Appendix 1

Technical Memorandum No. 1: Outreach Plan
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

“Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan”

Technical Memorandum No. 1:
Outreach Plan

October 2011

KFH Group, Incorporated
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Technical Memorandum No 1: Outreach Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Outreach Plan will serve as a guide for the Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) and the consultant to conduct activities to engage public input in updating the Regional Public Transportation Coordinated Plan FY 2011 (Coordinated Plan) during the period June 2011 through October 2011. The previous Regional Public Transportation Coordinated Plan was conducted in 2006 and will be used as a resource in this effort. KFH Group, Inc., the consultant contracted by Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) to complete the Coordinated Plan, will assist the LRGVDC and the RTAP in conducting elements that comprise this Outreach Plan. Based on RTAP input, there is an emphasis on engaging human service agencies and their clients.

The public involvement activities planned for the update to the Coordinated Plan include:

- Interviews with human service agencies (Needs/Strategies).
- Interviews with other community organizations (Needs/Strategies).
- Transportation Needs Survey – to conduct during the Operation Lone Star events to obtain input from individuals that live in under-served communities in the Valley.

Each activity is discussed below, and is comprised of a purpose, associated roles and responsibilities, and a timeline. The meetings effort includes additional information discussing content and methods of promotion.
INTERVIEWS WITH HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS - IDENTIFY NEEDS

Meet with and interview personnel at human service agencies to discuss and understand their need for transportation services and suggestions for improvements.

Responsibilities:

- RTAP and KFH Group will identify which organizations will be interviewed.
- KFH Group will interview agencies and collect information about their need for transportation services and ideas for improved coordination.
- KFH Group will incorporate this information into the Needs Assessment.

Timeline:

*June 2011 (Interviews will occur June 20th – 24th)*

INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS - IDENTIFY NEEDS

Interview personnel at various community organizations to discuss and understand their need for transportation services and recommended improvements.

Responsibilities:

- RTAP will identify which organizations will be interviewed.
- KFH Group will interview organizations and collect information about their need for transportation services and ideas for improved coordination.
- KFH Group will incorporate this information into the Needs Assessment.

Timeline:

*July 2011 (Interviews will occur July 1st – 8th)*
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS SURVEY (HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS)

Prior to development of any recommended coordination strategies, human service agencies that provide transportation will be surveyed regarding their need for improvements to existing transportation services.

Responsibilities:

- KFH Group will develop and distribute survey.
- KFH Group will tabulate and evaluate the survey responses.
- KFH Group will incorporate this information into the Needs Assessment.

Timeline:

**June - July 2011**

- KFH Group will develop and distribute survey.
- LRGVDC will post the survey information on their home page.
- KFH Group/LRGVDC will start receiving survey responses.
- KFH Group will incorporate information in the survey responses into the Needs Assessment.

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS SURVEY (UNDER-SERVED POPULATION AT OPERATION LONE STAR EVENTS)

The intent of the Lone Star event is to bring free medical services to underserved communities along the Texas border. There are three sites in the Lower Rio Grande Valley that will host a Lone Star event during the week of July 25th – 29th. Each location will be offering medical services Monday through Friday. This offers a great opportunity to conduct a simple survey of transit needs. The survey will be administered at the event location as individuals wait to receive these free services. The survey will be short and simple and will be conducted by volunteers (promotoras/-es) generated by local human service agencies. These individuals will be familiar with the local communities and will have relationships with members of those communities. The survey can be completed in less than two minutes. Once all of the surveys have been completed, they will be sent to KFH Group for tabulation. This survey effort will result in very useful data from members of the public that are underserved and, likely, under-represented in this kind of planning process.
Responsibilities:

- KFH Group and LRGVDC will work with HHSC to identify volunteers to conduct the survey.
- KFH Group will develop survey.
- KFH Group will provide instructions to the volunteers on how to administer the survey, and where to submit completed survey documents.
- KFH Group will incorporate this information into the draft plan.

Timeline:

**July 2011**

- Locations: Brownsville, Mission, and San Juan.
- Volunteers will conduct survey based on the instructions.
- Volunteers will submit all survey information to KFH Group.

**August 2011**

- KFH Group will compile all survey data received.
- KFH Group will incorporate information in the survey responses into the draft plan.

ROUND 1 MEETINGS: PRESENTING AND GATHERING INPUT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND POTENTIAL STRATEGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

This first series of focus group meetings will include an opportunity for the public to participate as well, at a site to be determined. There will be one focus group meeting per county. At this meeting we will discuss needs and potential strategies, and other elements of the update to the coordinated plan. The emphasis of these meetings will be to work with human service agencies to engage their clients to attend and participate.

Responsibilities:

- RTAP and KFH Group will select times and locations and KFH Group staff will work with transit systems and human service agencies to schedule and secure the venue. All meetings will be on consecutive days.
Human service agencies and transportation providers will disseminate information about the meetings.
The LRGVDC will update its website to include event information.
RTAP will coordinate with public transit providers to schedule any additional transportation coverage to be provided to meeting participants.
KFH Group will make a presentation of findings and strategies.
KFH Group will document verbal and written input received at the meetings.

Timeline:

July 2011

- Select dates/locations for meetings.
- Schedule meetings with host facility.
- Develop distribution list for announcements.
- Post meeting information on the LRGVDC website.
- Distribute meeting information.

August 2011

- KFH Group will conduct meetings.

The summary of the results of the focus group meetings will be presented in the draft Final Report.

ROUND 2 MEETINGS: PRESENTING AND GATHERING INPUT ON THE DRAFT UPDATED COORDINATED PLAN (HOSTED BY A HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY)

This second series of focus group meetings will be conducted at a site that will attract both human service agency clients as well as the general public. There will be one focus group meeting per county. At this meeting we will discuss the draft Coordinated Plan. The emphasis of these meetings will be to work with human service agencies to engage their clients to attend and participate.

Responsibilities:

- RTAP and KFH Group will select times and locations and KFH Group staff will work with host agency to schedule and secure the venue.
• Transit systems and human service agencies will distribute meeting announcements and provide insights.
• The LRGVDC will update its website to include event information.
• KFH will coordinate with public transit providers to schedule any additional transportation coverage to be provided to meeting participants.
• KFH Group will make a presentation of the draft Coordinated Plan.
• KFH Group will document verbal and written input received at the meetings.

Timeline:

**August 2011**

• Select dates/locations for meetings.
• Schedule meetings with host facility.
• Develop distribution list for announcements.
• Post meeting information on the LRGVDC website.
• Distribute meeting information.

**September 2011**

• KFH Group will conduct meetings.

The summary of the results of the focus group meetings and subsequent changes to the report will be included in the Final Report.
Appendix 2

Technical Memorandum No. 2:
Transportation Resources in the Region
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

“Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan”

Technical Memorandum No. 2: Transportation Resources in the Region

October 2011
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INTRODUCTION

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan is currently being updated for publication in 2011. This technical memorandum describes the transportation services and other resources currently available in the Valley region, which includes Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties in the southernmost area of Texas. This region also borders Mexico and many Mexican Nationals use local transit. The inventory of resources is organized as follows:

- **Planning Organizations** – agencies responsible for transportation planning in the region, including state, regional, and local organizations. Planning organizations are introduced prior to transportation services, because one of the planning organizations is one of the lead transportation providers in the region.

- **Public Transportation Providers** – operators of fixed-route, flex-route, and demand-response transportation services that are open to the general public (including intercity bus and taxis).

- **Client-Focused Services** – services provided to clients of human service agencies and programs, typically limited to particular demographic groups and trip purposes. This category includes private, non-profit community-based organizations, health and human service agencies, workforce agencies, schools, municipal programs targeted to particular groups, and others.
PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS AND COORDINATED PLANNING PROCESSES

The following planning agencies have responsibilities for planning transportation in the Valley region:

- Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC)
- Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization (HSBMPO)
- Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization (HCMPO)
- Hidalgo County Commuter Rail District
- Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority
- Cameron County regional Mobility Authority
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

Coordinated Planning Processes

While the alternative scope of work calls for a review of “Parallel Planning Processes” we have found that rather than parallel planning processes, the processes are all striving for coordination. The three MPOs as well as all other agencies listed above (that have any involvement in planning activities) are all represented and active in the Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) and all area working toward coordinating their planning activities with the Coordinated Plan.

Within each section below are the planning processes in place and a description of the level of coordination.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

LRGVDC is a voluntary association of local governments in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties focused on promoting coordinated regional development. LRGVDC is the lead agency in this planning effort, as well as one of the region’s primary providers of public transit and coordinated human service transportation. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan was initially developed in 2006-2007.

The LRGVDC Transit Department coordinates and provides administrative support to the RTAP, which provides direction and oversight to this regional public and human service transportation coordination planning process. Over 20 organizations are represented on the RTAP, including each of the three MPOs in the region (described below) as well as key stakeholder agencies. The RTAP developed the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan in 2007.
The LRGVDC has also conducted a Health and Human Services Transit Demonstration Project with a final report in 2009. This project provided a process for integration of transit information at HHSC offices.

The LRGVDC is an urban and rural transit district, and the designated recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 transit funds for the McAllen-Pharr-Edinburg urbanized area. The services provided under these programs are described later in this document.

**Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization**

The City of Brownsville is the designated MPO for the Brownsville urbanized area. In addition to the City, the MPO Policy Board includes representatives of the following entities: TxDOT, the Brownsville Navigation District, Cameron County, and the Brownsville Independent School District, the Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport Advisory Committee, the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, the Brownsville Economic Development Council, the Town of Rancho Viejo, and the City of Los Fresnos.

The Brownsville MPO adopted its 2010 – 2035 Brownsville Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) in December 2009. The transit element of this plan describes the Brownsville Urban System (Brownsville Metro) City–Wide Transit Improvement Project (BCWTIP) which calls for the following major tasks:

- Designing and constructing an intermodal/multimodal facility. This facility was started in 2011
- Constructing a transfer station on the north side of the city and several transfer hubs. This station was completed in 2011
- Renovating the current Brownsville Metro facility, yard, and parking area,
- Constructing a park and ride lot near downtown Brownsville
- Bus stop improvements
- Revenue fleet replacement

The MTP also indicates that Brownsville Metro will continue to work on regional coordination to:

- Enhance the quality of the customer’s travel experience
- Expand the availability of services to those who are un-served
- Increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery
- Establish and sustain communications and decision-making mechanisms among sponsors and stakeholders to guide Plan implementation effectively
- Improve the image of transit across the region
- Develop a transit traveler information system

The City of Brownsville is constructing a multimodal terminal within walking distance of the Gateway International Bridge. Approximately $7 million in FTA funding has been received toward this project in the past two years; the total project is expected to cost $31.3 million. The feasibility study for this project was completed in 2003, the environmental assessment was conducted in 2006, and construction began in December 2009, with completion anticipated in fall of 2011. Once complete, the multimodal terminal will include a visitor reception room, passenger waiting areas, intercity bus company counters, package express area, transit administrative and operating space (including space for 32 buses), and joint development space for retail, restaurant, or entertainment. The facility will serve as the administrative and operating facilities of the Brownsville Metro and national and international private transportation providers. It will also serve as a transfer point for Valley Metro, intercity operators and taxi cabs.

Other Brownsville Metro projects include the construction of the Northside Transfer Station located on Ruben M. Torres Boulevard (completed in 2006), the creation of routes funded through Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program, and bus stop improvements and passenger travel training through the New Freedom program.

Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization

The HSBMPO is responsible for the regional planning process for all modes of transportation for northern Cameron County, including Harlingen, San Benito, Combes, Los Indios, Palm Valley, Primera, Rio Hondo, La Feria, and Santa Rosa. The 2010-2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was adopted in December 2009.

