: \$1.50 one-way; \$3.00 all day; \$40 31-day pass. • Reduced fare: \$.50 senior/disabled/Medicare one-way; \$1.00 student one-way; \$1.25 all day; \$20 K-12 31-day pass; children 5 years and younger ride free • Those who qualify for reduced fares must provide documentation confirming their eligibility. • MCC and TSTC students are eligible to receive a free bus pass. • Waco ISD students ride free with a student ID. Demand-response: • \$3.00 one-way; \$5.00 same-day request.
Service policies/eligibility:	Eligible riders must apply for and be approved for ADA paratransit and demand-response service. Demand-response and Microtransit rides may be reserved by phone, online or through a smartphone app (Spare), or through arrangements by a third party (Modicare and SafeRide). Rides may be reserved up to 14 days in advance. Same-day reservations will be accommodated on a space-available basis. Up to 50 percent of daily capacity may be subscription trips.
Mobility management programs:	Services for individuals with disabilities or seniors (e.g., travel training)
Fleet information:	(Combined Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit) Sedans (6) 15-passenger vans (2) 8-14 seat vehicles (40) Transit buses (22)
Accessibility:	All Waco Transit vehicles are ADA accessible and are equipped with either a wheelchair lift or ramp.
Technologies in use:	Spare (demand-response), cell phones, two-way radios, mobile data terminals, tablets
Drivers and training:	(Combined Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit) 45 full-time drivers; 55 part-time drivers Drivers must complete classroom, behind-the-wheel, first aid, and defensive driving training.



Transportation Provider:	Waco Transit System (continued)
Ridership:	538,412 (2025) Demand-response: 63,446 (2024) Fixed-route: 789,667 (2024)
Vehicle service hours operated:	89,378 (2025) Demand-response: 32,123 (2024) Fixed-route: 49,312 (2024)
Vehicle service miles operated:	1,307,663 (2025) Demand-response: 482,817 (2024) Fixed-route: 749,202 (2025)
Operating expenses:	\$7,933,639 (2024)
Operating revenues:	(Combined Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit) • Passenger fares (6%) • Third-party tickets/fares (12%) • Reimbursements for services (5%) • City funds (7%) • State funds (9%) • FTA Section 5307 (44%) • FTA Section 5310 (2%) • Other revenues (7%)
Perceptions of met/unmet needs:	• Unable to accommodate all ride requests due to not insufficient number of vehicles and driver recruitment/retention challenges. • Barriers due to inconvenient or lengthy paths of travel.
Most needed coordination efforts:	• More funding for equipment (excluding vehicles), communications, or outreach. • More drivers and vehicles. • Technology for scheduling or dispatching (e.g., CAD/ADL). • Lack of qualified operators and vehicles to meet demand. • Coordination would most benefit under-banked or underserved residents needing access to public transportation.
For more information:	Website: www.waco-texas.com/Departments/Transit-System Phone: (254) 750-1900 Email: wtscomments@wacotx.gov Physical address: 301 S. 8 th St, Suite 100, Waco, TX 76701

Waco Transit operates 10 fixed routes serving the Waco Urbanized Area. These include:

- Route 1: MCC/Valley Mills (counter-clockwise; opposite of Route 2)
- Route 2: Valley Mills/MCC (clockwise; opposite of Route 1)
- Route 3: VA/Colcord (clockwise; opposite of Route 4)
- Route 4: Colcord/VA (counter-clockwise; opposite of Route 3)
- Route 5: TSTC/Bellmead
- Route 6: Highway 6 Loop



- Route 7: East Waco (counter-clockwise on even hours; clockwise on odd hours)
- Route 8: Bosque & Sanger
- Route 9: South Terrace
- Route 10: Waco/Riesel/Sanderson Farms

Exhibit 5.4 Waco Transit system map

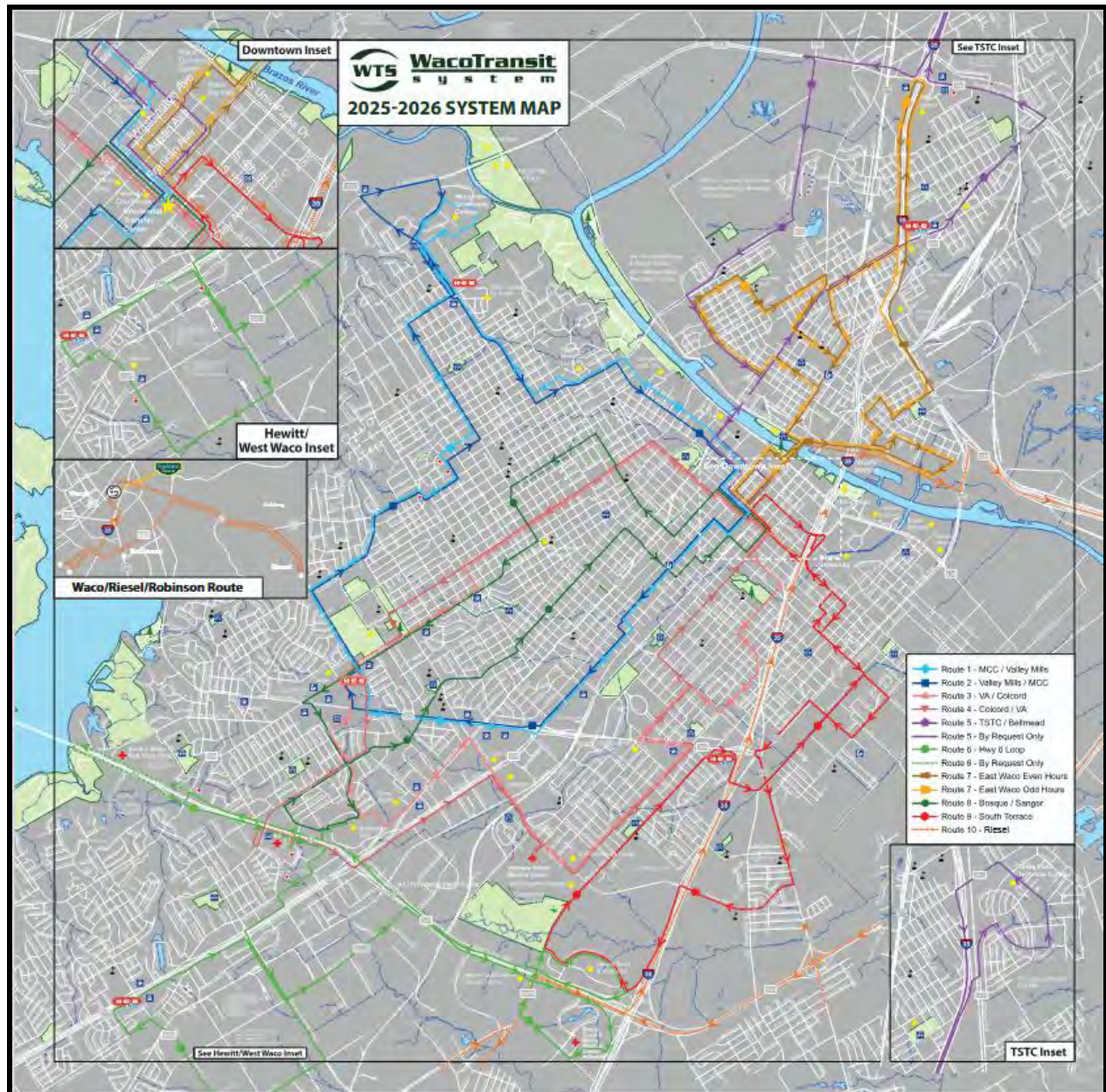




Exhibit 5.5 Waco Transit ADA Paratransit/Demand-Response service area

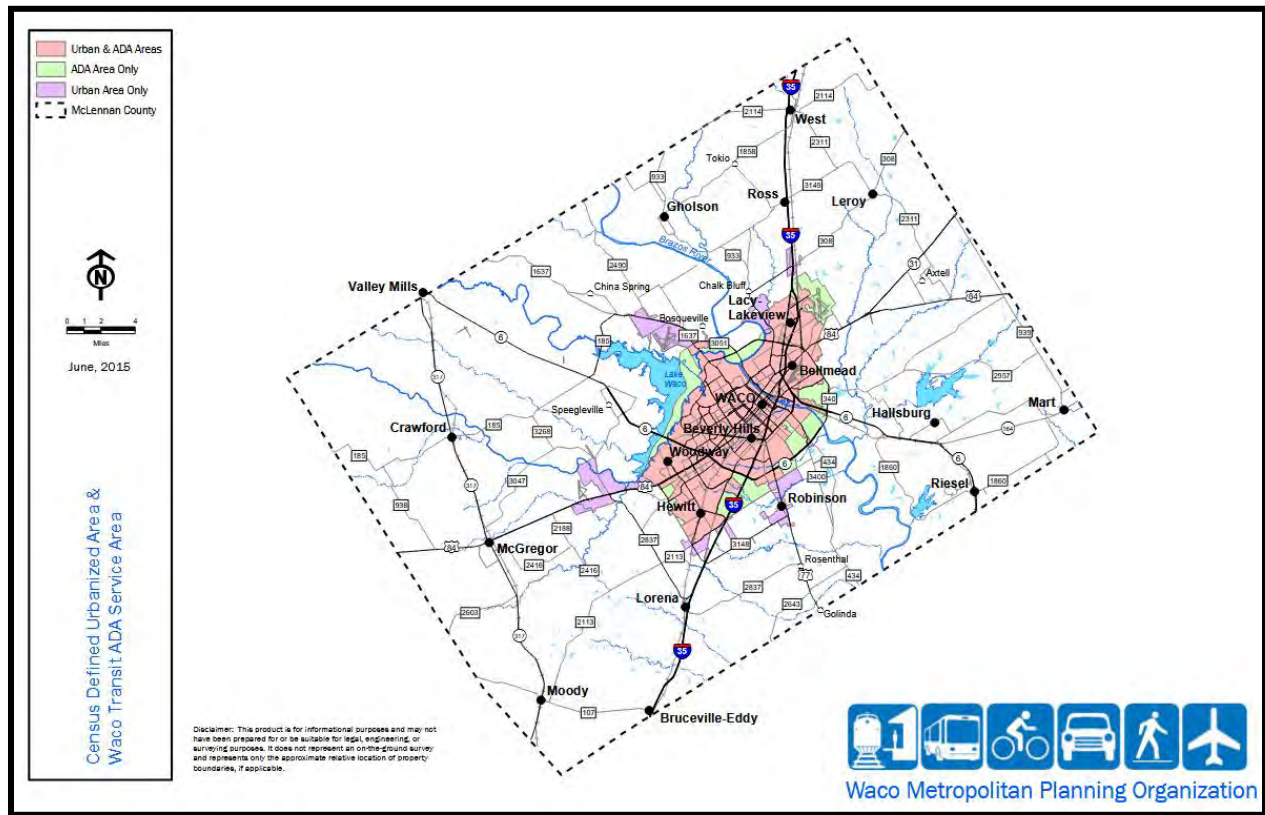




Exhibit 5.6 Waco Transit Micro Dash service zones





In addition to its regular service, Waco Transit also operates the free Baylor University Shuttle (BUS) service when school is in session. This includes four fixed routes (Green, Gold, Red, and Blue) serving the Baylor University campus and surrounding residential areas. Green and Gold routes operate every 10 minutes; the Red route every 12 minutes, and the Blue route every 15 minutes between approximately 7:25 a.m. and 5:25 p.m. (although the Gold Route operates until 6:30 p.m.). An After Hours route operates from 6:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Monday through Thursday when school is in session.