This plan indicates that the HSBMPO was awarded $1.95 million dollars in US DOT American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funding to assist the Harlingen-San Benito member cities to move forward with the establishment of new transit routes that serve the HSBMPO area, including purchasing vehicles, bus stop signs, bus stop shelters, ITS improvements, a vehicle storage facility, and vehicle maintenance equipment.

Among the 2010-2035 goals and objectives, the following are directly related to public transit services:

- Objective 1.2: Improve transit system services and facilities:
  - Maintain quality of benches and shelters; and
o Preserve bus routes that meet minimum performance standards to include services in the HSBMPO area with the direst need.

- Objective 2.2: Improve transit facilities infrastructure:
  o Identify possible park and ride areas that will allow better access to transit services and carpool;
  o Require that all new transit vehicles purchased include bicycle carrying capacity;
  o Identify a transfer station location within the HSBMPO area; and
  o Increase the number of bus stops without paved/marked platforms.

- Objective 2.3: Improve existing transit system operations:
  o Increase the hours and days of operation;
  o Increase service coverage;
  o Increase service frequencies along each flexible route; and
  o Maintain current and newly developed routes within the HSBMPO

- Objective 2.4: Improve the connection of multiple modes of transportation:
  o Secure or build a park and ride facility for express route bus services;
  o Secure or build a new community transit transfer station within the HSBMPO area that will serve as a hub for integration with the existing transit services, intercity buses, and airport shuttles;
  o Provide opportunities for covered bicycle racks and/or lockers at transit facilities and/or vehicles;
  o Increase the sidewalks and pedestrian facilities infrastructure leading to bus stops;
  o Increase the proportion of multimodal access points that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant; and
  o Increase the service coordination with transportation providers to actively support the public transportation regional transit connectivity.

- Objective 2.5: Improve the bicycle and pedestrian facilities infrastructure;
  o Decrease the number of gaps among sidewalks, trails, and bike pathways; and
  o Increase miles of sidewalk, trails, and on street bike pathways.

- Objective 2.6: Increase the connectivity to regions beyond the HSBMPO metropolitan area:
  o Connect the HSBMPO metropolitan area to a regional public transportation system;
  o Increase the number of intercity bus trips departing HSBMPO;
  o Continue the service coordination of public and private passenger transportation services inside and outside the HSBMPO area; and
• Objective 3.3: Improve existing transit system performance:
  o Implement intelligent transportation systems solutions, including automatic vehicle location and variable message sign technology to provide customers with real time transit travel time information;
  o Double transit ridership from 2009 levels for existing routes and 2011 levels for new transit routes within the first 5 years of the 2010-2035 MTP; and
  o Continue developing Congestion Management Process Studies within the HSBMPO metropolitan area.

• Objective 4.5: Provide security features on bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and parking facilities, and at multimodal crossings

• Objective 4.6: Provide Safety features on bicycle, pedestrian, transit facilities, buses, and multimodal crossings

Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization

HCMPO is a federally funded program that works with Hidalgo County communities and TxDOT to plan for the county’s future transportation needs. HCMPO developed the 2035 Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Hidalgo County to serve as a blueprint for transportation systems and services to meet the needs of the McAllen metropolitan area. Table 2-1 identifies the following long-range transit project goals and priority objectives for Hidalgo County.

The plan noted that the growth of transit ridership in Hidalgo County “is outpacing both population growth and the commuter transportation market growth.” Also stated was that “For the foreseeable future, the top transit market in the region will be the suburban downtown travel shed of downtown McAllen. Second to develop will be travel between communities, especially east-west. This travel market will eventually generate significant transit trips. A radial route structure based on downtown McAllen is appropriate for the region, followed by a gradually more interlocking hub and spoke system based on local community centers such as Edinburg and Pharr.”

The HCMPO and LRGVDC conducted a Multi-Modal Study in 2007. That effort called for more linkages between bus and pedestrians and bicyclists. Improved bus stops and bike racks were major recommendations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Category: Financial - Need to provide a cost effective transit system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide a balanced transit system that distributes resources based on travel demand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement an economically viable and equitable fare structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a financially sustainable transit system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop a more formal regional transit governance structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support downtown vitality and redevelopment with quality transit service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At a minimum, provide basic service to the region’s transit dependent population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support the regions quality of life with quality transit services</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Category: Market - Need to improve access to existing and future ridership markets</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve transit services and facilities for travel between and within regional activity centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concentrate future transit services in areas with high ridership potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore high capacity transit in future congested corridors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue to provide a downtown focused radial route structure – both McAllen and the surrounding communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve bus frequency</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Category: Customer - Need to improve customer service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve the transit passengers riding experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate schedule information clearly to customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify, develop and market tomorrow’s transit customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a comprehensive paratransit network for the region’s elderly and disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set a very high standard for customer relations</td>
</tr>
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**Hidalgo County Commuter Rail District**

The Hidalgo County Commuter Rail District was created by the Hidalgo County Commissioners’ Court, under the authority granted to counties along the Texas-Mexico border by the 80th Texas Legislature, to provide an alternative transportation mode for Hidalgo County residents. The organization’s mission is to “to create and maintain a
modern self supporting commuter transportation system that connects the important economic, educational, medical and entertainment venues of Hidalgo County, including metro and rural areas, at a low cost to the residents and visitors of the greater region of the Rio Grande Valley.”

The Commuter Rail District is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. The organization held an open house in May 2011 on a feasibility study for commuter rail service in the county that was funded by a grant from the US Department of Energy. The recommendations presented at this open house indicated that the commuter rail is the preferred mode over other rail modes and that such a system is Viable Relative to Forecasted Demographics. Recommendations also included improving policy, financial, physical, and institutional environments, and pursuing Federal “New Starts” funding.

**Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority**

The Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority is an independent governmental agency created by the Texas Transportation Commission and the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court, with the purpose of accelerating needed transportation projects in Hidalgo County. Overseen by a seven member Board of Directors, the Hidalgo County RMA and its consultants work with local communities implement new transportation projects. The Hidalgo County RMA’s purpose is to provide Hidalgo County with opportunities to accelerate needed mobility projects through the direction of the board.

The Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority primarily contributes work to highway infrastructure projects.

**Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority**

The purpose of the Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority is to provide Cameron County with an opportunity to significantly accelerate needed transportation projects and help create a local entity that will make decisions relating to mobility needs. The Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority works with numerous cities in Cameron County and will assist the citizens of South Texas by providing guidance in congestion relief, traffic safety, enhanced mobility and viable route alternatives. The Cameron County Regional Mobility authority has authority to undertake projects related to highways, rail, air and seaport, as well as having the ability to undertake projects in Mexico.

**Texas Department of Transportation**

TxDOT is the state agency responsible for construction and maintenance of all interstate, U.S, state highways, ranch-to-market (RM), and farm-to-market (FM) roads
within the State. The mission of TxDOT is to provide safe, effective, and efficient movement of people and goods. The state is organized in 25 geographic districts, each responsible for local highway design and maintenance, right-of-way acquisition, construction oversight, and transportation planning. The Valley region is located within the TxDOT Pharr District.

TxDOT has funding oversight over state public transportation funding through the Public Transportation Division (PTN). PTN, through its Public Transit Coordinators, work closely with transit systems. TxDOT manages, provides oversight, and disperses funding for:

- **Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities)** - Financial assistance for purchasing capital equipment or service, to be used to transport elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

- **Section 5311 (Non-Urbanized or Rural Area)** - financial assistance to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized (rural) areas for any needs.

In the non-urbanized (populations under 50,000) and small urbanized (population 50,000 to 200,000) areas of Texas, TxDOT also manages, provides oversight, and disperses funding for the following additional FTA programs.

- **Section 5316 (JARC)** - The JARC Program provides funding for developing new or expanded transportation services that connect low income persons to jobs and other employment-related services, and to transport residents of urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities.

- **Section 5317 (New Freedom)** - The New Freedom Program provides funding to assist individuals with disabilities to access and use transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. Projects funded through the New Freedom Program must be both new and go beyond the requirements of the ADA.

In the large urbanized areas (200,000 or greater), funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs flows from the FTA to the designated recipient in each area. In the Valley region, the designated recipient for these funds in the McAllen metropolitan area is the LRGVDC. The Brownsville Metropolitan area is likely to have become a large urbanized area with the 2010 Census, but this has not yet been determined.
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

The following public transportation operators currently provide services in the Valley:

- City of Brownsville - Brownsville Metro
- LRGVDC
  - Valley Metro Harlingen
  - Valley Metro Urban System
  - Valley Metro Rural System
- Metro McAllen (formerly McAllen Express Transit)
- The Wave (Town of South Padre Island)
- Valley Transit Company
- Other intercity bus companies
- Taxi companies

To obtain information about the public transit services funded by TxDOT, the consultant team reviewed the service information available through each of their websites, requested FY 2010 system data, and met with managers to discuss perceived needs and coordination opportunities. (The needs identified are summarized in a separate technical memorandum.) Information from other providers was obtained through their websites, online directories, and previous transportation planning studies conducted in the region.

Brownsville Metro

The City of Brownsville receives urban public transit funding and operates 15 fixed routes and ADA paratransit services within the City limits (Figure 2-1).

Most Brownsville Metro routes operate on hourly headways, timed for transfers at the Market Square Terminal at the top of the hour, Monday through Saturday, beginning 6:00 a.m. and ending 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. General public cash fares are $1.00, with reduced fares for seniors, people with disabilities, and students. Children under 6 ride free. Daily, weekly, and monthly passes are available, as well as discounted multi-ride tickets and UTB semester student passes. Transfers between routes are 25 cents.

ADA paratransit services are provided to individuals who are unable to utilize the fixed-route system due to a disability and eligibility is determined through a certification process. ADA paratransit is available during the same days and hours of service as the fixed routes, within a 3/4 of a mile radius from fixed-route alignments. The ADA paratransit fare is $1.50.
In FY 2010, Brownsville Metro operating expenses (amended budget) totaled $6.33 million, funded by FTA, local general fund, fares, TxDOT, and other sources. The 2011 budget for the Brownsville Metro is $4.94 million.

Brownsville Metro currently operates a fleet of 25 fixed route busses and 11 paratransit vans. In FY 2010 (October 1-September 30), Brownsville Metro provided nearly 1.5 million passengers. Additional service statistics are summarized in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: FY 2010 Service Statistics for Brownsville Metro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Component</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Miles</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Hours</th>
<th>Passenger Trips</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Route</td>
<td>753,349</td>
<td>63,913</td>
<td>1,471,448</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand Response</td>
<td>171,502</td>
<td>13,748</td>
<td>36,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>924,851</td>
<td>77,661</td>
<td>1,507,979</td>
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LRGVDC (Valley Metro)


Valley Metro currently operates 11 flexible fixed-routes and 2 demand-response services, and serves the following communities (Figure 2-2):

- In Hidalgo County: Alamo, Alton, Donna, Edcouch, Elsa, Edinburg, Hargill, La Blanca, La Joya, Mercedes, Mission, Palmhurst, Palmview, Pharr, San Carlos, San Juan, Sullivan City, and Weslaco. The main transfer hub for Valley Metro’s Hidalgo County routes is the McAllen Central Station in downtown McAllen.
- In Cameron County: Brownsville, Harlingen, La Feria, La Paloma, Olmito, Port Isabel, Primera, San Benito, and Santa Rosa. The main transfer hub for Valley Metro’s Cameron County routes is Brownsville Market Square in downtown Brownsville.

- In Willacy County: Curb-to-curb demand-response service.

Table 2-3 presents the general operating hours and coverage area of each route:

**Table 2-3: Valley Metro Routes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route and Service Area</th>
<th>Type of Route</th>
<th>Days of Operation</th>
<th>Hours and Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Route 10 - Edinburg – McAllen</td>
<td>fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>6:45 a.m. – 5:40 p.m. 4 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 11 - Hargill - Edinburg</td>
<td>Demand-response</td>
<td>Weds</td>
<td>6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 12 - Edcouch/ Elsa – Edinburg</td>
<td>Demand-response</td>
<td>Mon, Wed, Fri</td>
<td>6:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 20 - Mission - McAllen</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>7:45 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. 4 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 21 - Sullivan City – Mission</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon, Wed, Fri</td>
<td>7:40 a.m. – 4:37 p.m. 2 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 30 - Pharr - San Juan – McAllen</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>6:45 a.m. – 6:15 p.m. 4 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 31 - Business 83 (Mercedes to McAllen)</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>7:45 a.m. – 4:5 p.m. 4 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 40 - Harlingen Medical</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>6:30 a.m. – 6:20 p.m. 10 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 41 - Harlingen Retail</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>6:30 a.m. – 6:20 p.m. 10 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 42 - San Benito – Harlingen</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>6:35 a.m. – 5:10 p.m. 7 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 43 - San Benito – Brownsville</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon, Wed, Fri</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. 4 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 44 - La Feria / Santa Rosa / Primera</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>6:30 a.m. – 5:10 p.m. 8 trips per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 50 (Port Isabel / Laguna Heights)</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>5:40 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Valley Metro’s one-way general public cash fare is 1.50 ($1.00 for Route 11), with reduced fares for seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans. Children under 7 and students with ID from the University of Texas-Pan American or Texas State Technical College-Harlingen ride free, and transfers between routes are free. Twenty-ride passes are also available at a discounted rate of $1 per trip.

In FY 2010, LRGVDC provided 117,409 one-way passenger trips and 841,604 vehicle miles of service. Additional service statistics are summarized in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4: FY 2010 Service Statistics for Valley Metro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Component</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Miles</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Hours</th>
<th>Passenger Trips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Route</td>
<td>729,939</td>
<td>34,698</td>
<td>88,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand Response</td>
<td>111,665</td>
<td>6,556</td>
<td>28,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>841,604</td>
<td>41,254</td>
<td>117,409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LRGVDC currently operates a fleet of 24 vehicles, 20 of which are used in flexible fixed route operations and four which are demand-response vehicles. The agency’s FY 2011 transit budget is $2,243,064. This year’s budget reflects a significant decrease from FY 2010 operations, which totaled $3,032,713. FY 2010 funding sources included FTA Section 5307 and 5316, Federal HHS funds, state and local government, and passenger fares. State funding provided approximately 38% of the LRGVDC’s FY 2010 transit budget.

Metro McAllen

The City of McAllen provides the Metro McAllen transit system (recently renamed from McAllen Express Transit), which operates throughout the city (Figure 2-3). Presently, the seven fixed routes in the system operate on hourly headways, Monday through Saturday 6:00 a.m. to approximately 7:00 p.m. All routes are timed for transfers at Central Station / La Central in downtown McAllen (1500 W. Highway 83). The City of McAllen also provides ADA complementary paratransit services for persons with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route service.

Metro McAllen intends to increase bus service hours to 11:00 pm from Monday through Saturday in the near future. This increase will provide service which more adequately reflects the hours of operation for the most frequented destinations such as La Plaza Mall, hotels, hospitals, retail centers, UTPA’s McAllen Campus, and South Texas College. Additionally, Metro McAllen will provide bus service on Sundays from 8:00 am through 8:00 pm. Sunday service will enhance bus patrons’ flexibility to meet...
scheduling demands of current employers and available jobs; and provide access to religious and recreational activities.

Figure 2-3: McAllen System Map
General public cash fares on the McAllen fixed routes are $1.00, with reduced fares for seniors, persons with disabilities, and students. Children 6 years of age and under ride free. Transfers between routes are free.

Metro McAllen’s fleet includes one paratransit vehicle and 13 actively used fixed-route vehicles (mostly low-floor heavy-duty transit coaches). Eight older vehicles, titled to LRGVDC, are also included in the fleet inventory, but are no longer in use due to major mechanical problems; these vehicles will be disposed of once they meet useful life criteria. A ninth LRGVDC vehicle has attained its useful life and is planned for disposition.

In FY 2010, the City of McAllen provided a total of 426,593 one-way passenger trips and 373,596 revenue vehicle miles. Additional service statistics are summarized in Table 2-5.

Table 2-5: FY 2010 Service Statistics for Metro McAllen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Component</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Miles</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Hours</th>
<th>Passenger Trips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed-Route</td>
<td>333,807</td>
<td>23,698</td>
<td>419,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paratransit</td>
<td>39,789</td>
<td>2,526</td>
<td>6,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>373,596</td>
<td>26,224</td>
<td>426,593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrative, operating, and maintenance expenses for Metro McAllen services totaled $1,525,015 in FY 2010, funded by FTA, TxDOT, fares, and development corporation funding.

In addition, the City of McAllen’s FY 2010 administrative, operating and maintenance expenses for Central Station / La Central totaled $1,370,768, funded by FTA, bus company rental, concessions rental, public telephone revenue, and development corporation funding. Central Station is a 22,000 square foot facility that serves as a regional transportation hub for bus travel in the Rio Grande Valley and in the Texas border area. In addition, the station is the central transfer point for local transit service. Central Station is equipped with 14 bus bays, a 250-seat lobby, 14 ticket counters for bus lines, a restaurant, a news shop, bathrooms, vending machines, water fountains, storage space, and administrative offices. More than 75,000 people depart from Central Station each month, with approximately 40,400 of these riders boarding the local bus service.
The Wave (Town of South Padre Island)

The Town of South Padre Island operates The Wave, a fixed-route public transit system that serves the City of South Padre Island and Port Isabel with a fleet of ten accessible small buses. The two routes of this fare-free system operate daily from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on 30-minute headways (Figure 2-4). There is service for persons with disabilities. The Town of South Padre Island the WAVE does advertise services for people with disabilities.

Figure 2-4: Wave System Map
The Wave is funded by the Section 5311 and 5310 programs, with local match from the City of South Padre Island’s Convention and Visitor’s Bureau Hotel / Motel sales tax revenue. The total operating, maintenance, and administrative expenses for FY 2010 were $666,297. In FY 2010, The Wave provided 334,654 one-way passenger trips, 253,077 vehicle miles of service, and 13,332 vehicle hours. During the peak season, the Wave carries almost 5,000 trips per day.

Valley Transit Company (VTC)

VTC, a subsidiary of Greyhound Lines, serves South Central Texas and Northern Mexico with intercity, charter, tour, airport shuttle, and transit operations, as well as express package delivery. VTC’s scheduled intercity bus services are part of the Greyhound network. Three routes serve the Valley:

- Table 490, San Antonio – Brownsville – Matamoros, stops in Edinburg, McAllen, Donna, Weslaco, Harlingen, and Brownsville, with seven round trips per day (but only a subset of these stations served on each trip).

- Table 498, Laredo – McAllen – Harlingen - Brownsville – Matamoros, stops in Mission, McAllen, Weslaco, Harlingen, and Brownsville with over 20-round trips per day (but only a subset of these stations served on each trip).

- Table 499, Reynosa – McAllen – Houston and Matamoros – Brownsville – Houston, stops in Brownsville, Harlingen, Edinburg, McAllen, and Raymondville, with ten-round trips per day (but only a subset of these stations served on each trip).

Valley Transit is a TxDOT/FTA Section 5311(f) subrecipient.

Other Intercity Bus Companies

The following operators stop at the McAllen Downtown Terminal:

- Americanos - Provides service throughout Texas and throughout the Eastern United States with daily connections into Mexico via its affiliates. (Part of Greyhound Mexico)

- Omnibus de Mexico - Provides service throughout Texas and throughout the Eastern United States with daily connection in Mexico via El Faisan.
- Tornado Bus Company - Provides service throughout Texas and the Eastern United States with daily connections into Mexico via Sistema Estrella Blanca bus lines.

- Grupo Senda and Noreste – Provides service from Central Station to northern states in Mexico

- Transpais – Provides service throughout Northern Mexico with connecting service into central Mexico.

- Lineas Panamericanas de lujo – Provides service to Reynosa and Monterrey, Mexico with daily connection to other areas in Mexico.

- El Expreso – Provides service to Houston; Dallas; Plant City, Florida; Raleigh, North Carolina; Chicago, Illinois; and Atlanta, Georgia.

**Taxi Companies**

A total of 80 taxi companies were identified in the Valley, as listed in Table 2-6.

**CLIENT-FOCUSED SERVICES**

This section inventories those transportation services that are limited to clients of human services, residents of particular communities, or specific demographic groups (based on age, for example). Table 2-7 provides an overview of each of the client-focused transportation services identified in the Valley.

To obtain information about these transportation services, the consultant team sent a survey (Appendix A) to each provider (as identified in previous studies and through TxDOT and the RTAP). The survey requested information about current transportation services as well as perceived needs and coordination opportunities. (The needs identified are summarized in a separate technical memorandum.) Also, interviews were conducted with several key agencies, including Cameron Workforce Solutions, Texas Health and Human Service Commission (HHSC), Tropical Texas Behavioral Health Services, and several agencies that do not provide client transportation.