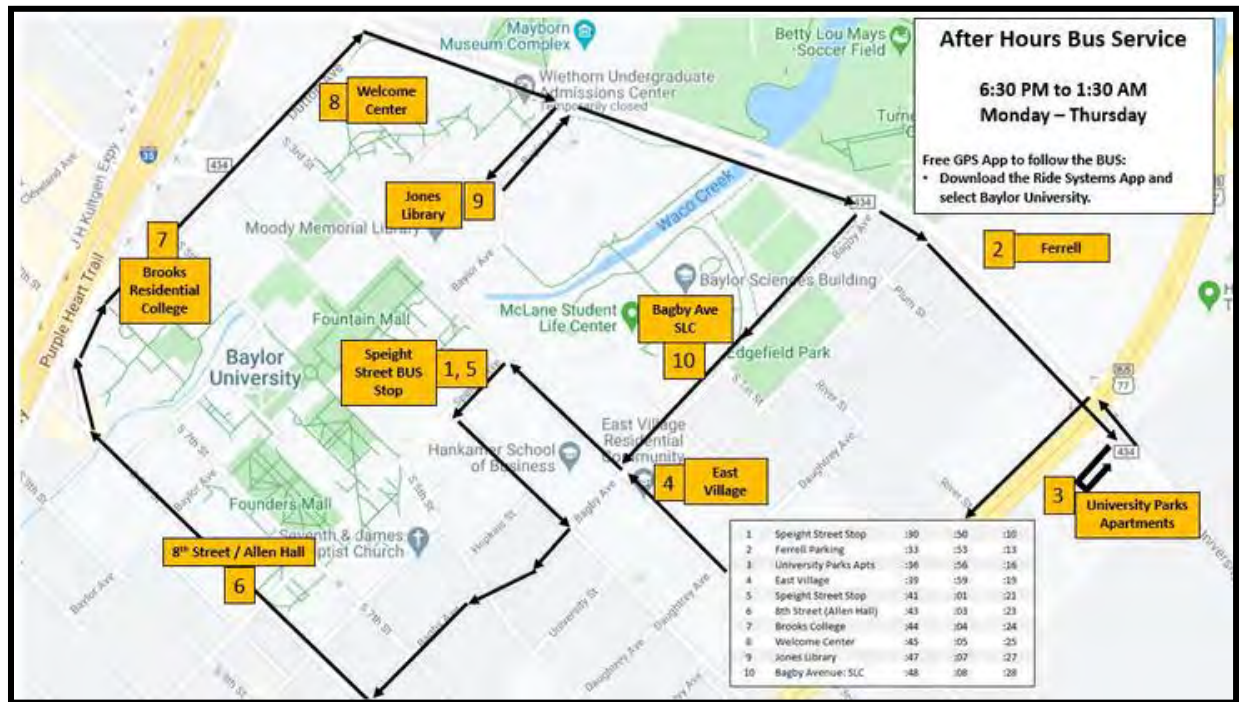
Waco Transit also operates free Gameday Shuttles for Baylor’s home football and basketball games. The “Tailgater” football shuttle picks up in downtown Waco and provides transportation to McLane Stadium. The Foster Pavilion Basketball Shuttle travels between campus and the Ferrell Center.

Exhibit 5.7 Baylor University Shuttle system map





Exhibit 5.8 Baylor University Shuttle After Hours route



Social Service Transportation Providers

Transportation Provider:	McLennan County Health Services
Type of transportation provider:	Municipal
Geographic area served:	McLennan County
Service modes provided:	Distribute public transit/paratransit passes to clients
Service policies/eligibility:	Services only available to residents of McLennan County
Perceptions of met/unmet needs:	Clients refuse to use the bus, even after being given free bus passes.
Existing coordination efforts:	- Local coordination committee. - Regional transportation authority's project advisory committee. - Information referral. - Participation on the HOTCOG RTCC Committee.



Transportation Provider:	McLennan County Health Services (continued)
Most needed coordination efforts:	• Greater coordination among providers. • More funding for operations. • More funding for equipment, communications, or outreach. • Longer hours and/or more days of service. • More drivers and/or vehicles. • Lower fares on existing services. • Technology for scheduling or dispatching. • Would like to see a unified single payment method between carriers (Waco Transit, Rural Transit, and RTCC). • Updated educational material. (The current Waco Transit video is dated and gives the perception of public transit being unsafe.)
For more information:	Website: www.mclennan.gov/291/Health-Services Phone: (254) 757-5174 Physical address: 824 Washington Avenue, Waco, TX 76701

Transportation Provider:	Meals on Wheels Waco
Type of transportation provider:	Private non-profit
Geographic area served:	Falls, Hill, and McLennan counties
Service modes provided:	Demand-response
Type of operation:	Directly operated
Operating days and hours:	4:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Fares for service:	\$3.00 and accepts any donation amounts.
Service policies/eligibility:	Eligible riders are seniors age 60 and older, persons with disabilities, or low-income/Medicaid beneficiaries. Rides must be reserved one day before travel. Same-day reservations on a space-available basis. Most clients have standing appointments.
Fleet information:	Three minivans currently in use
Accessibility:	The minivans are not wheelchair accessible, but will accommodate riders with walkers.
Technologies in use:	Spare (Waco Transit System), tablets
Drivers and training:	One full-time driver and three part-time drivers
Operating revenues:	• Federal and state grants (93%) • Client contributions (7%)
Perceptions of met/unmet needs:	• Affordability of current transportation services. • Client eligibility restrictions imposed by various funding sources. • Trip purpose eligibility restrictions imposed by funding sources.
Existing coordination efforts:	Partner with Waco Transit on a grant program to provide trips to clients. Have encountered statutory barriers to pooling funds.



Transportation Provider:	Meals on Wheels Waco (continued)
Most needed coordination efforts:	• More funding for operations. • More funding for equipment (excluding vehicles), communications, or outreach. • Technology for scheduling or dispatching.
For more information:	Website: mowwaco.org/about/programs/transportation/ Phone: (254) 752-0316 Physical address: 501 W. Waco Dr, Waco, TX 76707

Transportation Provider:	Veterans Transportation Program/VetRide
Type of transportation provider:	Medical
Geographic area served:	Central Texas – Waco
Service policies/eligibility:	Must be a veteran enrolled in VA healthcare, have an appointment at a VA health facility or VA-authorized community care provider, and the ride must be requested prior to the facility's specific deadline
For more information:	Website: https://www.va.gov/resources/veterans-transportation-program-representatives/ Email: fanalia.dupree@va.gov Phone: (254) 743-0749 Physical address: Doris Miller VA Medical Center, 4800 Memorial Dr, Waco, TX 76711

Private Transportation Providers

Transportation Provider:	Arradda Transportation
Type of transportation provider:	Private for-profit
Geographic area served:	Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, McLennan counties
Service modes provided:	Non-emergency medical transportation
Type of operation:	Directly operated
Fares for service:	Fare is paid for by insurance
Service policies/eligibility:	No eligibility requirements, as long as riders are pre-approved by insurance.
Technologies in use:	Cellular phones
Drivers and training:	Drivers are required to be CPR certified.
Perceptions of met/unmet needs:	Riders are not aware of all available services.
Most needed coordination efforts:	Travel training to educate the public regarding what services are available and what can be covered by insurance.
For more information:	Phone: (903) 907-0979 or (254) 747-3637



Transportation Provider:	Fairfield Ambulance Service Inc. (Fairfield EMS)
Type of transportation provider:	Private non-profit
Geographic area served:	Freestone County and the City of Fairfield
Service modes provided:	Ground ambulance, non-emergency medical transportation
Type of operation:	Directly operated
Fares for service:	12-month memberships available: \$60 individual, \$75 family. A membership covers emergency ambulance transport as often as medically necessary and free use of supplies and procedures (as required for transport to the nearest medical facility) not covered by insurance.
Service policies/eligibility:	No eligibility requirements.
Fleet information:	Four Type 1 Frazer Ambulances
For more information:	Website: fairfieldems.com Phone: (903) 389-6511 (business office; for emergency call 911) Physical address: 742 W. Commerce St, Fairfield, TX 75840

Transportation Provider:	Luxury Limousine of Waco
Type of transportation provider:	Private for-profit
Geographic area served:	Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, McLennan counties. Car and airport service to Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Waco.
Service modes provided:	Private
For more information:	Website: www.limowaco.com Phone: (254) 716-6224

Transportation Provider:	Waco Tours LLC
Type of transportation provider:	Private for-profit
Geographic area served:	Parts of McLennan County
Service modes provided:	Flex transit, private event transportation for Baylor University and the Texas Rangers
Type of operation:	Directly operated
Fares for service:	\$175 per van per hour
Technologies in use:	Cellular phones
Perceptions of met/unmet needs:	Unable to accommodate all requests due to lack of available vehicles and affordability of current services.
For more information:	Website: waco-tours.com Phone: (254) 300-8725 Physical address: 407 S. 8 th St, Waco, TX 76706



Other Transportation Providers

Name	Type	Contact Information
Access2Care/MTM Health	Non-emergency medical transportation	(844) 572-8194
Airport Transportation of Waco	Limo/car service, airport transportation to Austin Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, and Waco	(800) 542-1781; brian@airporttransportationofwaco.com
Elite Transportation	Car service	(254) 349-4007; EliteTransportation18@yahoo.com
EverDriven	Youth/school transportation	(877) 225-7750
Heart of Texas Limos	Limo/car service	(254) 661-4107; charles@heartoftexaslimos.com
MedLift	Non-emergency medical transportation	(512) 375-4168; info@medliftus.com
Oasis Limo	Limo/car service	(254) 300-1983; info@oasislimoservicellc.com
Ride N Safe	Non-emergency medical transportation in Bosque, Falls, Limestone, Hill, and McLennan counties	(817) 953-2979; ride@ridensafe.com
Taxi Mom – Waco	Youth transportation	(254) 633-7971; waco@taximom.com
Waco Streak	Airport shuttle to Austin and Dallas/Fort Worth, car service	(254) 772-0430; streak@grandecom.net
Yellow Cab Waco	Taxi	(254) 349-2083

Rideshare companies Uber and Lyft also operate within the region. Availability for a specific trip should be verified through the providers' mobile applications.



Other Transportation Assistance

Name	Type of Assistance Provided	Geographies served	Eligibility	Contact Information
Communities in Schools of the Heart of Texas	Provide tickets or passes to use public transit or paratransit	Locations within Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Limestone, Hill, and McLennan counties	Participating students	(254) 753-6002 1001 Washington Ave, Waco, TX 76701
Encompass Health	- Client transportation - Contract with a transit provider for client trips	HOTCOG region	Patients	(254) 523-2200 3600 S. Loop 340 Hwy, Robinson, TX 76706
Goodall Witcher Healthcare	Client transportation	Locations within Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Limestone, Hill, and McLennan counties	Patients	(254) 675-8322 101 Posey Ave, Clifton, TX 76634
Heart of Texas Veterans One-Stop	- Client transportation - Volunteer driver program - Provide tickets or passes to use public transit or paratransit	HOTCOG region	Military veterans	(254) 297-7171 2010 LaSalle Ave, Waco, TX 76706
Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions	Provide mileage reimbursement or gas money	HOTCOG region	Program participants eligible for WIOA financial assistance	(254) 296-5312 1415 S. New Rd, Waco, TX 76711
Hill County Veterans Office	Client transportation	Hill County	Military veterans	(254) 582-4074 126 S. Covington St, Hillsboro, TX 76645
McLennan County Health Services	Provide tickets or passes to use public transit or paratransit	McLennan County	Eligible clients	(254) 757-5174 824 Washington Ave, Waco, TX 76701



Name	Type of Assistance Provided	Geographies served	Eligibility	Contact Information
Meals on Wheels Waco	• Pay for car repairs or other car expenses	Hill and McLennan counties	Contact program for information	(254) 752-0316 501 W. Waco Dr, Waco, TX 76707
Texas AHEC East – Waco Region	• Client transportation • Contract with a transit provider for client trips	Bosque, Falls, Limestone, Hill, McLennan, and other counties	Eligible program participants	(254) 313-5100 1610 Providence Dr, Waco, TX 76707
Tri-Cities Ministries	• Provide tickets or passes to use public transit or paratransit • Provide mileage reimbursement or gas money	Bellmead, Lacy Lakeview, Elm Mott/ Chalk Bluff (76705 and 76640 zip codes)	Proof of doctor's appointment or job interview	(254) 777-5229 1301 Hogan Ln, Waco, TX 76705 (St. Paul Lutheran Church)
VA Medical Center	• Provide tickets or passes to use public transit or paratransit • Provide mileage reimbursement or gas money	HOTCOG region and other counties	Military veterans; contact facility for information	(254) 379-0532 4800 Memorial Dr, Waco, TX 76711
Waco Housing Authority	• Provide tickets or passes to use public transit or paratransit	Locations within Bosque, Limestone, Hill, McLennan, and other counties	Residents; contact Community Services	(254) 752-0324 ext 279 1115 Cleveland Ave, Waco, TX 76706



Chapter 6 | Transportation Needs and Gaps Assessment

Transit Needs Index and Maps

The Transit Needs Index (TNI) uses weighted demographic data to identify where transportation needs are more pronounced. Demographic data used in the TNI includes older adults (age 65 and older), individuals with a disability, persons living below the federal poverty level, and households lacking access to a personal vehicle. Demographic data from the American Community Survey, 2023 five-year estimates, for each census tract within each county in the HOTCOG region was utilized in developing the Transportation Needs Index.