Additional information was obtained through their websites, online directories, and previous transportation planning studies conducted in the region, including the 2009 Texas Transit Institute inventory.
### Table 2-6: Taxi Companies in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Based in</th>
<th>Taxi Company</th>
<th>Based in</th>
<th>Taxi Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>A-Aba Fiesta Taxis</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Checker Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>ABC Taxi Cabs</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Cobra Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>American Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Delta Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Balli Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Eagle Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Bell's Taxi &amp; Limousine Service</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Ernies Taxicab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Brownsville Cab</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>International Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>City Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Javi’s Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>GC Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Javi’s Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Imperial Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Joe Bell Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Longoria's Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Mancias Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Red Top Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>McAllen Cab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Rio Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>McAllen Cab &amp; City Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Valley Taxi Cabs</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Mexico Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Yellow Express Taxi Cab Inc.</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Palma’s Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>McAllen Limo Service</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Red Top Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>AA Limousine Service</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Shadow Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>AAA Taxi Company</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Valdez Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>Edinburg Limo Service</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Valley Taxi Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>Taxi Valdez</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Yellow Cab</td>
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<td>Harlingen</td>
<td>Airport Taxi</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Yellow Checker Cab Company</td>
</tr>
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<td>Harlingen</td>
<td>City Cab</td>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>A-I Taxi</td>
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<td>Harlingen</td>
<td>Guerra’s Taxi Cab</td>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Yellow Cab</td>
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<td>Harlingen Taxi Cab</td>
<td>Pharr</td>
<td>Blue Cab</td>
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<tr>
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<td>South West Taxi Cab</td>
<td>Pharr</td>
<td>City Taxi</td>
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<td>Yellow Cab</td>
<td>Port Isabel</td>
<td>A Taxi</td>
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<td>Franz Taxi</td>
<td>Port Isabel</td>
<td>Port Isabel Taxi</td>
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<td>Palma’s Taxi</td>
<td>San Benito</td>
<td>Champion Taxi</td>
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<td>Sig Transit Services</td>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>Ace Taxi</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Vip Luxury Limousine Services</td>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>Taxi A-Ok-Pharr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laguna Heights</td>
<td>A Taxi</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>A Cabs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>AAA Taxi Service</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>A Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>AB Taxi Cab</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>A-I Limousine &amp; Sedans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Airport Taxi</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>Airport Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>All Valley Limousine &amp; Sedan</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>B B’s Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Amaa Taxi Service</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>JJ Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>American Border Cab</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>Padre Cab Co</td>
</tr>
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<td>McAllen</td>
<td>American Taxi</td>
<td>South Padre Island</td>
<td>Ride In Padre</td>
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<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>American Yellow Checker Cab</td>
<td>Weslaco</td>
<td>City Cab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Blue Cab</td>
<td>Weslaco</td>
<td>JAC Taxi Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Checker Cab Company</td>
<td>Weslaco</td>
<td>St Michael’s Cab Co</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization Name</td>
<td>Primary Services Provided by the Organization</td>
<td>Approach to Client Transportation Assistance</td>
<td>Characteristics of Clients Who Can Use Transportation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amigos Del Valle</td>
<td>Senior services, affordable housing, home-delivered meals</td>
<td>operate agency vehicles</td>
<td>senior center, medical appts., shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Hidalgo</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>seniors, people with disabilities, people needing mental health services, general public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Port Isabel</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center</td>
<td>Senior services</td>
<td>operate agency vehicles</td>
<td>medical, social/recreational, nutritional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Council of South Texas (Rainbow Lines)</td>
<td>Comprehensive human services network with a rural public transportation system</td>
<td>contracted transportation</td>
<td>medical, social/recreational, nutritional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo County Head Start Program</td>
<td>Early childhood education &amp; social services</td>
<td>operate agency vehicles</td>
<td>pre-school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeFleur Transportation</td>
<td>contracted transportation</td>
<td>operate agency vehicles</td>
<td>medical</td>
</tr>
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<td>LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging (AAoA)</td>
<td>Senior services</td>
<td>contracts for services from CACST, LeFleur and South Texas Transportation Services</td>
<td>medical, shopping</td>
</tr>
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<td>Southwest Key Program / La Esperanza Home for Boys</td>
<td>Residential alternative youth treatment</td>
<td>operate agency vehicles</td>
<td>medical, educational, social/recreational, nutritional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tropical Texas Behavioral Health</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>operate agency vehicles, staff use own vehicles, purchase bus rides for clients</td>
<td>people of all ages needing mental health services, young children and adults with developmental disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>TxDOT Medicaid Program</td>
<td>Funding for Medicaid services and transportation</td>
<td>contracts with transportation providers (LeFleur)</td>
<td>economically disadvantaged</td>
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<td>Workforce Solutions Cameron</td>
<td>Workforce development</td>
<td>provide gas cards to participating program customers</td>
<td>agency programs, caseworkers appts., education/training, employment, medical, shopping, social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alegras Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alpha I Adult Day Care Center</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2-7: Client-Focused Transportation Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Primary Services Provided by the Organization</th>
<th>Approach to Client Transportation Assistance</th>
<th>Characteristics of Clients Who Can Use Transportation Services</th>
<th>Trip Purposes Served</th>
<th>Transportation Service Area</th>
<th>Service Hours</th>
<th>Number of vehicles in fleet</th>
<th>Wheelchair accessible vehicles</th>
<th>Passenger Trips Provided in 2010</th>
<th>Funding Sources for Transportation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpine Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Texas Dept of Aging &amp; Disability Services (part of total daily client rate; no extra for transportation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amigos Del Progreso Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Progreso</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amor Y Paz Adult Day Care Center</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Edinburg</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Angeles Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Mission</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carino Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
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<td>Casa del Sol Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro de Amistad Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Pharr</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro de Buena Vida Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Mission</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Circle of Friends Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in San Benito</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>De Colores Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Edinburg</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dias Felices Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Alamo</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulce Hogar Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Mundo Feliz Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiesta Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends &amp; Neighbors Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Edinburg</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy Hearts Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angelitos Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Brownsville</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi Destino Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Harlingen</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunglo Adult Day Care</td>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>based in Harlingen</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Information is not available because agency did not return a survey.
Texas Medical Transportation Program (MTP) / LeFleur Transportation

The MTP is part of the HHSC. This program funds transportation services to non-emergency medical appointments to Medicaid recipients only. It is far and away the largest human service transportation program in the state, as it is about ten times the size of all other human service transportation programs in the state combined. Details about Medicaid transportation funding levels or service statistics in the Valley were not made available for this study, since HHSC representatives indicated that they were only able to provide very general information, and their contract transportation provider was unresponsive to requests for an interview or information.

LeFleur Transportation is the contracted provider of MTP program services in MTP transportation service areas 19, 20, and 21, an 18-county region. MTP service area 21 is comprised of the three counties in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. LeFleur did not participate in a scheduled interview, did not return repeated follow-up calls, and did not return a survey. According to their website, LeFleur Transportation is one of the largest non-emergency medical transportation providers in the country, operating a fleet of 400 vehicles and carrying more than 1 million passenger trips per year nationwide.

In response to the survey request, a representative of HHSC indicated that the agency can only provide general information such as processes, and that cost information would need to be requested through an Open Records request. An interview was conducted with another HHSC representative during which general transportation needs were discussed. This representative indicated that program funds are allocated per case, so it is not possible to allocate a proportion of overall program funds to address transportation needs.

According to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website, HHSC MTP payments to LeFleur totaled $34,223,388 in FY 2010 for service in all 18 counties in LeFleur’s MTP coverage area.

Though the amount of MTP funding in the Valley in FY 2010 is not available, in a 2004 statewide inventory of human service transportation compiled by KFH Group for TxDOT identified approximately $95 million for Medicaid transportation and approximately $5 million for other funding sources for human service transportation combined. Based upon this statewide study and recent regional studies the consultant team has conducted in other regions of Texas, the MTP is far and away the largest human service transportation program in the Valley and the state.
Amigos Del Valle

Amigos Del Valle, Inc., located in Mission, is a private non-profit organization that provides senior services, affordable housing services, and home-delivered meals to seniors in the Rio Grande Valley. According to their website, they operate a fleet of 16 mini-buses and five vans for demand-responsive transportation. The agency’s catchment area includes Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. They receive funding from the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging.

City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center

The City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center provides transportation services to and from the center, doctor appointments, and shopping, according to the city’s website (a survey was not returned).

Community Action Council of South Texas (CACST) (Rainbow Lines)

The CACST operates a rural public transportation system called the Rainbow Lines. Based in Rio Grande City in Starr County, the primary service area is Starr, Duvall, Jim Hogg, and Zapata Counties, in the South Texas planning area. Destinations are served in neighboring counties (i.e., Starr County service goes to destinations in the Valley). The Rainbow Lines operate Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Fares are based on distance traveled. In FY 2010, CACST provided a total of 72,804 passenger trips, 311,982 vehicle miles, and 16,588 vehicle hours. The system is funded by Section 5311, passenger fares/donations, United Way voucher program contract revenue, and other TxDOT/FTA funding programs. CACST operates a fleet of 30 vehicles.

The LRGVDC AAA indicated that CACST is one of their transportation vendors and as such provides senior transportation in the Valley to medical appointments and shopping.

Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Hidalgo County Head Start Program is a comprehensive child development program which serves economically challenged children ages 3-5 and their families throughout Hidalgo County. The agency operates 36 vehicles 6:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. In FY 2010, a total of 12,639 passenger trips were provided. The annual budget for Hidalgo County Head Start Program’s transportation program is approximately $1 million, funded entirely by Head Start funds.
LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging

The LRGVDC AAA provides funding to senior centers in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. LRGVDC receives Section 5310 funding from TxDOT as well as funding for public transportation services.

Currently, the AAA uses three vendors to provide transportation services for medical visits and shopping: LeFleur Transportation, South Texas Transportation Services, and CACST. These vendors offer transportation for medical visits and shopping. We have been unable to find information on South Texas Transportation Services.

Amigos Del Valley, described earlier, until recently was a contracted provider for transportation to the AAA, but we understand this is no longer the case.

LRGVDC AAA case managers work with each individual client to determine the kind of transportation necessary and develop a transportation plan for the client.

Mi Destino Adult Day Care

Mi Destino Adult Day Care, located in La Feria, operates eight vehicles to transport adult day care clients to and from agency programs, medical appointments, nutrition programs, religious activities, shopping, social activities, and therapy appointments. Services are available Monday to Friday 6:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. Mi Destino’s transportation services are funded as part of the standard reimbursement per client from the Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services and thus resources for transportation are limited.

Southwest Key Program / La Esperanza Home for Boys

Southwest Key Program in Brownsville receives Section 5310 funding from TxDOT. La Esperanza Home for Boys, a program of Southwest Key Program located in Combes, is an alternative treatment facility for boys placed in the juvenile justice system. La Esperanza Home for Boys was included in the 2009 Texas Transit Inventory. At that time they operated two accessible minibuses to transport boys age 10-17 to medical, educational, social/recreational, nutritional, and other activities.

Tropical Texas Behavioral Health

Tropical Texas Behavioral Health provides mental health services and services for young children and adults with developmental disabilities in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. They operate a fleet of approximately 50 vehicles and reimburse staff at the US General Services Administration applicable rates for use of their personal...
vehicles to transport clients. Trip purposes served include agency programs, caseworker appointments, education/training, employment, medical, shopping, and social. Tropical Texas Behavioral Health also purchases bus passes and tickets for clients and provide travel training so that clients can become comfortable in riding the bus.

**Port Isabel Senior Center**

The Port Isabel Senior Center provides transportation for its clients within the City of Port Isabel. The organization has one vehicle that is equipped with a wheelchair lift and uses it to take clients to medical appointments, shopping, to meals, and to agency events. The agency made 7,449 one way passenger trips and logged 1,008 miles and 5,274 miles on their vehicle in 2010. The Port Isabel Senior Center had $62,037 budgeted for transportation in 2010.

**Workforce Solutions Cameron**

Workforce Solutions Cameron provides gas cards to participating program customers in Cameron County for their use in driving to job training, job search activities, job interviews, and employment. This program is funded by the Texas Workforce Commission ($273,028 in FY 2010 and budgeted for 2011, with decreases anticipated in future years).

**Other Adult Day Care Centers**

There are numerous adult day care centers in the Valley, providing day care to seniors and adults with disabilities. Approximately 20 are believed to provide client transportation services based upon information in previous studies. However, only one adult day care center, Mi Destino Adult Day Care, returned a survey and is described above. The following centers did not respond to survey requests:

- Alegros Adult Day Care
- Alpha I Adult Day Care Center
- Alpine Adult Day Care
- Amigos Del Progreso Adult Day Care
- Amor Y Paz Adult Day Care Center
- Angeles Adult Day Care
- Carino Adult Day Care
- Casa del Sol Adult Day Care
- Centro de Amistad Adult Day Care
- Centro de Buena Vida Adult Day Care
- Circle of Friends Adult Day Care
• De Colores Adult Day Care
• Dias Felices Adult Day Care
• Dulce Hogar Adult Day Care
• El Mundo Feliz Adult Day Care
• Fiesta Adult Day Care
• Friends & Neighbors Adult Day Care
• Happy Hearts Adult Day Care
• Los Angelitos Adult Day Care
• Sunglo Adult Day Care
APPENDIX A

Human Service Agency Transportation Survey
Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan

Human Service Agency Transportation Survey

The KFH Group is assisting the Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Transit Advisory Panel in updating the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan for the Lower Rio Grande Valley region.

To ensure that your agency’s client transportation needs and resources are accurately reflected in the Plan, please return responses to these questions by June 21 to Bennett Powell of the KFH Group at bpowell@kfhgroup.com, fax: 512-372-8307, or mail to KFH Group, 3409 Executive Center Drive, Suite 209, Austin, Texas 78731.

If you would prefer to respond by telephone, please contact Mr. Powell at bpowell@kfhgroup.com or 512-372-8807 to schedule an interview.

Name of Organization: ____________________________________________________________

Name of Individual Completing Survey: ____________________________________________

Title: _______________________________________________________________________

Phone: _______________________________ Email: ________________________________

1. **Does your organization assist clients with transportation?**

   ___ yes – please check all that apply:
   __ We operate vehicles owned or leased by our organization
   __ Staff members transport clients in their personal vehicles
   __ We arrange for volunteers who transport clients in their personal vehicles
   __ We contract for transportation services operated by another organization
   __ We purchase bus passes, tickets, or vouchers for clients
   __ We reimburse clients for their transportation expenses
   __ Provide funding to local program sites that provide or arrange for client transportation
   __ Provide vehicles to another organization that operates them
   __ Other / please specify: ________________________________

   ___ no – skip to question 11

2. **Please describe the transportation services you provide to clients.**
a. When is the service available (days and hours)?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

b. What geographic area and regular destinations are served?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

3. **What trip purposes are served?** Please check all that apply.
   
   _ _ Agency programs at our facility
   _ _ Caseworker appointments
   _ _ Education / Job training
   _ _ Employment
   _ _ Medical appointments
   _ _ Nutrition/congregate meals
   _ _ Religious
   _ _ Shopping
   _ _ Social
   _ _ Other / please specify: ____________________________

4. **What groups are eligible to use your transportation services?**
   
   _ _ Seniors / minimum age: ______ years
   _ _ People with disabilities
   _ _ People needing mental health services
   _ _ Economically disadvantaged people
   _ _ Children / age range: ______ years
   _ _ Only participants in certain programs / please specify:
       ____________________________________________________________
   _ _ Other / please specify: ____________________________

5. **Do you have a driver training program?**
   
   _ _ no
   _ _ yes
   If yes, how many hours of training do new hires generally receive? _____
6. If your agency owns or lease vehicles used to provide client transportation services, please answer the following:

   a. How many vehicles do you operate? ___

   b. How many are equipped with a wheelchair lift or ramp? ___

   c. Who maintains them?
      __ Our organization
      __ Another organization / please specify: ______________________

   d. Are there usually unused seats on your regular routes?
      __ no
      __ yes

   e. Are there any times of the day when vehicles are usually not in use?
      __ no
      __ yes / please indicate: __

7. If your organization contracts or purchases from (an)other transportation provider(s), please describe these services.

   a. What organization(s) provides this service? ______________

   b. Under what type of arrangement is this service provided? (e.g., contract for services which are invoiced, memorandum of understanding)
      __________________________________________________________

   c. Do you own any of the vehicles operated by this organization?
      __ yes ___ no

8. How much client transportation service did your organization provide or fund in FY 2010?
   Please complete the following table as best you can with available data. If actual data are unavailable, even estimations would be helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provided in FY 2010</th>
<th>Passenger Trips</th>
<th>Vehicle Miles</th>
<th>Vehicle Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchased/Reimbursed for in FY 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. **What is your organization’s client transportation budget?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Category</th>
<th>Actual Cost in FY 2010</th>
<th>Budgeted for FY 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased Transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursed Staff / Volunteers for Mileage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Annual Cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. **What funding sources support your organization’s client transportation services?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Category</th>
<th>Received in FY 2010</th>
<th>Budgeted for FY 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TxDOT/FTA Section 5310-Elderly and Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TxDOT/FTA Section 5316-Job Access &amp; Reverse Commute (JARC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TxDOT/FTA Section 5317 - New Freedom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Funding from TxDOT: (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Department of Family and Protective Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Department of State Health Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Education Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Health and Human Services Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Workforce Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Department of Veterans Affairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Federal/State funding sources: (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Government: (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Government: (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local School District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger Fares / Donations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Service Client Fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind Donations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Contract Revenue: (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. **Are there unmet needs for public or specialized transportation in your service area?** For each unmet need, specify geographic area, service days and hours, direction of travel, particular groups of people (e.g., your agency’s clients or members of the general public), types of trips (e.g., medical), fare concerns, and any other details you feel are important.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

12. **What do you think would be the best way to meet these needs?** (E.g., expand your agency’s transportation program, expand public transit services, better coordinate services with other human service agencies)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

13. **Do your clients use public transit services?**

   ___ no
   ___ unknown
   ___ yes - if so, do you provide assistance in learning to ride the bus?
   ___ no ___ yes

14. **Do you anticipate any changes to the levels of funding for your client transportation services in the next few years?** Please elaborate.

   ___ no
   ___ unknown
   ___ yes – please describe: __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

15. **Do you coordinate with other human service agencies or public transit providers in the provision or management of client transportation services?** (e.g., vehicle sharing, driver training, travel training, maintenance, etc.)

   ___ no
   ___ yes – please describe: __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
16. Are you aware of opportunities for additional coordination among public transit and/or human services transportation services that would result in improvements in efficiency or effectiveness of service operations? Please indicate areas for coordinating service operation, such as vehicle sharing, ridesharing, combining routes and services, and/or shared scheduling/dispatching.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

17. Are there opportunities for additional coordination of organizational functions that would result in improvements in efficiency or effectiveness of administrative and support functions? Please indicate areas for coordinating management, marketing, training, maintenance, purchasing, or other support functions.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

18. Are there issues or barriers to coordination that present a challenge to any of the opportunities discussed under the previous two questions? What is the history of working to address these issues or barriers?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

19. Additional comments:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your time and efforts.
Appendix 3

Technical Memorandum No. 3:
Assessment of Transportation Needs
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

“Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan”

Technical Memorandum No. 3: Assessment of Transportation Needs

October 2011
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V. Summary of Needs, Inefficiencies, and Service Gaps .................................... 3-36
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Technical Memorandum No. 3:
Assessment of Transportation Needs

An integral part of the planning process includes a demographic review and an assessment of needs/demand for service. This technical memorandum presents a comprehensive assessment of the public’s unmet transportation needs and efficiencies and inefficiencies in the delivery of transportation services for the Lower Rio Grande region. This includes quantitative analysis of demographic data as well as identification of unmet needs through discussions with service providers and other community stakeholders, focus groups, public meetings, and a review of needs identified in previous coordinated planning efforts.

The assessment of transportation needs is detailed through the following sections:

I. **Description of the Geographic Area** – summarizes the geographic boundaries of the study area, its relationship to planning regions and other types of regions, and provides a brief introduction to the demography and geography of each county.

II. **Regional Demographic Profile** – reviews data available from the U.S. Census and other sources to identify areas where the need is greatest for public and specialized transportation services.

III. **Major Travel Origins, Destinations, and Travel Corridors** – identifies major travel origins and destinations through the region and reviews current commuter travel patterns.

IV. **Health and Human Service (HHS) and Workforce Agency Needs** – describes the transportation needs and gaps identified through interviews with and surveys from the human service providers in the region.
V. **Summary of Needs, Inefficiencies, and Service Gaps** - compiles and analyzes the needs identified through all sources and summarizes service needs, inefficiencies, and gaps.

VI. **Summary of Public Outreach Round One** - summarizes the public meeting conducted focusing on unmet needs and potential strategies.

I. **DESCRIPTION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA**

The three-county area of the Lower Rio Grande region consists of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties, six cities over 50,000 populations, and 30 cities of over 4,000 population. Table 3-1 shows a brief profile of communities over 4,000 in population. The service area is quite diverse with suburbs/exurbs, and very rural areas in the remaining study area. The largest Cities, Brownsville and McAllen, are each at the far end of the service area. The region’s population has reached over one million according to the 2010 Census. The region is the southernmost region in the State of Texas and borders Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>175,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>129,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>77,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>77,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharr</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>70,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlingen</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>64,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weslaco</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>35,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Juan</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>33,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Benito</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>24,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamo</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>18,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>15,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercedes</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>15,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alton</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>12,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Homa</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>11,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymondville</td>
<td>Willacy</td>
<td>11,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>11,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Feria</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>7,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron Park</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>6,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mila Doce</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>6,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsa</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>5,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmview South</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>5,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Fresnos</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>5,542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physically, the area has a long urbanized corridor of travel along US Highway 83 which links the two largest Cities (McAllen and Brownsville) with the urbanized portion of Hidalgo County. The vast majority of the population resides in this corridor. Outside the corridor, the major population centers include Port Isabel, South Padre Island, and Raymondville.

Figure 3-1 displays the study area in more detail. The study area encompasses 3,643 square miles and has a population of 1,203,123 (2010 Census), which is an overall population density of 330 persons per square mile. Hidalgo County has a density of almost 500 persons per square mile. Willacy County, the rural county, has a density of only 28 people per square mile, calling for different types of solutions to transit needs. From 2000 to 2010, the population of the service area had grown at a rate of 30%, making it one of the fastest growing regions in Texas.

Brief profiles are provided on each county in the region. Summary population data is provided in Table 3-2 (total county population and change in the past decade)

Table 3-2: County Population Growth, 2000 – 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>335,227</td>
<td>406,220</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1,276</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>569,463</td>
<td>774,769</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>1,583</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willacy</td>
<td>20,082</td>
<td>22,134</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>924,772</td>
<td>1,203,123</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3,643</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cameron County

Cameron County is the southernmost county in the State of Texas. Its largest city and county seat is Brownsville with a population of 175,023 according to the 2010 Census. Cameron County is bordered by Hidalgo and Willacy Counties as well as Mexico to the south and the Gulf of Mexico to the east. South Padre Island is a barrier island at the far eastern edge of the county, and is a popular tourist destination. The cities of Reynosa and Matamoros are directly adjacent to Cameron County across the U.S-Mexico border. These cities contribute many workers and visitors to the county every year. Port Isabel is a port city to the east of Brownsville and a major industrial hub of the county. The University of Texas Brownsville is a major employer in Cameron County along with Valley Baptist Health Systems. Other major industries include port facilities, offshore marine and automotive safety testing, and manufacturing.
Hidalgo County

Adjacent to the west of Cameron County is Hidalgo County, the region’s most populated county. The largest city is McAllen, located about five miles north of the Mexican border. Edinburg is the county seat and is located approximately six miles north of McAllen. The county is bordered by Mexico and Cameron, Willacy, Brooks, Starr, and Kenedy Counties. Hidalgo County is one of the fastest growing counties in Texas with a 36% increase in population over the last ten years. Edinburg is home to the University of Texas Pan Am which is a major employer for the region. Other major businesses include retail, medical, and information technology software distribution and government.

Willacy County

Willacy County is the smallest and northernmost county in the Lower Rio Grande region. Its largest city and county seat is Raymondville, with a population of 9,733 located in the north central part of the county on U.S. Highway 77, and the Union Pacific Railroad. Other communities in the county are the incorporated towns of Lyford and San Perlita and the unincorporated towns of Lasara, Los Coyotes, Porfirio, Port Mansfield, Santa Monica, Sebastian, and Willamar. Willacy County is bordered by Cameron, Hidalgo, and Kenedy County as well as the Gulf of Mexico to the east.

II. REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A key component of the needs assessment involves identifying where people live who are most likely to need public and specialized transportation services. A first step is identifying where people are concentrated across the region, specifically population density in small geographic areas.

Next, assessment of relative need for transportation services across the region is accomplished through an analysis of demographics indicative of transportation needs to determine where people live who are likely to need mobility options beyond a personal automobile. This needs analysis focuses on groups that are most likely to have limited mobility options due to age, disability, limited financial resources, and/or lack of access to an automobile.

Population Density

Population density is an important indicator of how rural or urban an area is, which in turn affects the types of transportation that may be most viable. While fixed-route transit is more practical and successful in areas with 1,000 or more persons per
square mile, other scheduled or demand-response transportation services are typically a better fit for areas with lower population densities. Major tourist destinations such as South Padre Island and other areas with high concentrations of destinations are notable exceptions to this guideline and can often best be served by fixed-route transit.