Methodology

The methodology for developing a TNI value is as follows:

1. For each census tract, obtain percentages for each demographic cohort.
2. Assign an index by dividing the census tract percentage by the census tract mean for each cohort.
3. Multiply the index by the weight for that demographic cohort.
 - a. Persons with a disability: 40
 - b. Persons living in poverty: 15
 - c. Households with no vehicle available: 15
 - d. Population age 65 and older: 30
4. Add together the index times weight for all four cohorts; this is the TNI value.
5. Calculate the standard deviation.
6. Determine the TNI category based on the number of standard deviations from the mean.
 - a. Very high transit need = More than 1.5 standard deviations above the mean.
 - b. High transit need = Between 0.5 and 1.5 standard deviations above the mean.
 - c. Average transit need = Plus or minus 0.5 standard deviations from the mean.
 - d. Low transit need = Between 0.5 and 1.5 standard deviations below the mean.
 - e. Very low transit need = More than 1.5 standard deviations below the mean.

Bosque County

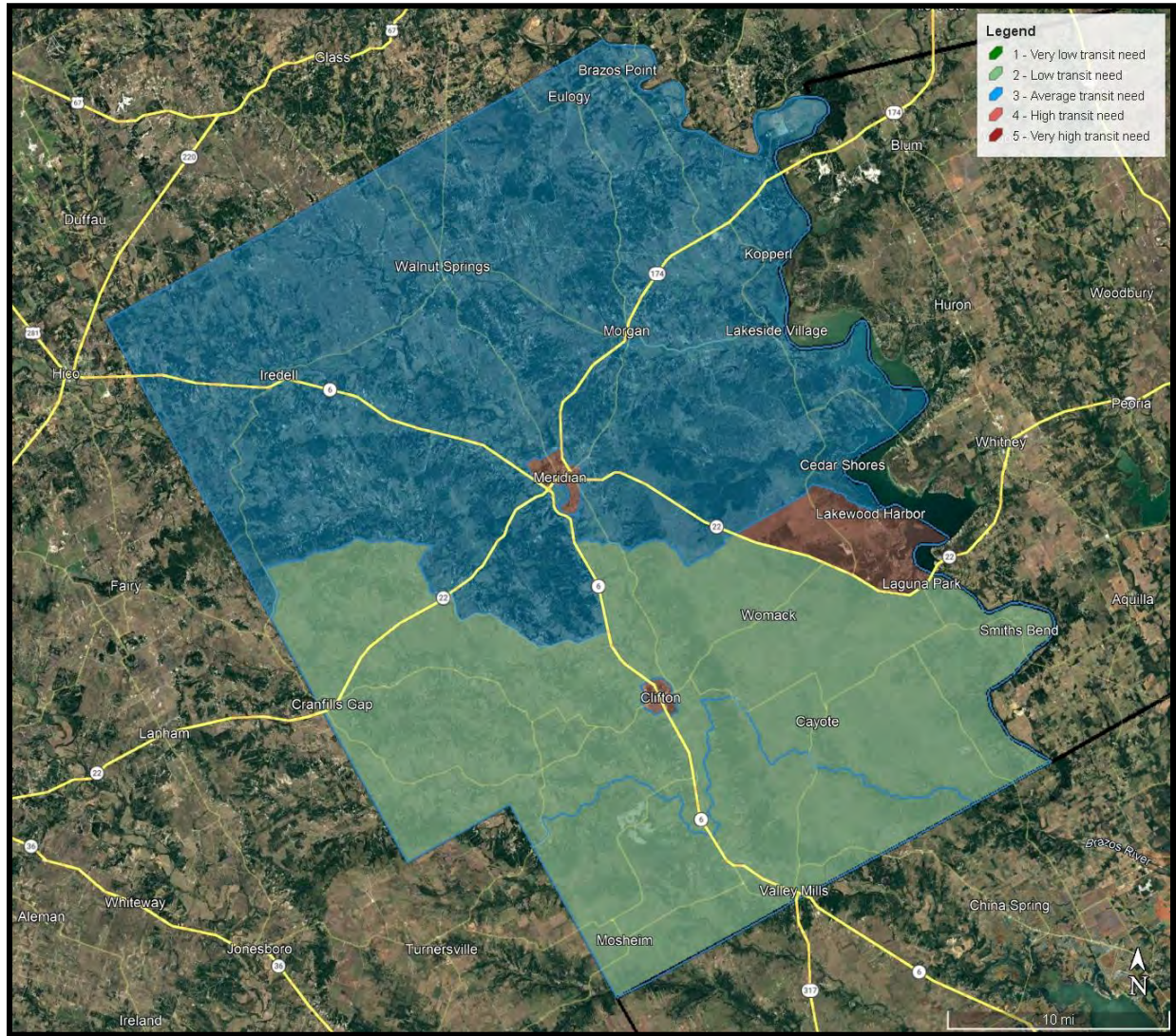
For Bosque County, a standard deviation of 31 was calculated. As a result, a TNI value under 54 was considered *very low transit need*; a value between 54 and 85 was considered *low transit need*; a value between 85 and 115 was considered *average transit need*; a value between 115 and 146 was considered *high transit need*; and a value of 147 or higher was considered *very high transit need*.

None of the seven census tracts was determined to be *very low* or *very high transit need*. Two of the census tracts were categorized as *low transit need* (28.6 percent), two as *average transit need* (28.6 percent), and three as *high transit need* (42.9 percent). The three census tracts identified as *high transit need* were 9502 (which includes most of the city of Meridian), 9505 (which includes most of the city of Clifton), and 9506 (which is located in the eastern portion of the county and includes the Laguna Park area).



Exhibit 6.1 details Bosque County census tracts by their TNI ratings. The full TNI for individual census tracts in Bosque County is provided in Appendix G.

Exhibit 6.1 TNI ratings for Bosque County census tracts



Falls County

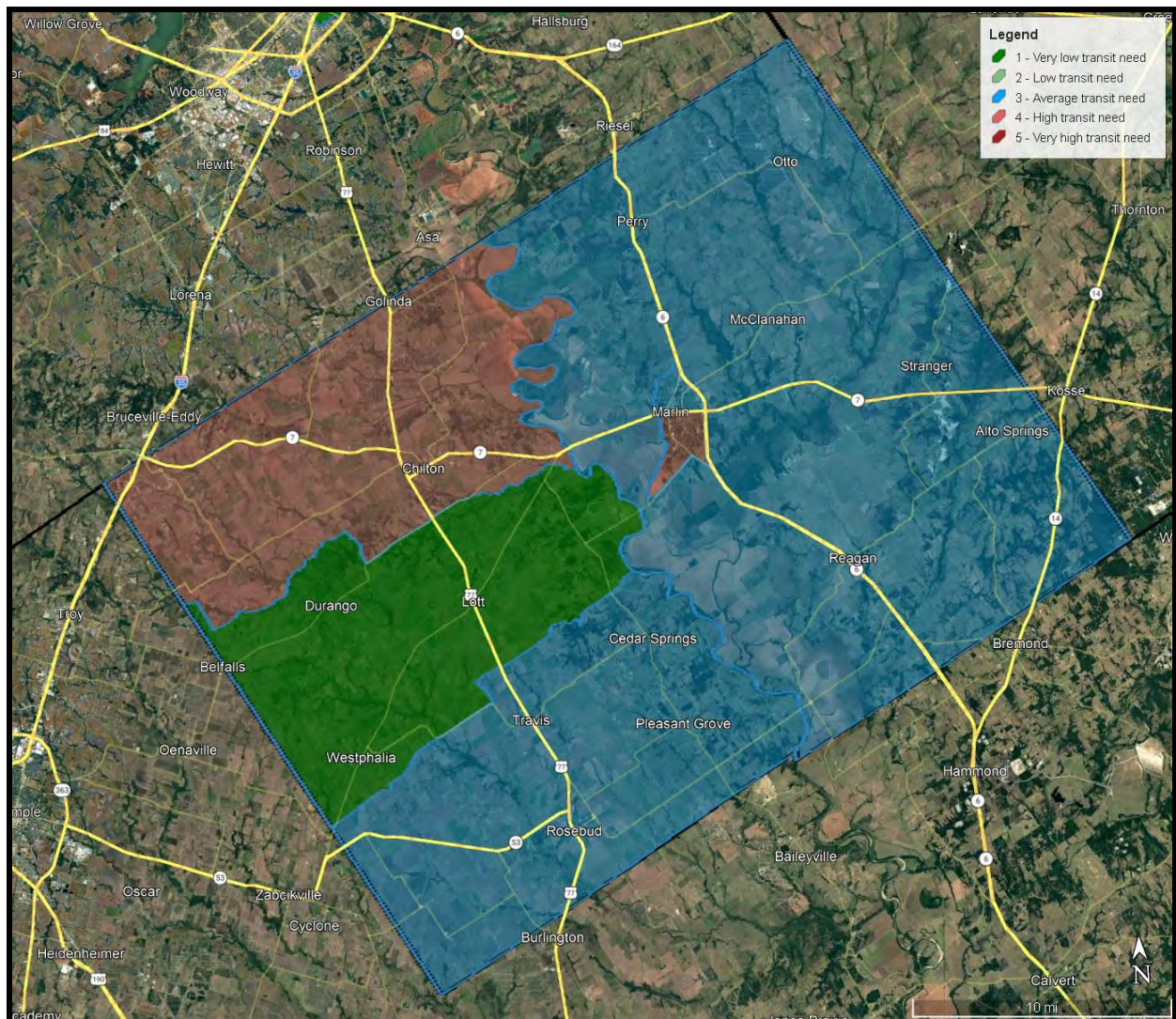
For Falls County, a standard deviation of 19 was calculated. As a result, a TNI value under 71 was considered *very low transit need*; a value between 71 and 91 was considered *low transit need*; a value between 91 and 109 was considered *average transit need*; a value between 109 and 128 was considered *high transit need*; and a value of 129 or higher was considered *very high transit need*.



None of the six census tracts was determined to be *very high transit need*. One of the census tracts was categorized as *very low transit need* (16.7 percent), three as *average transit need* (50 percent), and two as *high transit need* (33.3 percent). The two census tracts identified as *high transit need* were 2 (which includes the city of Chilton and a portion of the city of Golinda in the northwest portion of the county) and 4 (which primarily consists of the city of Marlin).

Exhibit 6.2 details Falls County census tracts by their TNI ratings. The full TNI for individual census tracts in Falls County is provided in Appendix G.

Exhibit 6.2 TNI ratings for Falls County census tracts





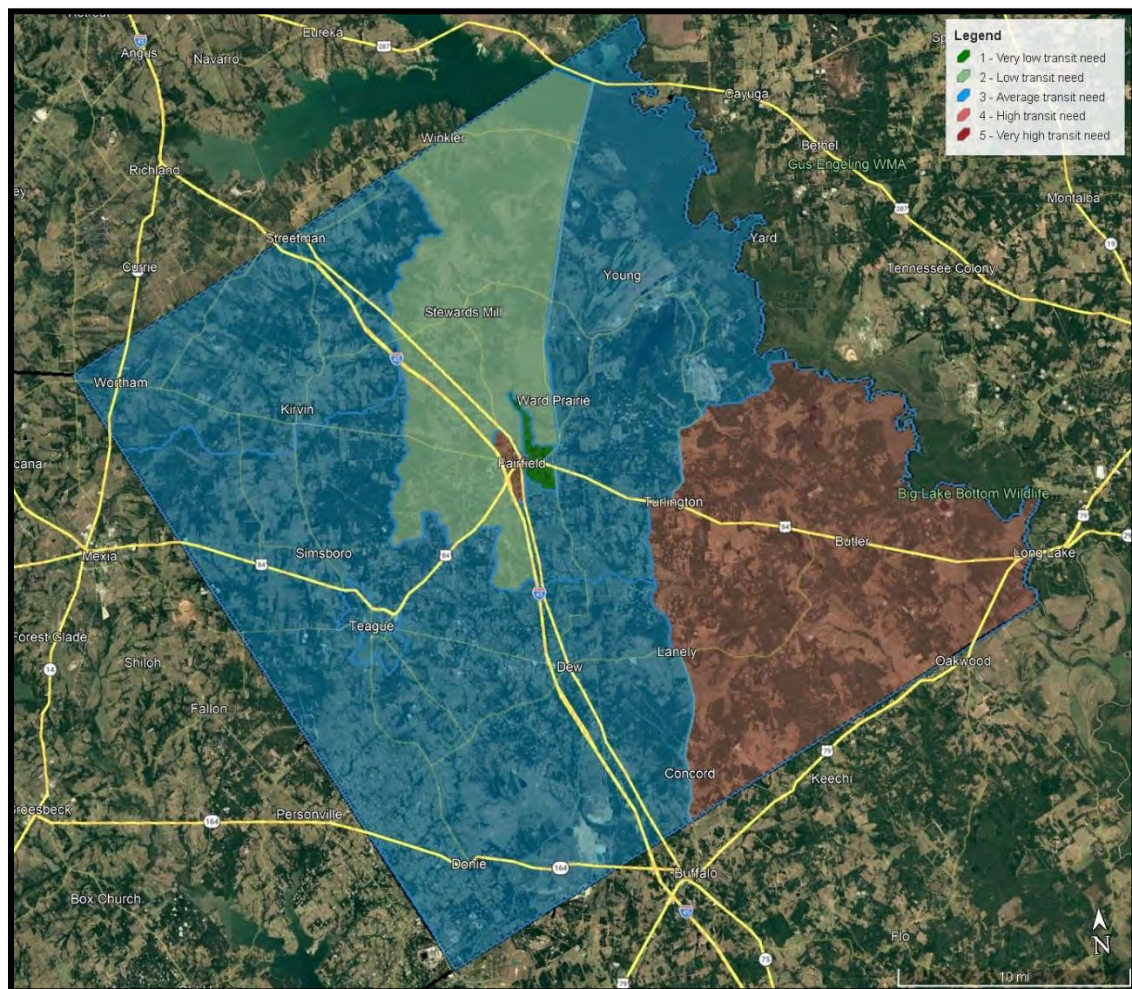
Freestone County

For Freestone County, a standard deviation of 22 was calculated. As a result, a TNI value under 66 was considered *very low transit need*; a value between 66 and 89 was considered *low transit need*; a value between 89 and 111 was considered *average transit need*; a value between 111 and 134 was considered *high transit need*; and a value of 134 or higher was considered *very high transit need*.

None of the eight census tracts was determined to be *very high transit need*. One of the census tracts was categorized as *very low transit need* (12.5 percent); one as *low transit need* (12.5 percent), four as *average transit need* (50 percent), and two as *high transit need* (25 percent). The two census tracts identified as *high transit need* were 3 (which primarily includes the western portion of the city of Fairfield) and 9 (which is located in the southeastern portion of the county).

Exhibit 6.3 details Freestone County census tracts by their TNI ratings. The full TNI for individual census tracts in Freestone County is provided in Appendix G.

Exhibit 6.3 TNI ratings for Freestone County census tracts





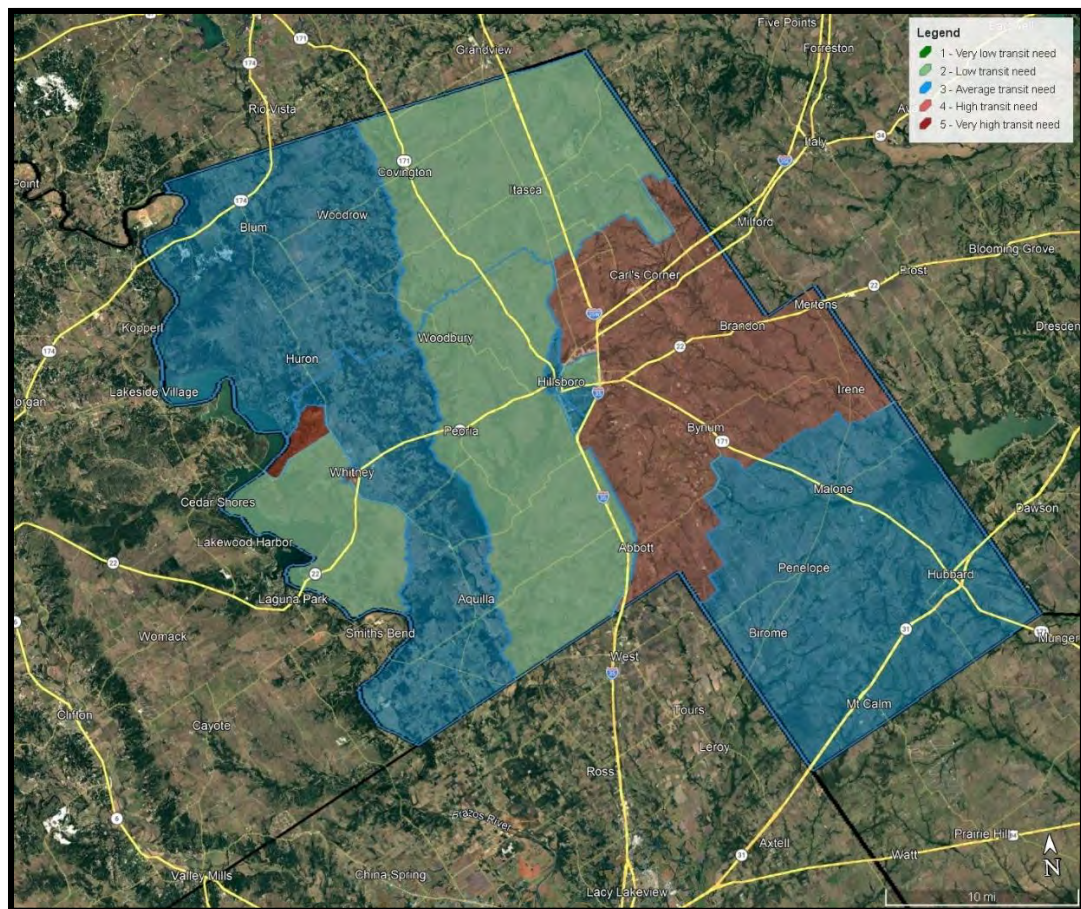
Hill County

For Hill County, a standard deviation of 20 was calculated. As a result, a TNI value under 70 was considered *very low transit need*; a value between 70 and 90 was considered *low transit need*; a value between 90 and 110 was considered *average transit need*; a value between 110 and 130 was considered *high transit need*; and a value of 130 or higher was considered *very high transit need*.

None of the 12 census tracts was determined to be *very low transit need*. Four of the census tracts were categorized as *low transit need* (33.3 percent), five as *average transit need* (41.7 percent), two as *high transit need* (16.7 percent), and one as *very high transit need* (8.3 percent). The two census tracts identified as *high transit need* were 9606 (which includes most of the city of Whitney) and 9611 (which encompasses much of the eastern portion of the county, including Carl's Corner, Mertens, and Bynum). The census tract identified as *very high transit need* was 9604 (which includes the lakefront communities along the bend of the Brazos River northwest of Whitney).

Exhibit 6.4 details Hill County census tracts by their TNI ratings. The full TNI for individual census tracts in Hill County is provided in Appendix G.

Exhibit 6.4 TNI ratings for Hill County census tracts



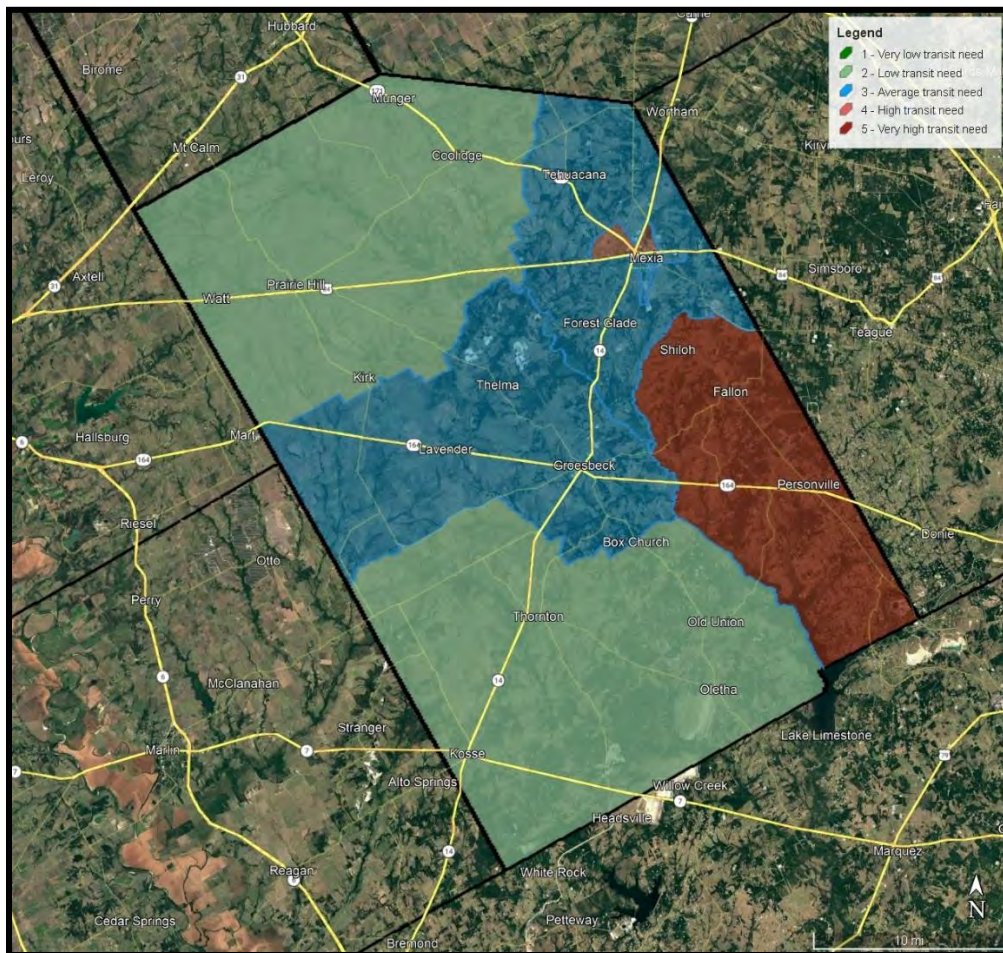
Limestone County

For Limestone County, a standard deviation of 33 was calculated. As a result, a TNI value under 50 was considered *very low transit need*; a value between 50 and 83 was considered *low transit need*; a value between 83 and 117 was considered *average transit need*; a value between 117 and 150 was considered *high transit need*; and a value of 150 or higher was considered *very high transit need*.

None of the eight census tracts was determined to be *very low transit need*. Two of the census tracts were categorized as *low transit need* (25 percent), four as *average transit need* (50 percent), one as *high transit need* (12.5 percent), and one as *very high transit need* (12.5 percent). The census tract identified as *high transit need* was 9703 (which includes most of the city of Mexia north of Milan St/Hwy 84). The census tract identified as *very high transit need* was 9707 (located in the southeastern corner of the county, east of Groesbeck).

Exhibit 6.5 details Limestone County census tracts by their TNI ratings. The full TNI for individual census tracts in Limestone County is provided in Appendix G.

Exhibit 6.5 TNI ratings for Limestone County census tracts





McLennan County

For McLennan County, a standard deviation of 34 was calculated. As a result, a TNI value under 52 was considered *very low transit need*; a value between 52 and 82 was considered *low transit need*; a value between 82 and 116 was considered *average transit need*; a value between 116 and 151 was considered *high transit need*; and a value of 151 or higher was considered *very high transit need*.

One of the 57 census tracts was categorized as *very low transit need* (1.8 percent), 18 as *low transit need* (31.6 percent), and 24 as *average transit need* (42.1 percent). Ten census tracts were categorized as *high transit need* (17.5 percent) and four as *very high transit need* (7.0 percent). The ten census tracts identified as *high transit need* were:

- 10 (which is located in downtown Waco and is bordered by Maple Ave, N. 26th St, Bosque Blvd, and N. 15th St);
- 14.02 (which is located south of Lacy-Lakeview and west of Bellmead and is bordered by Business 77, Waco Dr, Delano Ave, the Brazos River, and W. Craven Ave);
- 19 (which is located in southeast Waco, extends from just north of La Salle Ave to Hwy 6, and includes the Oakwood neighborhood);
- 23.02 (which includes the Richland Hills neighborhood and is bordered by N. Valley Mills Dr, N. 57th St, Sanger Ave, Owen Ln, Hwy 6, and an area east of Franklin Ave);
- 25.03 (which includes Woodway and is bordered by Hwy 6, Hwy 84, Estates Dr, and Lake Waco);
- 28 (which includes the Landon Branch neighborhood and is bordered by Hillcrest Dr, MacArthur Dr, McFerrin Ave, N. 29th St, Park Lake Dr, Lake Shore Dr, and Lake Waco);
- 36.01 (which is located in the far southeast corner of the county and includes portions of the city of Hallsburg and the city of Mart);
- 37.11 (which includes portions of West Waco and Hewitt and is bordered by Hwy 6, Hwy 84, Chapel Rd, Panther Way, N. Hewitt Dr, and a rail line);
- 38.02 (which is located in the far southwest corner of the county and includes the cities of Moody and Bruceville-Eddy); and
- 42.01 (which is located in the far northeast corner of the county and includes most of the city of West).