Figure 3-2 displays the population density of Census Block Groups across the region. As illustrated in this map, the highest density areas across the region (8,000 or more persons per square mile) include Brownsville, McAllen, and Harlingen and areas along Highway 83/77 between Brownsville and Harlingen, and along the Highway 83 corridor in Hidalgo County. Communities containing block groups with densities between 2,000 and 6,000 persons per square mile include the McAllen and Brownsville urbanized areas, and geographically small block groups where fixed-route may not be feasible (for example, there is a small block group in Raymondville that has a high density, but a low total population, which results in a high density that is not appropriate for fixed-route). The northern part of the region has a very low population density.

Demographic Needs Analysis

This analysis identifies where concentrations of people who are potentially dependent on public and specialized transportation services (henceforth referred to more briefly as “transit dependent”) to meet mobility needs (as an alternative to the private automobile). People who are potentially transit dependent are those segments of the population that, because of demographic characteristics such as age, disability, income, or automobile availability, may be less able to drive than the general population. These demographic groups are more likely to be customers of public and specialized transportation services, and generally have greater need for such services to access basic life needs such as grocery shopping, medical services, and employment.

- **People Living Below the Poverty Level** – People with limited economic means generally have the fewest transportation options (since while other groups may be unable to drive themselves, they may still be able to afford other options).

- **People with Disabilities** – People with disabilities are more likely to need transportation services as many disabilities affect the ability to operate a vehicle, and may also limit such options as walking or bicycling. This demographic group is more likely to need specialized transportation services than the general population.
FIGURE 3-2:
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN
POPULATION DENSITY (PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE)

Persons Per Square Mile

- 0 - 2,000
- 2,000 - 4,000
- 4,000 - 6,000
- 6,000 - 8,000
- 8,000 +

Prepared by: KFH Group
Prepared for: LRGVDC

Data Source: 2000 Census and American Community Survey 2009 5 Year Summary File
- **Elderly People** – Older people are more likely to need transportation services as the effects of aging can result in affecting the ability to operate a vehicle, and may also limit such options as walking or bicycling. Some segments of this demographic group are also more likely to need specialized transportation services.

- **Youth Population** - Teenagers under the driving age often have limited transportation options, especially when a family member is not present. Experience indicates that teenagers are often in need of transportation for after school activities, employment, and recreational activities.

- **Autoless Households** - Autoless households are a helpful indicator of areas that are more likely to need transportation options, because residents do not have access to a personal vehicle or cannot drive for various reasons.

It is important to note that, with the exception of youth and elderly populations, none of these groups are mutually exclusive. The needs analysis described below takes into account each of the above five categories equally.

**Methodology**

Demographic and economic characteristics of the population are key factors when highlighting the need for public transit services in a study area. The objective of the needs analysis is to identify the location of population segments that are traditionally dependent upon public transit services. The identified locations are then compared to areas with existing service in order to determine geographic gaps where transit service may be introduced or expanded. This geographically-focused assessment complements other assessments regarding level of service, service quality, and system connectivity.

**Transit Dependence Index (TDI)**

The TDI is an aggregate measure that may be used to effectively display relative concentrations of transit dependent populations within a study area. The framework for the TDI is based on the findings of a 2004 National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) report that examined the process of assessing environmental justice persons and, subsequently, produced an index to locate concentrations of low-income populations. The NCHRP report introduced an Environmental Justice Index, which the
report’s authors stated may be modified to include additional protected population factors.\(^1\)

**Data Sources**

The TDI utilizes data from the 2005-2009 ACS five-year estimates, which permit an analysis of socioeconomic characteristics at the block group level, in addition to below-poverty data and geographic information (e.g., block group boundaries) supplied by the US Census Bureau. The ACS is different from the US Census data in that it represents “period estimates,” which describe the average population and housing characteristics over the entire given time period, based on sample surveys. The 2005–2009 ACS was used for this needs analysis instead of the 2010 US Census because the ACS five-year estimates have more detailed demographic data at the block group level. An exception to the use of the ACS five-year estimates for socioeconomic characteristics is made when measuring the population of persons with disabilities, where an alteration to the question in the ACS made during the latest collection period resulted in a disruption in reporting consistency.\(^2\) Therefore, recent US Decennial Census data is used to calculate ten-year population shifts per block group, with this percent change being factored to the most-recent disabled population data that is available at the block group geography.\(^3\) Table 3-3 outlines the input categories used in the TDI index along with their corresponding table and number in the 2005-2009 ACS and US Census.

The population density within each block group is calculated and assigned a score from 0 and 4. Areas with the highest concentration of people are assigned a score of 4, while areas with the lowest concentration are assigned a score of 0. Table 3-4 outlines the scoring of the population density, which is used as a factor in the TDI model.

---


### Table 3-3: Input Categories for Transit Dependence Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Category</th>
<th>Table Source and Number</th>
<th>Table Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Density (PD)</td>
<td>ACS-B01003</td>
<td>Total Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US Census-AREALAND</td>
<td>Area in Square Miles (converted from meters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Vehicle Household (NV)</td>
<td>ACS - B25044</td>
<td>Tenure by Vehicles Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Adult Population (E)</td>
<td>ACS - B01001</td>
<td>Sex by Age (65 years &amp; over)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Population (Y)</td>
<td>ACS - B01001</td>
<td>Sex by Age (10 - 17 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Population (D)</td>
<td>US Census - P041012</td>
<td>Go-Outside-Home Disability (16-64 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US Census - P041019</td>
<td>Go-Outside-Home Disability (65 years &amp; over)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below-Poverty Population (BP)</td>
<td>ACS - B17021</td>
<td>Poverty Status of Individuals in the Past 12 Months by Living Arrangement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3-4: Population Density Scoring for Transit Dependence Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population per Square Mile</th>
<th>Population Density Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 0 and ≤ 500</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 500 and ≤ 1,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 1,000 and ≤ 2,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 2,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of persons in the five transportation dependent categories (no vehicle household, older adult, youth, disabled, and below-poverty) is compared to the calculated study area average for each category. Based upon whether the number is below or above the study area average for each category it is assigned a score. Table 3-5 describes the scoring approach for each of the five transportation dependent populations used in generating the TDI.

Table 3-5: Scoring for Transportation Dependent Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Vulnerable Persons/Households</th>
<th>NV or E or Y or D or BP Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; Study Area Average (SAA)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ SAA and &lt; 1.33 times the SAA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 1.33 times the SAA and &lt; 1.67 times the SAA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 1.67 times the SAA and &lt; 2.00 times the SAA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 2.00 times the SAA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aforementioned factors are calculated at both the selected geography of analysis (e.g., block group) and the overall study area (e.g., county or region) for comparison purposes. Once the values for all six factors are computed, the values are inserted into the TDI formula to calculate the overall index. Scores of the resulting TDI will range from 0 to 100, with a higher score indicating an area where a large number of transit dependent persons are present in an area with a high population density.

Transit Dependence Index Formula:

TDI = PD x [NV + E + Y + D + BP], where:

- PD = population per square mile
- NV = amount of vulnerability based on presence of no vehicle households
- E = amount of vulnerability based on presence of older adult population
- Y = amount of vulnerability based on presence of youth population
- D = amount of vulnerability based on presence of disabled population
- BP = amount of vulnerability based on presence of below-poverty population
**Transit Dependence Index Classification**

Upon generating the TDI score for each block group, the average TDI score for the study area is computed. Comparing the TDI score with the average TDI score for the study area, each block group is then assigned a value between 1 and 5 and classified as either very low, low, moderate, high, or very high concentration of transit needs. Table 3-6 provides an outline of the TDI classification.

**Table 3-6: Transit Dependence Index Classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TDI Score</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Needs Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; Study Area Average (SAA)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ SAA and &lt; 1.33 times the SAA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 1.33 times the SAA and &lt; 1.67 times the SAA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 1.67 times the SAA and &lt; 2.00 times the SAA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 2.00 times the SAA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary Findings on Transportation Needs**

Finally, a TDI map was developed presenting the summarized results of the analyses by density – based on a sum of the rankings across all five demographic groups - and summarized for the entire region.

**Overall Need by Density of Potentially Transit Dependent Persons.**

The summary rankings involved examining the population density of each of the five variables. Figure 3-3 presents the graphic representation of that ranking. Though the overall density of each block group heavily affects the density of potentially transit dependent persons in the study area, this measure helps determine areas of high concentrations of need, where service implementation could reach a greater number of potential customers.

The areas of highest need based on the density of the potentially transit dependent population across all five groups includes (in order of highest overall population):
FIGURE 3-3:  
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN  
TRANSIT DEPENDENT INDEX

Concentration of Transit Dependent Population

- **Very Low**
- **Low**
- **Moderate**
- **High**
- **Very High**

Data Source: 2000 Census and American Community Survey 2009 5 Year Summary File
- McAllen Urbanized Area (including Edinburg, Mission, Pharr, Alamo, Mission, Weslaco, and Mercedes)
- Brownsville Urbanized Area (including Cameron Park)
- Harlingen/San Benito
- Port Isabel
- La Feria

There are two populations that may have significant indications of transit dependency that may not be reflected in the Census are ACS data sets. The first population group is people coming from Mexico for day trip purposes such as work. Estimates from Metro Brownsville are that approximately 20% of their ridership is Mexican nationals.

The other cohort that may not be reflected in the TDI, but was identified through ridership data and interviews, is seasonal residents particularly in the Port Isabel and South Padre Island area, but also spread throughout the study area. Many in this group are retirees and use transit to access their everyday activities.

Colonias

The term "colonia," in Spanish means a community or neighborhood. The Office of the Secretary of State defines a "colonia" as a residential area along the Texas-Mexico border that may lack some of the most basic living necessities, such as potable water and sewer systems, electricity, paved roads, and safe and sanitary housing.

Agency definitions will vary due to funding requirements. The differences among its applied definitions are attributed to the varying emphases placed on its specific characteristics by government agencies and codes. Consequently, the characteristics that define a colonia differ according to the type of agency, government code or issue being addressed at any given time.

There are 1,378 in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Colonias are areas that are indicative of transit dependency. Figure 3-4 shows the location of colonias throughout the region. Interviews with human service agencies and organizations revealed that increased transit service to the colonias is an important unmet need. South Texas has more colonias than any other border state in the nation and Hidalgo County has more than any other county.
FIGURE 3-4: LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN COLONIANS

Prepared by: KFH GROUP
Prepared for: LRGVDC

Source: GrantWorks Texas, Colonias shapefiles 2009
Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) requested data on where persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) live. Also requested was information on race. Figure 3-5 and 3-6 detail where these populations reside, however the consultants do not believe that this information has any value for transit purposes. We believe that the transit dependent factors tell us what we need to know, not data on race or language skills.

III. MAJOR TRAVEL ORIGINS, DESTINATIONS, AND TRAVEL CORRIDORS

Major Trip Generators

An important part of the analysis of unmet needs is determining where people need to travel. This includes major employment centers, affordable housing complexes, shopping centers, medical centers, and educational facilities.

Major employers (with 500 or more employees at one site), were mapped in Figure 3-7. As can be seen in this map, most of the major employers are located in the urbanized areas of the region or along major highway corridors. The McAllen urbanized area has the largest number of major employers in the region. There are 23 employers that have more than 500 employees at one location within the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Table 3-7 shows a profile of the largest employers in the region with high concentrations of workers in one location.

Medical Facilities

The locations of medical facilities are shown in Figure 3-8. There are 13 hospitals or medical facilities throughout the area, with most of those located in the McAllen, Harlingen, and Brownsville vicinities.

Educational Facilities

The location of universities, colleges, vocational schools, and high schools can be seen in Figure 3-9. High schools, which are spread out to serve all areas of the county, are normally located near smaller town centers in rural areas. There are 41 high schools in the study area. Towns with more than two high schools include Brownsville (5), Pharr (4), McAllen (3), Mission (3), and Edinburg (3). There are four universities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. They are located in McAllen, Brownsville, Harlingen, and Edinburg.
FIGURE 3-5:
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN
NUMBER OF RESIDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Number of Residents with Limited English Proficiency per Census Tract

- 0 - 1,000
- 1,000 - 2,000
- 2,000 - 3,000
- 3,000 - 4,000
- 4,000 +

Source: American Community Survey, 2009 5 Year Summary File
FIGURE 3-6:
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN
NUMBER OF NON-WHITE RESIDENTS PER CENSUS TRACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Non-White Residents per Census Tract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 - 2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000 - 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 - 4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000 - 5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 2009 5 Year Summary File
FIGURE 3-7:
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN
MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Source: Texas Workforce Solutions, Employer Contact Information
Table 3-7: Major Employers in the Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Texas Pan Am</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergys Corporation</td>
<td>Data Systems/Networks</td>
<td>Pharr</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's Hospital</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knapp Medical Center</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Weslaco</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen Medical Center</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Texas College</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keppel Amfels Corporation</td>
<td>Energy/Infrastructure/Development</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Safety Systems Inc.</td>
<td>Automotive Parts &amp; Supply</td>
<td>Los Indios</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Fabricators</td>
<td>Repairing</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Texas Brownsville &amp; Texas Southmost College</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Baptist Health Systems</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Harlingen</td>
<td>1,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duda Farms Fresh Foods</td>
<td>Produce Distribution</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>500 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburg Childrens Hospital</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>501 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merkafon</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Edinburg</td>
<td>502 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart Supercenter</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>503 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart Supercenter</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Palmhurst</td>
<td>504 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart Supercenter</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Weslaco</td>
<td>505 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willacy Processing Center</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Raymondville</td>
<td>506 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Harlingen</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Harlingen</td>
<td>507 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlingen City Hall</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Harlingen</td>
<td>508 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trico Products</td>
<td>Automotive Parts &amp; Supply</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>509 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Baptist Medical Center</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>510 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Regional Medical Center</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>511 - 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart Supercenter</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>512 - 999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Affordable Housing

Another indicator of where transit may be needed is the location of affordable housing in the study area. There are 39 affordable housing complexes in the study area. There are eight in Brownsville, seven in McAllen, and four each in Edinburg, Harlingen, and Mercedes. Table 3-8 lists the affordable housing.

The locations of colonias (previously discussed and mapped in Figure 3-4) are also likely to be indicative of transit need.

Shopping

Major shopping destinations throughout the service area were identified and located. Since different types of shopping call for different levels of transportation need, the destinations were broken up into two categories:

- **Regional Retail Centers**: Including malls, shopping centers, and other regional attractors such as Sears, Wal-Mart, and Target.
- **Local Retail**: Major stand alone large grocery stores such as HEB and Albertsons that may contain a pharmacy or other services.

Figure 3-10 displays the locations of regional retail centers throughout the study area. There are 40 regional retailers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Study Area. Seven of these are in Brownsville, six are in McAllen, and three are in Harlingen. There are 35 local retailers in the study area. Seven are in Brownsville, six are in McAllen, three are in Harlingen, and the rest are scattered in towns throughout the study area.

Figures 3-7 through 3-10 displayed significant travel destinations. Just as important to the needs assessment is determining where people live who need transportation services (trip origins). Travel origins were to some extent addressed through the demographic analysis at the block group level, as well as the locations of affordable housing and the colonias.
Table 3-8: Affordable Housing Complexes of the Lower Rio Grande Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alamo Village Apts.</td>
<td>504 N 9th St</td>
<td>Alamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candlewick Town Homes</td>
<td>1155 Peredes Line Rd</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa De Amigos I</td>
<td>455 El Paso Rd</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa Del Mar Apts.</td>
<td>2575 Russell Dr</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunningham Manor</td>
<td>2835 Rockwell Dr</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Santander</td>
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<tr>
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<td>La Hacienda Apts.</td>
<td>925 N Carlson St</td>
<td>Elsa</td>
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<td>Harrison Manor</td>
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<td>Robinhood Apts.</td>
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<td>2801 Maple</td>
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<td>Port Isabel</td>
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<td>San Benito</td>
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<td>Santa Rosa Village Apts.</td>
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Travel Corridors and Commuting Patterns

One indicator of travel patterns at the county level is the journey-to-work data available from the U.S. Census. This analysis serves as a baseline for travel patterns, to be supplemented through the other approaches to needs assessment documented in this technical memorandum.

Introduction and Methodology

This section focuses on commuter patterns derived from journey-to-work data from the U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics “LED OnTheMap” application, 2009 Work Destination (“Where Workers are Employed who Live in the Selection Area”) and Home Destination (“Where Workers Live who are Employed in the Selection Area”) Area Reports. From this dataset we extracted summaries for worker flows between home and work for the Lower Rio Grande region, by place of residence and place of work.

It should be noted that, although work trip patterns may not fully reflect travel for other trip purposes, they nevertheless provide a general indication of access and mobility needs. Supplemented by insights gained through the community surveys, interviews with stakeholders, public meetings, and by field observation, the final plan will reflect a thorough understanding of the basic travel needs of the region.

Findings

The findings of this analysis are displayed in Figure 3-11. The majority of intercounty trips made in the region are in between Hidalgo and Cameron Counties, demonstrating that many trips go beyond municipal and county boundaries. Willacy County has a significantly smaller numbers of trips entering both Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. There are also a significant number of trips within the study area that originate in Starr County (Rio Grande City), which is directly adjacent to the west of Hidalgo County.

Travel Need Extending Out-of-Region

The commute trip data reveal that Dallas County and Bexar County are out-of-region employment destinations extending far to the north of the study area.
FIGURE 3-11:
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN
COUNTY TRAVEL PATTERNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Intracounty Trips</th>
<th>Intercounty Trips</th>
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<td>Willacy County</td>
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<td>1,000-2,000 trips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cameron County</td>
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<td>&lt;1,465 trips</td>
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KFH GROUP

INTERSTATE TRAVEL PATTERNS
PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

Each of the four public transit systems was interviewed in order to determine the needs the transit systems encounter in the community. There was a general consensus that the needs centered on connectivity. While they acknowledge that there is some level of service in each area, the greatest problem was simply connectivity – going from one county to a second one. Travel throughout the US 83/77 corridor is a great need. For example:

- McAllen area to Harlingen and Brownsville
- Harlingen to South Padre Island
- Brownsville to South Padre Island

Other needs discussed by the operators include:

- Simplified fare policy
- Expanded rural service
- Routes that operate throughout the day (Hidalgo County)
- Expanded coordinated training
- Expanded coordinated of procurement

In October of 2012 Valley Metro will connect McAllen to Harlingen via US Business 83 with a new JARC service. A Harlingen to Brownsville route is being planned for one year service thru a partnership with The University of Texas – Brownsville, Texas State Technical College, Workforce Solutions Cameron County, United Way of Cameron County, Los Fresnos CISD, City of Los Fresnos, Cameron County, HSBMPO, and LRGVDC – Valley Metro. Currently, Valley Metro commuter service connects Brownsville to South Padre Island and Port Isabel.

IV. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE AND WORKFORCE AGENCY NEEDS

In addition to the assessment of quantitative data, a critical component of the transportation needs assessment is to gain input from a variety of health and human service organizations and workforce development agencies, since the people these agencies serve typically encounter mobility challenges. To obtain information about these needs, the consultant team sent a survey to each human service transportation provider (as identified in previous studies and through TxDOT and the Rural Transit Assistance Program). The survey requested information about current transportation services as well as perceived needs and coordination opportunities. (The services are...
summarized in a separate technical memorandum.) Also, interviews (in person and by telephone) were conducted with several key agencies, including:

- Cameron Workforce Solutions
- Health and Human Service Commission
- Tropical Texas Behavioral Health Services
- Valley Association of Independent Living
- Migrant Health Promotion
- Proyecto Azteca
- La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
- University of Texas – Pan American / Office for Sustainability
- Texas A&M University – Center for Housing & Urban Development

The following needs were identified by the organizations that were interviewed or that responded to the survey.

**Geographic Coverage and Frequency:**

- Additional public transit services in rural areas (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health survey, VAIL interview)
- More services to the colonias (HHSC interview, Tropical Texas Behavioral Health interview, VAIL interview)
- Services connecting the colonias to the urban areas (Migrant Health Promotion interview)
- Transit services to colonias in southern and northern Cameron County to get to services/employment in Harlingen/San Benito (Workforce Solutions Cameron interview)
- Services on the 281 and 83 corridors (VAIL interview)
- Connecting service between Harlingen/San Benito and Brownsville (Workforce Solutions Cameron interview)
- Better connections between services (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health interview)
- Service to the Tropical Texas Behavioral Health Edinburg office (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health interview)
• Convenient service between Edinburg and McAllen (VAIL interview)

• Service to connect Pan American to North McAllen (VAIL interview)

**Specific Trip Purposes:**

• Daily continuous public transportation in Cameron County outside of the City of Brownsville for job-seeking and underemployed persons. This is particularly lacking in the rural communities, to connect residents to employment, post-secondary education, child care providers, and medical facilities. (Workforce Solutions Cameron survey)

• Transportation to multi-services centers, Social Security office, Food Stamps office, and non-Medicaid-eligible medical trips (Mi Destino ADC survey)

• Early morning services to access medical appointments in the morning (Migrant Health Promotion interview)

• Transportation that does not require a person to wait an entire day after the doctor’s visit for the return trip (Migrant Health Promotion interview)

**Days and Hours:**

• More service hours – earlier morning and later evening services (HHSC interview)

• Weekend public transportation services (Community Action Council of South Texas survey)

**Needs Related to Improved Access to Existing Services:**

• More accessible intercity bus service; potential riders with disabilities have had trouble scheduling an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) trip (VAIL interview)

• A more convenient form of fare payment, such as a contactless “smart card” (Workforce Solutions Cameron interview, VAIL interview)

• more vouchers to provide to clients (as were available from United Way in the past (VAIL interview)
• Additional bus stops (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health survey)

• Travel training so that riders can become comfortable with using the service (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health interview, VAIL interview) Valley Metro and Migrant Health Promotion are starting a travel training program in 2012.

• Improved outreach & marketing of transportation services (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health interview, VAIL interview)

• Use ‘promotoras’ (local community liaisons) to get the word out and obtain feedback from the communities about their ability to access services – not just transportation services (Migrant Health Promotion interview)

• Transit trip planning assistance (VAIL interview)

• Layman’s information/transit service orientation for human service agency staff who assist clients with finding services (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health interview)

• Better-coordinated, centralized source for transit information (LRGVDC – Agency of Aging interview)

Other Needs:

• More reliable specialized service providers (Tropical Texas Behavioral Health interview, LRGVDC – AAA interview)

Survey of Human Service Agency Clients

On July 28 – 29th the Operation Lone Star event occurred in south Texas. The operation is a joint exercise of state health and human services agencies, Texas Military Forces and county health departments to prepare for disasters. All organizations work together to bring free medical services to under-served communities along the Texas border.

The LRGVDC initiated a survey in the Hidalgo and Cameron County events. These surveys were used to measure the needs of participants. In Hidalgo County all participants drove themselves or had a relative drive them. The principal reason for not using transit was because the bus did not go where they needed to go. In each case cited, the problem was service between cities – lack of regional service. Mission, Edinburg, McAllen and South Padre Island were all destinations desired.
In Cameron County (Brownsville) almost all survey respondents drove themselves or had a friend or family member that drove them. Most did not respond to unserved destinations, but those that did cited areas outside the Brownsville Service area (Cameron Park and Los Fresnos, in addition to other destinations just outside the service area).