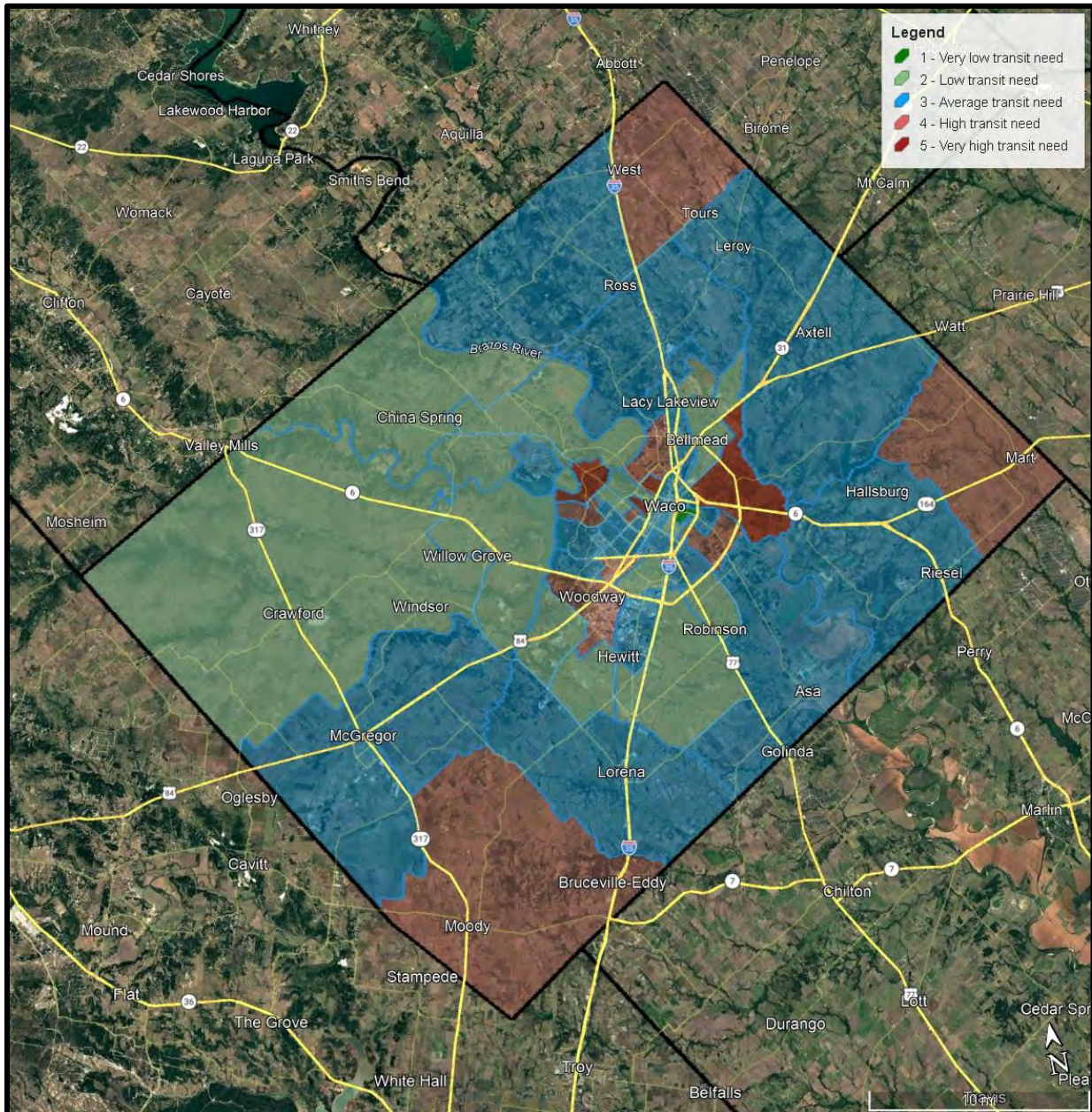
The census tracts categorized as *very high transit need* were:

- 12 (which is located in downtown Waco, includes the Brook Oaks neighborhood, and is bordered by N. 15th St, W. Waco Dr, N. 6th St, and Herring Ave);
- 14.01 (which is located across the river from downtown Waco and is bordered by the Brazos River, Herring Ave, JJ Flewellen Rd, Faulkner Ln, Garrison St, and W. Waco Dr);
- 18 (which is located east of Waco, extending up east of Bellmead, including the Timbercrest neighborhood and portions along Hwy 84 and Hwy 6); and
- 30 (which includes the Cedar Ridge neighborhood and is bordered by the Bosque River, Lake Waco, and Park Lake Dr).

Exhibit 6.6 details McLennan County census tracts by their TNI ratings. The full TNI for individual census tracts in McLennan County is provided in Appendix G.



Exhibit 6.6 TNI ratings for McLennan County census tracts





Summary of Area Transportation Needs/Gaps and Methodology

Analysis of High and Very High Transit Need Census Tracts

In order to effectively identify geographic service gaps, this section examines how census tracts categorized as *high* and *very high transit need* are currently being served by public transportation.

For the *high* and *very high transit need* census tracts located in the rural counties (Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone), transit service is available to the general public through Blue Transit. While there may be issues with capacity, especially for out-of-county trips, the service is available.

In McLennan County, areas within the Waco Urbanized Area are eligible to be served by Waco Transit, while those outside of the urbanized area are served by McLennan Rural Transit. Most of the census tracts located within the Waco Urbanized Area are service in some capacity by Waco Transit, either via a fixed route or through Demand-Response service.

High and *very high transit need* census tracts located within the Waco Urbanized Area and served by Waco Transit include:

- 10: served by Route 8 and Demand-Response. (High)
- 12: served by Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 as well as Demand-Response (Very high).
- 14.01: served by Routes 5 and 7 as well as Demand-Response (Very high).
- 14.02: served by Routes 5 and 7, Demand-Response, and Micro-Dash. (High)
- 18: portions served by Demand-Response. (Very high)
- 19: the portion of this census tract closest to La Salle Ave is served by Route 9. The entire tract is served by Demand-Response. (High)
- 23.02: served by Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 as well as Demand-Response. (High)
- 25.03: served by Route 6, which operates along the edges of the census tract, and Demand-Response. (High)
- 28: served by Routes 1 and 2, which operate along the south/east edges of this census tract, and Demand-Response. (High)
- 30: served by Demand-Response service and Micro-Dash. The McLennan Rural Transit China Spring/Airport commuter route also travels through this census tract, with a stop in Cedar Ridge. (Very high)
- 37.11: served by Route 6, Demand-Response, and Micro-Dash. (High)

Census tracts located outside the Waco Urbanized Area are served by McLennan Rural Transit. These include:

- 36.01 (Hallsburg and Mart): served by McLennan Rural Transit demand-response. There is also fixed-route service between Waco and Mart via a commuter route. (High)
- 38.02 (Moody and Bruceville-Eddy): served by McLennan Rural Transit demand-response. (High)
- 42.01 (West): served by McLennan Rural Transit demand-response. (High)



- 18 (east of Waco/Bellmead, west of Riesel): portions served by McLennan Rural Transit demand-response. (Very high)

The conclusion, after reviewing the *high* and *very high transit need* census tracts, is that all of these areas are currently served by public transportation. As a result, no new service is warranted absent the identification of previously unidentified demand.

Unmet Transit Need Methodology

The majority of the needs identified could not necessarily be tied to a specific day or time, or a specific geographic jurisdiction. Instead, most are broadly applied to the rural service areas, which frequently experience trip denials and have recently had to reduce the amount of service provided given a loss of key state funding.

All of the transportation needs identified in Exhibit 6.7 were identified through multiple sources, including stakeholder surveys and interviews, community surveys, and transportation provider surveys.



Transportation Needs and Service Gaps

Nearly all of the transportation needs identified in previous chapters can be addressed as part of four core needs: Increased funding for operations, coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, lower fares, and increased outreach and engagement.

Exhibit 6.7 Transportation Needs

Core Need	Specific need	Impact	What addressing the need looks like
Increased funding for operations	Service capacity	Dependent on the number of vehicles and drivers available to provide service	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Intra-county and inter-county trips within the primary service area can be provided as needed or on a reasonable schedule. (Local/Regional)
			Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Inter-county trips outside the primary service area can be provided as needed or on a reasonable schedule. (Regional)
			Waco/McLennan County: There are enough drivers to provide the scheduled service. (Local)
	Service reliability	Rides are available when and where the rider needs to travel; highly dependent upon adequate service capacity	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Riders can reasonably expect to be able to use public transportation to meet their mobility needs for intra-county and inter-county trips within the primary service area. (Local/Regional)
			Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Riders can reasonably expect to be able to use public transportation to meet their mobility needs for inter-county trips outside the primary service area. (Regional)
	Weekend service	Enables riders in rural communities to access essential shopping, etc.	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Intra-county and inter-county trips within the primary service area can be provided on weekends as needed or on a reasonable schedule. (Local/Regional)



Core Need	Specific need	Impact	What addressing the need looks like
Coordination with neighboring jurisdictions	Service capacity	Travel outside of the primary service area could be coordinated with a partner agency to optimize vehicle/driver use	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Inter-county trips outside the primary service area could be provided through transfer to a neighboring jurisdiction's transportation provider. (Regional)
			McLennan County: Inter-county trips outside the primary service area could be provided through transfer to a neighboring jurisdiction's transportation provider. (Regional)
Lower fares	Affordability	While transit fares throughout the project area are reasonable, they are still too high for some members of target populations	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Subsidies for low-income riders are provided through a grant or partnerships with local stakeholders. (Local/Regional)
			Waco/McLennan County: Subsidies for low-income riders are provided through a grant or partnerships with local stakeholders. (Local)
Increased outreach and engagement	Raising awareness among target populations	Increases awareness of transportation options and addresses misperceptions	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Individuals within target populations in the rural counties are aware of the transportation options available to them for intra- and inter-county travel. (Local)
	Travel training	Teaches individuals how to use the available transportation options	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Members of target populations in the rural counties understand how to access the available transportation options. (Local)
	Engagement with stakeholders	Seeks coordination and partnerships with stakeholders serving the same target populations	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Stakeholders (including cities, counties, social service providers, etc.) play an active role in supporting access to transportation. (Local/Regional)
			McLennan County: Stakeholders (including cities, counties, social service providers, etc.) play an active role in supporting access to transportation. (Local)



Core Need	Specific need	Impact	What addressing the need looks like
Increased outreach and engagement (continued)	Better communication of transportation provider service information	Reduces confusion by clarifying service days/times and policies	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone counties: Comprehensive service information (including service days and times, fares, and policies) is available through multiple formats, including online and in print, as well as in Spanish. (Local/Regional)
			McLennan County: Comprehensive service information (including service days and times, fares, and policies) is available through multiple formats, including online and in print, as well as in Spanish. (Local)



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Chapter 7 | Goals, Strategies, and Projects

Documentation of Goals and Strategies

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. The first is to define the regional goals for the Coordination Plan as determined through a review of the mobility needs and services gaps identified through the activities conducted earlier in the planning process. The second is to identify a series of strategies designed to address those mobility needs and service gaps. The results of this process, along with the prioritization process discussed in Chapter 8, are summarized in Appendix H: Matrix of Goals and Strategies, which reflects the required and optional information specified in the TxDOT Coordination Plan Guidebook.

Coordination Overview

“Coordination” is a term that can look very different depending upon the context. Within the framework of transportation and mobility planning, coordination typically seeks to enhance cost efficiency and productivity by optimizing resources. This includes reducing operating costs by improving productivity, reducing administrative costs by optimizing staffing roles, and enabling transportation providers to access additional funding sources.

The purpose of this section is to provide a basic level of understanding regarding potential coordination strategies in the context of mobility and transportation.

Types of Coordination Strategies

There are four main types of coordination strategies, which require varying degrees of formality and financial commitment.

Cooperative agreements can range from an informal agreement to share another entity’s information to a joint procurement of vehicles, technology, or services. These types of agreements do not typically result in financial agreements between the entities, but both benefit in some way. For example, if two agencies conduct a joint procurement for dispatching or vehicle monitoring technology, both entities can benefit from economies of scale or optimal pricing that they would not have had access to if they managed their procurements separately. Another example would be a transportation provider offering referrals to another provider to customers it was unable to accommodate. In this example, all parties benefit: the original provider is able to offer a solution, the second provider increases its ridership, and the rider is able to travel where they need to go.

Joint-use agreements have more of a financial impact, and some require a formal agreement. In many cases, one entity is typically the primary owner or lead agency, with another entity “piggybacking” onto the purchase or use. Examples include an entity paying to participate in another entity’s driver training program, an entity using another entity’s vehicle(s) on the weekend when they are idle, an entity renting office or storage space from another entity, or adding another entity onto an existing technology agreement at a cost lower than a new/separate license. These offer considerable benefit to both parties. The “owner” entity receives payment that can often be counted as a local match, while the secondary entity receives access to an opportunity it might not have access to otherwise.



Purchase-of-service agreements are when one entity that does not provide a particular service contracts with another entity to provide that service. This is commonly seen when a human services agency wishes to provide transportation for its clients, but does not directly operate a transportation service. In such cases, the human service agency may contract with an established transportation provider, which agrees to transport the human service agency's clients for an established rate. If such rides are comingled with other riders/trips, they may be billed by the trip or based on distance and invoiced to the agency. If a dedicated service is needed, the agency's contracted cost may be based on vehicle service hours provided.

Consolidation agreements bring the services of two or more transportation programs into a single program. This can include one or more programs being consolidated into an existing program, or multiple programs being consolidated into a newly created entity. Consolidation agreements typically result in a single entity operating the consolidated program (single provider model), or one entity serving as a coordinator for multiple services or programs (brokerage model). In the brokerage model, the lead entity may contract out all operations but organizes the service network (administrative); provides administrative and call center services but contracts out trips to individual providers (operational); or provides administrative and call center and some operations, contracting out trips it cannot serve directly (combined). Like purchase-of-service agreements, rates for consolidated services would be formally agreed upon.

Obstacles to Coordination

While these strategies may seem straightforward, there are many circumstances that may present challenges to effective coordination. These include the following:

- **Regulatory or funding limitations**, such as limits as to how long a rider may be on the vehicle or a requirement to provide out-of-area trips, may make coordination complicated or too costly. This can occur when a program (such as Medicaid) has specific requirements in order for it to reimburse a provider for a trip. In some situations, a transit operator may not be able to guarantee it could meet the requirements of the funding source, or those requirements may be considered too cumbersome. This can limit the number of transportation providers able or willing to provide service under certain programs.
- **Insurance or liability requirements** may differ between operators (in a consolidation agreement) or between the transportation providers and the contracting agency (for purchase-of-service agreements).
- **Relinquishment of control** can be a significant obstacle in coordination efforts, especially consolidation and purchase-of-service agreements. A primary concern is often that the community or population originally served by an organization will not be appropriately served if that organization no longer has control. This can be mitigated by including performance standards and clear definitions in service and consolidation agreements.
- **Behavior incompatibility and special needs** can impact certain types of coordination. For example, comingling riders may not be an option if some riders need special accommodations. This can be addressed through the use of scheduling parameters, either programmed into the scheduling technology or adjusted manually, so that vehicle use can be maximized while taking into account the needs of certain riders or groups of riders.



- **Change from the status quo** can be challenging, especially for many vulnerable populations served by Section 5310 providers. Adequate preparation and training for changes resulting from coordination efforts can make the transition smoother all around.
- **Cost savings expectations** can be deceptive, as they may take some time to be fully realized. Organizations embarking on coordination efforts should be aware of the time, effort, and initial investment that may be required to realize cost savings in the long-term.
- **Capacity and accessibility of the existing vehicle supply** is a significant consideration when evaluating opportunities for consolidation. Size, condition, and features of existing vehicles should all be taken into account.
- **Vehicle availability** is an important consideration when exploring coordination strategies such as vehicle sharing, and is based on the services provided by the entity that owns the vehicle(s). Services that primarily provide transportation to a location in the morning and home in the afternoon (such as an adult day program) may have availability in the middle of the day and evening. Those that are regularly utilized throughout the day on weekdays may have availability on the weekends when the regular service does not operate.
- **Differences in service policies and parameters** is another issue to consider when consolidating services. In the case of such differences, the consolidating entities would need to determine if having different policies for different programs is viable or if they should be streamlined into a common set of policies and parameters. This can be especially challenging if one entity's policies and parameters are defined by a specific funding source (such as one that limits the time spent onboard the vehicle).

Regional Goals

A goal is generally defined as a broad, long-term outcome to be achieved. In any context, goals are designed to offer direction for the recommendations and activities of an organization, program, or project. Within the Coordination Plan, regional goals are based on the needs identified through the public engagement and outreach process as well as the service and gap analysis. Each of the goals will be supported by strategies designed to further progress toward that goal. Each strategy will be a measurable action that can be objectively assessed. These strategies will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Five goals have been identified for the HOTCOG region.

Regional Goal 1.0: Ensure sustainability of the transportation network through consistent local support and engagement of local communities.

One of the most significant concerns within transportation is ensuring the services and programs offered to address community needs have sufficient resources for continued operation. Pilot and demonstration projects are excellent opportunities to “test” demand or operational models, but there should always be consideration for how the project or program will be funded once the initial funding (often through a grant) is exhausted. This is especially important for transportation, as people can quickly grow to rely on a program that meets their needs. If that program is eliminated because continuing funding cannot be secured, not only does it significantly impact their mobility, but it can also create distrust or animosity for the provider of the service.



Different types of funding are critical for sustaining a healthy transportation environment. Federal formula funds, such as FTA Section 5310 (seniors and persons with disabilities), 5311 (rural), and 5307 (urban) require a local match. In some cases, additional formula funds are available if there is an additional local match. This local match can include funding from the State or from local jurisdictions (such as cities or counties) or organizations (such as colleges, human service providers, etc.). Partnerships or agreements that contribute to the local match can often make additional federal funding available. Non-transit grant funding secured by local and regional partners can often be used as a local match as well.

Local support is also important with respect to competitiveness for discretionary grant funding. A grant application typically scores higher if there is greater support for the project or program to be funded. Local financial contributions, as well as letters of support, can bolster a grant application's competitiveness, resulting in greater funding.

Simply put, the ability to provide effective mobility solutions of all types, including the provision of transportation services, is contingent on sufficient funding. Sustainability requires consistent and stable sources of funding as well as regular use of the transportation service by members of the community. The more sources of funding are used, the more sustainable a program is, because it will be impacted less if funding from one source is decreased or eliminated. The greater the number of funders, the less of a burden it is on any one entity, and the better the transportation provider can address the needs of the community through its programs.

Regional Goal 2.0: Improve the reliability of service within rural counties.

At present, service is nominally offered in each of the five rural counties within the HOTCOG region. However, whether or not an individual trip can be delivered is subject to driver and vehicle availability. In recent years Blue Transit has had to adjust its capacity to provide trips based on decreased funding levels. This leaves riders in the rural counties with little certainty that any given trip can be successfully scheduled.

Reliability is a key aspect of any transportation service. Riders not only need to feel confident that they will arrive at their destination on time, but also that they will be able to make the trip at all. When there is a general distrust as to the reliability of a service, fewer people see its value, and fewer potential partners are interested in funding it, resulting in a downward spiral of even lower performance. Ensuring there is ongoing collection and analysis of relevant data both drives how transportation services are delivered and supports partnership and funding opportunities, advocacy, and collaboration.

Regional Goal 3.0: Create partnerships to enhance regional mobility.

Building partnerships is a never-ending process, and the more partnerships that are created, the better opportunities there are for increased local revenue generation and expanded services.

Not all partnerships have to consist of financial support. Coordination with medical offices, for example, where there is a better understanding of the travel constraints of those who arrive via regional public transit, can improve efficiency and greatly improve the rider's overall experience with the trip. Such understanding can impact scheduling and prioritization on the part of the medical office. Other partnerships can offer other types of coordination, such as letters of support for grant funding (as noted in Goal 1.0), joint contracting for maintenance or other services, shared technology or dispatching,



advertising partnerships, and more. Partnerships can advance awareness of transportation services and programs in the community, encourage usage of those programs through endorsement by a trusted community partner, and benefit both the partner and the transportation program, as well as enhance reliability and the rider experience.

Regional Goal 4.0: Expand transportation provider capacity to meet the needs of rural communities.

While increasing capacity by increasing funding was discussed under Goal 1.0, there are additional opportunities to expand capacity, especially in rural communities. The obvious step of increasing capacity on existing public transportation providers (including HOT RTD and McLennan Rural) is to increase available funding, especially through local match. Other opportunities to expand capacity may include the development of localized transportation programs that can address needs within a specific community or population, for example, thereby creating the capacity for the rural transportation service to cover more trips. These localized programs could include City- or County-based services as well as those sponsored by health and human services providers. They could include transportation services, voucher programs for ridehailing services (if they exist in the area), volunteer driver programs, mileage reimbursement programs, etc.

Regional Goal 5.0: Increase awareness of available transportation services.

Awareness of a transportation program is critical for its use. However, expanding awareness of a program when that program is already at capacity can be a dilemma. In addition to expanding general awareness of regional transportation programs (including key service information), raising awareness of the programs and the needs they address is important at the stakeholder level as well. Some of the most important stakeholders in this effort include decision-makers within local jurisdictions, particularly at the county level. In a culture that centers around personal mobility and vehicle ownership, many of those who have never faced a lack of mobility do not understand how prevalent the need for transportation is, especially among those who cannot drive, do not have access to a personal vehicle, or do not have a reliable personal vehicle. Raising awareness and increasing understanding among stakeholders is also the first step in creating advocates for mobility.

Regional Coordination Strategies

Goals, as defined in the previous section, represent broad, long-term outcomes to be achieved. Strategies, on the other hand, represent the methods to be used to help achieve those goals. In this section, each goal features strategies and action items that can be implemented to further progress toward that goal. Strategies are initially discussed within the narrative, with additional detail (as required by the TxDOT Coordination Plan Guidebook) provided within the matrix in Appendix H.

Regional Goal 1.0: Ensure sustainability of the transportation network through consistent local support and engagement of local communities.

- **Strategy 1.1: Maintain county-specific data for all rural counties.** Blue Transit serves five rural counties, with some trips into McLennan County to provide access to the urbanized area. At present, Blue Transit tracks the pick-up location but not the drop-off location. In addition, rides



that are not able to be negotiated (and are ultimately declined by the rider) are not currently tracked. (See Strategy 2.1 for further discussion of this issue.)

Tracking performance (e.g., number of trips) provided on a county- (and/or community-) specific basis, as well as information on both the origin and destination of each trip, and sharing that information within the region would offer insight into the current demand as well as how often an operator travels into another jurisdiction. It will facilitate a more complete look at the demand for transportation overall as well as by individual counties or communities. This data can also be used to demonstrate to rural county decision makers how additional funding could impact the availability and sustainability of service.

While McLennan Rural Transit District only serves a single county, it does provide some trips into the other rural counties. McLennan Rural Transit maintains comprehensive documentation about where riders are traveling and is happy to share its information to enhance the regional understanding of rural mobility.

- **Strategy 1.2: Effectively communicate the public transit message throughout the region.** This strategy is intended to garner support for transportation, both financial and otherwise. If transportation services, particularly public transportation services, are viewed as something “other people” use or a mode of last resort, they hold less value. Raising awareness of how public transportation works and how it addresses the needs of the community also raises the profile of the programs throughout the region. (This strategy also supports Goal 5.0, as it also seeks to increase overall awareness of available transportation services.)
- **Strategy 1.3: Increase FTA Section 5311 funding by increasing the local match.** There is currently additional FTA Section 5311 funding available, but it is inaccessible because there is an insufficient local match. At present, each local dollar is essentially doubled as it unlocks an equal amount of federal funding.

There are numerous methods to increase the amount of local match funding, which despite its name can be generated through local contributions or strategies such as federal fund braiding, where federal funds under one program can be used to unlock federal funds under another. Requesting the member counties to contribute to the transit program is one of the most straightforward ways to increase local funding. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) could be employed to define each county’s contribution based on population share, or individual contributions could be used to expand service in a specific community or county. HOTCOG could also explore the use of “Rural Texas Strong” Rural Health Transformation prevention funds (Initiative 1) for service to wellness centers as additional local match for Section 5311 funds. Should Blue Transit wish to explore becoming a Medicaid provider, those funds could also be used as a local match to increase Section 5311 funding.



Regional Goal 2.0: Improve the reliability of service within rural counties.

- **Strategy 2.1: Adjust service days/hours to provide more reliable Blue Transit service.** The objective is for Blue Transit to provide as much service as it reliably can. “Reliable service” means that if a rider calls to schedule a trip, they can be confident that the trip can be accommodated within a reasonable time period. This may mean changing its coverage days or service hours until Blue Transit has sufficient funding to reliably serve the current schedule. Blue Transit has already implemented some actions in support of this, such as only providing inter-county service into Waco on certain days of the week. Blue Transit may also wish to examine how it is scheduling trips, keeping at least one vehicle within the county throughout the service day to facilitate shorter intra-county trips. One or more key performance indicators (such as trip requests vs. trip fulfillment) should be defined to measure performance and improvement.

Consistent with Strategy 1.1, knowing what trips are not being served is critical to effective service development. To this end, Blue Transit should not only document trip denials but also trip requests that were not able to be fulfilled. For example, if a rider requests a trip at a particular day and time, but there is no reservation available, they will be provided with an alternative. If the rider does not want to travel using the alternate appointment and cancels the request, that trip is not considered a trip denial, but does represent a trip that could not ultimately be provided. This includes such circumstances as a trip into Waco requested for a Tuesday when the bus only travels on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The rider would be offered a reservation for Wednesday, which they would have the option to accept or decline. As Blue Transit continues to refine its service, and especially when the opportunity arises for it to expand service, it will be critical to understand what travel needs are not currently being met by understanding what trips are not being taken. This data can also help to support funding requests, as it can point to specific conditions that can be improved with additional revenue.

- **Strategy 2.2: Evaluate demand for scheduled or true on-demand service within communities/counties.** Offering scheduled or true on-demand service within a community or county may help improve reliability by providing service that does not need an advance reservation. A fixed-route circulator that serves defined stops within a single community (or between two communities, if they are close together) even one day per week would help riders who need to access a grocery store, local clinic, pharmacy, laundromat, or other local activity centers. It would also take some of the scheduling burden off of the Blue Transit demand-response service. Another option would be on-demand microtransit operating one or more days per week, which would offer point-to-point service within a defined area but would not require an advance reservation. Documenting actual service and requests for service within each county and/or community (as discussed in Strategy 1.1) would help to assess demand for a localized scheduled or on-demand service.
- **Strategy 2.3: Evaluate demand for inter-county scheduled service.** Documenting actual service within between counties (as discussed in Strategy 1.1) would help to assess demand for scheduled service. “Scheduled service” could mean a fixed route that travels from a rural county into Waco (similar to the commuter routes operated by McLennan Rural Transit), or simply specific days



during which Blue Transit provides service from a particular county into Waco. Blue Transit has already initiated the latter option, but it should continue to explore whether fixed-route service between one or more rural counties and Waco would be effective in meeting community transportation needs.

- **Strategy 2.4: Where possible, continue to store Blue Transit vehicles in the county they serve to minimize deadhead travel and potentially increase availability.** There is a perception in the rural counties that, while at one time, Blue Transit vehicles were stored within the county in which they operated, all vehicles are now stored and dispatched from Waco. In reality, some vehicles are stored locally, though possibly not in the same locations as in prior years. Maintaining storage locations within the individual counties minimizes vehicle deadhead time while also reinforcing the idea that Blue Transit operates within that county. Blue Transit may also wish to explore opportunities to reinforce the idea of a “local bus” within the county where a vehicle is stored to generate a sense of ownership of the local service.
- **Strategy 2.5: Consider implementing county-specific service (including intra- and inter-county).** Treating each county (or pairs of counties, as appropriate) as a single service area may help Blue Transit optimize trips. Treating Freestone and Limestone counties, for example, as a single service area (with the intra-county fare) would expand access to essential services and supplies, especially for those who live in Freestone County but have frequent business in Mexia. This would also make it easier to limit inter-county trips as discussed in Strategies 1.1 and 2.3.

Regional Goal 3.0: Create partnerships to enhance regional mobility.

- **Strategy 3.1: Engage stakeholders (especially local elected officials and healthcare providers) for local support.** Stakeholders are key partners in regional mobility, either by advocating for transportation or contributing financially. Local elected officials have an important role as stakeholders, as they can be important advocates for transportation services in their communities as well as have input into whether local funding can be provided for transportation. Engagement with elected officials – especially those who are new to their role – is vital to communicating the essential role transportation services play, especially in rural communities. Healthcare providers are also well-positioned as transportation advocates, since access to healthcare is one of the most frequent reasons for rural customers to need transportation services. It is critical for healthcare providers to not only be aware of the challenges their patients face in accessing care, but knowledgeable about the transportation options available.
- **Strategy 3.2: Conduct outreach to healthcare providers regarding patients who use public or NEMT transportation for travel to appointments.** Raising awareness of the transportation challenges of patients among healthcare providers, as discussed in Strategy 3.3, is the first step. This strategy gives them a potential role to play in improving access to healthcare. While use of public or NEMT transportation should not entitle a rider to special treatment, awareness that a patient is using a transportation service can help inform scheduling or other decisions. For example, if a patient travels into Waco from a rural county using Blue Transit and transit service is only provided on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, an appointment should not be scheduled



on a Tuesday or Thursday. This applies to initial appointment setting, follow-up appointments, and any rescheduling that may be necessary. The same principle applies to the timing of appointments – a patient traveling via Blue Transit cannot be scheduled for an early morning or late afternoon appointment. Ideally this same information would be shared between healthcare providers with respect to referrals as well (for labs, specialist appointments, etc.).

- **Strategy 3.3: Partner with transit operators outside the primary service area (where available) to offer connections (transfers) to key destinations.** Establishing relationships with transit operators outside of the HOTCOG region is one way to address mobility needs that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. At present, Blue Transit does provide service into counties in the secondary service area, though the number of trips is modest.

HOTCOG's service area is bordered by 13 counties served by multiple regional rural transit providers. These include Brazos Transit District (Leon and Robertson counties), City and Rural Rides (CARR) (Erath and Hamilton counties), City/County Transportation (Johnson County), Community Services, Inc. (Ellis and Navarro counties), GoBus (Anderson and Henderson counties), Hill Country Transit District (The HOP) (Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties), and The Transit System, Inc. (Somervell County).

Rather than having Blue Transit vehicles traveling outside of the primary (five-county) service area, they can coordinate a transfer with a neighboring provider. For example, a rider needing to travel to Temple from Falls or Limestone County could transfer to The HOP's rural demand-response service near the Bell County line. This would enable the Blue Transit bus to remain in service within the primary service area while the rider continued on to their destination. However, both operators would need to coordinate to ensure a timely transfer for both directions of travel, which can be challenging.

Regional Goal 4.0: Expand transportation provider capacity to meet the needs of rural communities.

- **Strategy 4.1: Expand service capacity/options based on funding from a specific area/county.** There are two primary methods for expanding transportation provider capacity in rural communities. The first is to provide additional funding for the public transportation provider (e.g., Blue Transit). If a city, county, or community is willing to fund additional service, approaching Blue Transit regarding the desired service may be its first step. (This also ties into Strategy 1.3, wherein additional local funding can be used to generate additional Section 5311 funding.) Another approach would be if a local organization is interested in providing a transportation service. While this would not result in the additional funding available to Blue Transit by increased local funding, it would provide an opportunity for an interested human or social services provider, for example, to introduce a new local service, or for the introduction of an innovative approach to mobility at a local level. Either way, additional capacity would be created, resulting in the provision of more trips in the local area.



- **Strategy 4.2: Educate and recruit human and social services providers in an effort to expand the pool of qualified Section 5310 providers to better meet community needs.** The FTA Section 5310 program in Waco is administered by Waco Transit, which is responsible for making sure the money that is awarded is spent for its intended purpose. If there is a shortage of human services operators or if the money is not used, it reflects on Waco Transit as the federal recipient. While there has historically not been a lot of interest in local organizations using Section 5310 in the region, this strategy is included in this Plan to ensure any organization interested in qualifying as a Section 5310 provider is given the opportunity to do so. Many organizations choose not to utilize Section 5310 funding due to the administrative requirements, while others may not be aware of how to obtain funding under the program. Increasing available resources and guidance for how Section 5310 funding can be used and what the program requirements are would raise awareness and may result in new Section 5310 providers.
- **Strategy 4.3: Introduce a volunteer driver program and/or mileage reimbursement program (pay-your-pal) in the HOTCOG region to improve mobility, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities.** Introducing non-transit mobility options can often help to meet specific needs of target populations. Two such options are volunteer driver programs and mileage reimbursement programs. These types of programs are frequently sponsored by human or social services organizations, which may or may not operate other transportation programs.

A volunteer driver program relies on a pool of qualified drivers who can be called upon to provide trips. This can be especially valuable for trips outside of regular service hours for public transportation or when other transportation options are not suitable. In a volunteer driver program, volunteer drivers typically use their own vehicles to provide transportation for ambulatory riders who can transfer in and out of a standard vehicle. A sponsoring organization would be responsible for recruiting and screening drivers and matching up the drivers with the persons needing a ride, which would likely require additional funding and may require additional staff. Onboarding a volunteer often includes an application, background check, and orientation/training. However, recruiting volunteer drivers can be one of the most challenging aspects of such a program. Some programs offer a mileage reimbursement stipend to volunteer drivers as an incentive. One of the more successful volunteer driver programs in Texas is Drive a Senior, which serves the Austin area. It was formed relatively recently by the consolidation of three similar programs (Chariot, Drive a Senior ATX, and Senior Access); in September 2025, 61 percent of the rides provided by the organization were via volunteer drivers. National RTAP also recently published its Volunteer Driver Program Toolkit, which includes case studies as well as information about setting up and operating such a program.

An option that requires less management by the sponsoring organization is a mileage reimbursement program, where riders arrange for their own drivers but are able to request reimbursement to pay their driver for the trip. This can be an effective mobility solution for individuals who have someone to drive them, but are afraid of becoming a burden or are unable to help defray the cost of the trip. This type of program would require someone at the sponsoring organization to manage eligibility and fulfill requests for payment, and would likely require additional funding. There are many examples of mileage reimbursement programs specific to



transportation that is covered by insurance; however, there are several programs in place across the country that are independent of insurers. Some of these programs include Pay-Your-Pal programs administered by Faith in Action Georgetown, Lake Links (Lake County, California), and Homage Senior Services (Snohomish County, Washington). El Dorado Transit (El Dorado County, California) offers a My Ride mileage reimbursement program very similar to the Pay-Your-Pal programs, while Via Mobility Services (Boulder, Colorado) sponsors a Family and Friends Mileage Reimbursement Program that reimburses trips for registered riders that it cannot cover with its own mobility services. All of these programs establish their own eligibility requirements (such as age or disability), registration process, travel documentation requirements, and reimbursement process. Some also cap the amount of reimbursement an individual can receive in a given month or calendar year.

- **Strategy 4.4: Continue to recruit and retain a sufficient driver pool to provide the full level of service for Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit District.** At the beginning of the update process for the Coordination Plan, a driver shortage in Waco resulted in less service being provided in Waco and McLennan County. Since that time, Waco Transit automated parts of its application process, which expedited the hiring process. At the time of this report, the driver workforce was fully staffed. However, since driver retention is not guaranteed, Waco Transit should continue efforts to recruit and retain qualified drivers on an ongoing basis so as to be able to maintain its full level of service.
- **Strategy 4.5: Explore the introduction of a vanpool program that can provide regular transportation between locations (such as for work and school).** A vanpool program typically has all of the riders gather at the origin location before traveling to the destination location, which can be effective provided those locations are the same for all riders. Consider implementing a vanpool program with opportunities for riders who may live along the path of travel but do not board at the origin destination, or who get dropped off prior to the van reaching its ultimate destination. This could provide more flexibility and potentially result in a greater number of interested riders. While HOTCOG may help facilitate such a program, engaging employer and/or educational partners would be needed in order to maximize the success of a vanpool program.

Regional Goal 5.0: Increase awareness of available transportation services.

- **Strategy 5.1: Improve the service information available online and in print (especially with respect to rural transportation).** While many individuals, especially seniors, prefer to pick up the phone when they have a question, many others would prefer to look for printed or online materials when they need information. It is critical that public transportation providers – especially rural providers – maintain an informative and accurate online presence. For those new to public transportation, having limited information can result in unrealistic expectations or deter them from using the service at all. Having accurate service information available, even if only online, can result in a more well-informed community. Progress on this strategy can be measured by documenting changes in phone calls seeking information, website hits, and overall customer satisfaction.



- **Strategy 5.2: Develop train-the-trainer materials so that travel training can be conducted by local organizations.** While it is not uncommon for a regional entity to conduct travel training, passing such knowledge to local organizations can often be a more effective way to communicate such information. HOTCOG may wish to develop materials that can be used to educate members of local organizations about travel training, who can then pass that information along to members of their own communities or the populations they serve. This can also serve to raise awareness about how public transportation (especially rural public transportation) works without unduly increasing the burden on HOTCOG staff. Effective implementation of this type of program requires the support and participation of local organizations who can set up periodic (or more frequent) travel training sessions for the populations they serve.
- **Strategy 5.3: Improve bus stop infrastructure in Waco.** While Waco Transit does allow flag stops (where a rider can flag down a bus at points along the route other than designated stops), each route does include designated bus stop locations. However, the lack of shelter at bus stop locations was cited several times during the public engagement for this Plan. While this lack of shade may have been the issue riders who provided input were most vocal about, the overarching challenge is an overall lack of infrastructure surrounding Waco Transit bus stops. Before any type of shade structure can be provided, a bus stop needs to include basic features such as an ADA-compliant sidewalk and concrete landing pad. Once those elements are in place, then other amenities (such as a bench or shelter) can be added as warranted. Such bus stop improvements have multiple benefits beyond customer comfort – they ensure ADA compliance by enabling deployment of a wheelchair ramp as well as provide a clear path of travel to the bus stop. Waco Transit has an existing Bus Stop Improvement Plan which should be used to guide the development of stop locations.



Chapter 8 | Priorities

Description of Prioritization/Rating Methodology

During RCC Workshop #1 on January 15, 2026, participants were asked to rank the 16 transportation needs identified in Technical Memos #1 and #2 (provided herein in Chapters 2 and 5) as *low*, *medium*, or *high* priority. The purpose of this exercise was to guide the subsequent development of the goals, strategies, and projects.

During the workshop, a Mentimeter live poll was used by both in-person and virtual attendees to rank the needs, with feedback provided in real-time. Subsequent to the workshop, RCC members who did not attend were provided with a ballot and offered the opportunity to provide their feedback as well. Ultimately, 10 participants provided input during the workshop and six submitted ballots afterward.

All results were tallied and a mean rating was calculated for each need. The following rating scale was used to rank each need based on the mean rating as *low*, *medium*, or *high* priority.

- Low: 1.00 to 1.69
- Medium: 1.70 to 2.39
- High: 2.40 to 3.00

The full prioritized list of needs is provided in Exhibit 8.1.



Exhibit 8.1 Prioritized list of transportation needs

Rank	Mean Rating	Score	Need
1	3.00	High	Reliable access to transportation for intra- and inter-county trips (within the primary service area) within the five rural counties. (#4)
2	2.94	High	Greater awareness of transportation options within the five rural counties. (#11)
3	2.88	High	Increased partnerships with and support for transportation from stakeholders in the five rural counties. (#13)
4	2.81	High	Improved access to comprehensive service information for persons in the five rural counties. (#15)
5 (tie)	2.71	High	Greater service capacity for intra- and inter-county trips (within the primary service area) within the five rural counties. (#1)
5 (tie)	2.71	High	A sufficient number of qualified transit drivers to serve Waco and McLennan county. (#3)
6 (tie)	2.56	High	Increased partnerships with and support for transportation from stakeholders in rural McLennan County. (#14)
6 (tie)	2.56	High	Improved access to comprehensive service information for persons in rural McLennan County. (#16)
7	2.38	Medium	Coordinated service between other transportation providers for service outside of the primary service area for the five rural counties. (#7)
8	2.25	Medium	Greater access to travel training for persons in the five rural counties. (#12)
9 (tie)	2.19	Medium	Reliable access to transportation for inter-county trips outside of the primary service area within the five rural counties. (#5)
9 (tie)	2.19	Medium	Coordinated service between other transportation providers for service outside of McLennan County. (#8)
10	2.13	Medium	Weekend service for intra- and inter-county trips (within the primary service area) within the five rural counties. (#6)
11	2.00	Medium	Greater service capacity for inter-county trips outside of the primary service area within the five rural counties. (#2)
12	1.25	Low	More affordable transit fares for travel within the rural counties. (#9)
13	1.00	Low	More affordable transit fares for travel within Waco and McLennan County. (#10)



In addition to prioritizing the transportation needs identified through outreach to the community and transportation providers, RCC Workshop #1 included a discussion of the criteria the committee would like to use for prioritizing the projects and strategies that would be developed in the second half of the project. Participants provided the following list of key priorities and potential criteria to be used in the prioritization methodology. Those elements were:

- Ease of access to making a ride reservation
- Access to information about scheduling
- Funding available
- Works within existing funding
- Improves regional transportation network (especially minimizes deadhead travel)
- Partnerships
- Talk to TxDOT about funding for trips into other counties (discretionary fund?)
- Marketing to identify new funding streams (hard to get local match contributions)

Through further discussion, the RCC narrowed these down to four primary criteria. In order of importance, they were:

1. Works within existing funding available
2. Identifies new funding
3. Improves regional transportation network/coordination
4. Effective communication

Following the meeting, the project team developed a scoring matrix for future projects and strategies. Using the methodology shown below, each project/strategy will receive a score between 0 and 20.

Criterion	Max points
Works within existing funding	5
Identifies new funding	5
Improves regional transportation network/coordination	4
Improves access to information/communication	3
Improves access to transportation services	2
Addresses a project goal/need	1
Total possible points	20

Because the top two criteria are somewhat (though not entirely) exclusive, the majority of the projects/strategies are expected to have a score between 0 and 15. Achieving a “perfect” score of 20 should not be viewed as the goal. A project/strategy with a score of 15 will have met all of the other criteria and either work within existing funding or identify a new funding source.



Documentation of Priorities

Both the needs prioritization and the prioritization methodology for scoring projects and strategies were approved by the RCC at its February 19, 2026 meeting. This methodology was used to prioritize the strategies, which were reviewed as part of RCC Workshop #2. The points totals used for calculating the priority level for each strategy are provided in Exhibit 8.2.

All recommended strategies are scored in the following matrix. Resultant scores were categorized within priority levels as follows:

- Low: 11 points or fewer
- Medium: 12 – 13 points
- High: 14 points or higher



Exhibit 8.2 Prioritized list of coordination strategies

Strategy/Project	Works within existing funding (5 pts)	Identifies new funding (5 pts)	Improves regional network/coord. (4 pts)	Improves access to information (3 pts)	Improves access to transportation (2 pts)	Addresses a project goal/need (1 pt)	Total points	Priority
Strategy 1.1: Maintain county-specific data for all rural counties.	5	N/A	4	0	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 1.2: Effectively communicate the public transit message throughout the region.	5	N/A	4	3	2	1	15	High
Strategy 1.3: Increase FTA Section 5311 funding by increasing the local match.	N/A	5	4	3	2	1	15	High
Strategy 2.1: Adjust service days/hours to provide more reliable Blue Transit service.	5	N/A	3	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 2.2: Evaluate demand for scheduled service within communities/counties.	3	1	4	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 2.3: Evaluate demand for inter-county scheduled service.	3	N/A	4	2	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 2.4: Consider housing Blue Transit vehicles in the county they serve to minimize deadhead travel and potentially increase availability.	5	N/A	4	0	1	1	11	Low
Strategy 2.5: Consider implementing county-specific service (including intra- and inter-county).	5	N/A	4	3	2	1	15	High
Strategy 3.1: Engage stakeholders (especially medical providers and local elected officials) for local support.	5	2	4	3	1	1	16	High



Strategy/Project	Works within existing funding (5 pts)	Identifies new funding (5 pts)	Improves regional network/coord. (4 pts)	Improves access to information (3 pts)	Improves access to transportation (2 pts)	Addresses a project goal/need (1 pt)	Total points	Priority
Strategy 3.2: Conduct outreach to medical providers regarding patients who use public or NEMT transportation for travel to appointments.	4	N/A	4	3	0	1	12	Medium
Strategy 3.3: Partner with transit operators outside the primary service area (where available) to offer connections (transfers) to key destinations.	4	NA	4	2	2	1	13	Medium
Strategy 4.1: Expand service capacity/options based on funding from a specific area/county.	N/A	5	4	2	2	1	14	High
Strategy 4.2: Educate and recruit human and social services providers in an effort to expand the pool of qualified Section 5310 providers to better meet community needs.	N/A	4	4	2	0	1	11	Low
Strategy 4.3: Introduce a volunteer driver program and/or mileage reimbursement program (pay-your-pal) in the HOTCOG region to improve mobility, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities.	3	N/A	4	2	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 4.4: Recruit and retain a sufficient driver pool to provide the full level of service for Waco Transit and McLennan Rural Transit District.	4	N/A	4	1	2	1	12	Medium



Strategy/Project	Works within existing funding (5 pts)	Identifies new funding (5 pts)	Improves regional network/coord. (4 pts)	Improves access to information (3 pts)	Improves access to transportation (2 pts)	Addresses a project goal/need (1 pt)	Total points	Priority
Strategy 4.5: Explore the introduction of a vanpool program that can provide regular transportation between locations (such as for work and school).	2	N/A	4	3	2	1	12	Medium
Strategy 5.1: Improve the service information available online and in print (especially with respect to rural transportation).	5	N/A	3	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 5.2: Develop train-the-trainer materials so that travel training can be conducted by local organizations.	4	N/A	4	3	2	1	14	High
Strategy 5.3: Improve bus stop infrastructure in Waco.	3	N/A	3	3	2	1	12	Medium



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Chapter 9 | Plan Approval

Documentation of Individuals Included in Plan Adoption **[pending]**

The link to the draft final Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan, which was posted to the project webpage at www.GetConnectedHOT.com as well as www.hotcogtx.gov and www.gobluetransit.com, was distributed to the following entities and individuals:

- Members of the Regional Coordination Committee,
- TxDOT's Regional Public Transportation Coordinator,
- Transportation provider survey respondents,
- Counties located within the region,
- Municipalities located within the region,
- Human service agencies within the region,
- Stakeholder survey respondents, and
- Community survey respondents (who provided an email address and expressed an interest in being updated on the project).

Counties, municipalities, human service agencies, and stakeholders were asked to alert their constituents and clients that the draft final Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan would be available for review online at the aforementioned website from August 11, 2026 through September 11, 2026. A printed version was also made available at the HOTCOG offices, located at 1514 S. New Road in Waco, during business hours.

Steps Completed for RPTCP Adoption **[pending]**

All comments received during the public review period were documented and reviewed. Comments and feedback, as well as a summary of requested changes and actions taken, is provided in Appendix I in Volume 2.

The RCC met on September 24, 2026, to review the feedback received and determine if any additional revisions were needed. The revised draft final Coordination Plan was presented as a red-line version with the input/requested changes and the proposed changes to the document. The RCC determined the document with the proposed changes reflected its direction and appropriately integrated the public and stakeholder feedback received during the comment period. The RCC subsequently voted to adopt the Regional Public Transportation Plan as amended during the meeting.

Individuals involved in the adoption of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan were as follows:

- Carey Amthor, Friends for Life
- Judge Shane Brassell, Hill County
- April Cook, Hill County Indigent Health Care
- Judge Richard Duncan, Limestone County



- Judge Jay Elliott, Falls County
- Judge Scott Felton, McLennan County
- Jefferson Gunn, Heart of Texas National Federation of the Blind
- Melissa Ingriola, Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center
- James Jarmon, Meals on Wheels Waco
- Commissioner Will Jones, McLennan County
- Mukesh Kumar, Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Susan Nemmer, McLennan County
- Frank Patterson, McLennan Community College
- Jason Pettegrow, Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network
- Rep Pledger, Blue Transit
- Will Roe, City of Marlin
- Meredith Stephens, Texas Workforce Solutions
- Serena Stevenson, Waco Transit/McLennan Rural Transit
- Julie Talbert, Heart of Texas Workforce Solutions Development Board
- Heather Travers, McLennan County Health Services
- Danielle Utrera, Veterans Affairs
- Keith Vandiver, Bosque County Senior Services
- Judge Cindy Vanlandingham, Bosque County
- John Vorderkunz, HOTCOG Health and Human Services Director



Signature Page

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