Overall, the responses confirmed the findings cited above – regional service with better connections to major destinations is needed.

Summary of Public Outreach Round One

The public outreach effort for the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan called for two rounds of public meetings. The first round presented the findings of the needs assessment to the public and various stakeholders. The objective was to ensure that all unmet public transit needs are accounted for and to elicit input on strategies to improve transit coordination and services within the region. The purpose of the second round of public meetings (discussed in Technical Memorandum No. 5) was to present the strategies that were developed as a result of the needs assessment and round one of the public involvement. Participants were asked to ensure that all viable strategies were accounted for. The following is a summary of the first round of needs meetings.

An issue Brownsville is facing is that their designation as a result of the 2010 Census is changing from “small urban” to “urban.” As a result Brownsville Metro will no longer be able to use much of the federal operating assistance they have used in the past. This is coupled with a tremendous rise in demand for public transit services in the Brownsville area.

The conversation regarding unmet needs highlighted the need for capital improvements, particularly bus stops. Dissemination of information regarding public transit services to the public was a concern of many. Transit dependent residents were of particular concern because lack of internet access is an issue for this group. Suggested strategies to fill this unmet need were posting of schedule information on busses and at bus stops. Also, the suggestion that the various transit systems should post the information of other systems that they connect. Employment opportunities in South Padre Island require expanded commuter services to this area. The public also showed great interest in the Valley Metro pilot vanpool program as a method to meet demand for commuter services.

Another significant issue was that of serving colonias. Participants indicated that there is a lack of public transit services around the colonias locations in the
northern portion of Hidalgo County and, where there is service it is hard to identify and use. One issue that must be overcome in many of these areas is that the roadway infrastructure is not of the quality that can accommodate a transit vehicle. Capital improvements of pathways and bus stops were an identified unmet need.

Human Service Agency – Inventory

Many human service agencies were contacted in order to gain a greater understanding of the needs and simply to list out the agencies. The list of agencies and contact information are in Attachment No. 3-1. Following is a narrative description of those agencies that responded or had information on a website. For further details see Technical Memorandum No. 2.

Texas Medical Transportation Program (MTP) / LeFleur Transportation

The MTP is part of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). This program funds transportation services to non-emergency medical appointments to Medicaid recipients only. It is far and away the largest human service transportation program in the state, as it is about ten times the size of all other human service transportation programs in the state combined. Details about Medicaid transportation funding levels or service statistics in the Valley were not made available for this study, since HHSC representatives indicated that they were only able to provide very general information, and their contracted transportation provider was unresponsive to requests for an interview or information.

LeFleur Transportation is the contracted provider of MTP program services in MTP transportation service areas 19, 20, and 21, an 18-county region. MTP service area 21 is comprised of the three counties in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. LeFleur did not participate in a scheduled interview, did not return repeated follow-up calls, and did not return a survey. According to their website, LeFleur Transportation is one of the largest non-emergency medical transportation providers in the country, operating a fleet of 400 vehicles and carrying more than 1 million passenger trips per year nationwide.

According to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website, HHSC MTP payments to LeFleur totaled $34,223,388 in FY 2010 for service in all 18 counties in LeFleur’s MTP coverage area.

Amigos Del Valle, Inc.

Amigos Del Valle, Inc., located in Mission, is a private non-profit organization that provides senior services, affordable housing services, and home-delivered meals to
seniors in the Rio Grande Valley. According to their website, they operate a fleet of 16 mini-buses and five vans for demand-responsive transportation; although the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging (AAA) indicated in an interview that Amigos Del Valle no longer provides transportation services. The agency’s catchment area includes Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties, although it is unknown whether these all are (or were) served by transportation. They receive funding from the LRGVDC AAA.

Port Isabel Senior Center

The City of Port Isabel Senior Center operates 1 wheelchair equipped vehicle for senior citizens needing to access their facility, medical appointments and shopping. They provided 7,449 passenger trips in 2010, logging 5,274 vehicle miles and 1,008 vehicle hours.

City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center

The City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center provides transportation services to and from the center, doctor appointments, and shopping, according to the city’s website (a survey was not returned).

Community Action Council of South Texas (CACST) (Rainbow Lines)

CACST operates a rural public transportation system called the Rainbow Lines. Based in Rio Grande City in Starr County, the primary service area is Starr, Duvall, Jim Hogg, and Zapata Counties, in the South Texas planning area. Destinations are served in neighboring counties (i.e., Starr County service goes to destinations in the Valley). The Rainbow Lines operate Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Fares are based on distance traveled. In FY 2010, CACST provided a total of 72,804 passenger trips, 311,982 vehicle miles, and 16,588 vehicle hours. The system is funded by Section 5311, passenger fares/donations, United Way voucher program contract revenue, and other TxDOT/FTA funding programs. CACST operates a fleet of 30 vehicles.

The LRGVDC AAA indicated that CACST is one of their transportation vendors and as such provides senior transportation in the Valley to medical appointments and shopping.

Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Hidalgo County Head Start Program is a comprehensive child development program which serves economically challenged children ages 3-5 and their families throughout Hidalgo County. The agency operates 36 yellow school bus type vehicles 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. In FY 2010, a total of 12,639 passenger
trips were provided. The annual budget for Hidalgo County Head Start Program’s transportation program is approximately $1 million, funded entirely by Head Start funds.

**LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging**

The LRGVDC AAA provides funding to senior centers in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. LRGVDC receives Section 5310 funding from TxDOT as well as funding for public transportation services.

Currently, the AAA uses three vendors to provide transportation services for medical visits and shopping: LeFleur Transportation, South Texas Transportation Services, and CACST. These vendors offer transportation for medical visits and shopping. We have been unable to find information on South Texas Transportation Services.

**Mi Destino Adult Day Care**

Mi Destino Adult Day Care, located in La Feria, operates eight vehicles to transport adult day care clients to and from agency programs, medical appointments, nutrition programs, religious activities, shopping, social activities, and therapy appointments. Services are available Monday to Friday 6:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. Mi Destino’s transportation services are funded as part of the standard reimbursement per client from the Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services and thus resources for transportation are limited.

**Southwest Key Program / La Esperanza Home for Boys**

Southwest Key Program in Brownsville receives Section 5310 funding from TxDOT. La Esperanza Home for Boys, a program of Southwest Key Program located in Combes, is an alternative treatment facility for boys placed in the juvenile justice system. La Esperanza Home for Boys was included in the 2009 Texas Transit Inventory. At that time they operated two accessible minibuses to transport boys age 10-17 to medical, educational, social/recreational, nutritional, and other activities.

**Tropical Texas Behavioral Health**

Tropical Texas Behavioral Health provides mental health services and services for young children and adults with developmental disabilities in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. They operate a fleet of approximately 50 vehicles and reimburse staff $0.51 per mile for use of their personal vehicles to transport clients. Trip purposes served include agency programs, caseworker appointments, education/training,
employment, medical, shopping, and social. Tropical Texas Behavioral Health also purchases bus passes and tickets for clients and provide travel training so that clients can become comfortable in riding the bus.

**Workforce Solutions Cameron**

Workforce Solutions Cameron provides gas cards to participating program customers in Cameron County for their use in driving to job training, job search activities, job interviews, and employment. This program is funded by the Texas Workforce Commission ($273,028 in FY 2010 and budgeted for 2011, with decreases anticipated in future years).

**Other Adult Day Care Centers**

There are numerous adult day care centers in the Valley, providing day care to seniors and adults with disabilities. Approximately 20 are believed to provide client transportation services based upon information in previous studies. However, only one adult day care center, Mi Destino Adult Day Care, returned a survey and is described above.

**V. SUMMARY OF NEEDS, INEFFICIENCIES, AND SERVICE GAPS**

This summary considers the findings of both Technical Memorandum Nos. 2 and 3.

**Service Area Needs**

The estimate of need is not a matter of a simple calculation. It is an assessment based on a wide variety of input. These key areas of input included:

1. **Meetings and Interviews**: The meetings with human service agencies, transit providers, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the general public, and other interested participants provided a significant backdrop to the discussion of needs.

2. **Review of Demographics and Travel Patterns**: The detailed findings delineated above indicate that the need for service will continue to increase as the general population increases.

3. **Survey of Transportation Providers**: Some of the respondents to the surveys responded to the questions on needs.
The results of the needs review indicates that the general population is growing at a rapid rate. Compounding this with the low incomes in the area should result in considerable need for service. The use of transit can equal approximately 2% of all trips if regular service were available. The fact that a private carrier has been able to recover their costs from the farebox is significant proof of need between cities.

**The Most Significant Needs are as Follows:**

- **Connectivity** - Connectivity is acknowledged to be one of the highest needs. Increases in connectivity throughout the region will grow in importance as people spread farther out seeking employment. Simply put, while most of the service area has coverage, the ability to get from one city to another, or to travel across the region is problematic. There is no regular daily service that connects the largest cities and persons wanting to use transit for commuting purposes cannot do so.

- **Colonias** - Some of the highest needs continue to be in the colonias spread all over Hidalgo County, with many in Willacy and Cameron Counties as well. These are depicted in Figure 3-6. These areas need regularly scheduled service throughout the day to meet a variety of needs including commuter, medical, and shopping.

- **Mexican Nationals** - There is no doubt that the continued growth in Mexico will contribute to high levels of ridership in the urban systems for Brownsville and McAllen, without any federal or state compensation for this extra burden.

- **Fixed Route Need** - Harlingen - San Benito and Edinburg - Mission each has the potential demand and need for more fixed-route service within their cities. Cities of 60,000 population (for example) can sustain a 5 – 6 bus fixed-route system.

- **Shorter Headways** - There is a need for more frequent service throughout the day on consistent schedules in the urbanized areas.

- **Rural Service** - Willacy County has additional needs that are not being met, for both local service and service to Harlingen. Rural parts of the other two counties also have some unmet needs.
Service Efficiencies and Inefficiencies

Any service area with four transit systems will generate inefficiencies and higher costs due to significant administrative/management/operations duplication. However, significant progress has been made in a number of areas. McAllen Metro and Brownsville Urban System are now working together and have conducted a group procurement of vehicles and have all rebranded their systems in a similar manner. These are significant gains that are substantial, and all systems are now working together and trusting each other.

While it is anticipated that these systems will not consolidate their operations, there are a number of areas where these systems can continue to coordinate services and eliminate inefficiencies. These include:

- Coordinate/consolidate administrative functions, including but not limited to:
  - Vehicle operator training
  - Continued group procurement
  - Marketing and promotion of services
  - Simple region wide fare policy
  - Coordinated maintenance
  - Coordinated road supervision and training
  - Ridesharing services

Service Gaps - Connectivity

The major service gap is connectivity between cities and counties. While most areas are served, they do not always connect to each other. This was cited as a very significant barrier and gap. Further, there are other gaps:

- Many colonias are not served
- Hours of service do not meet all of the needs
APPENDIX A

Contact Information for Health and Human Service Agencies and Programs and Workforce Agencies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Mailing address</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Contact Title</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Study Contact Notes*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Alegros Adult Day Care Center</td>
<td>320 Huisache St, Weslaco, TX 78596</td>
<td>(956) 968-6005</td>
<td>(956) 968-6122</td>
<td>no response to survey</td>
<td>no response to survey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dianagrmt@yahoo.com">dianagrmt@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Alpha I Adult Day Care Center</td>
<td>220 N Cage Blvd Pharr, Texas 78577</td>
<td>(956) 283-9595</td>
<td>(956) 283-9414</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
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<td>956-544-6977</td>
<td>(956) 544-7099</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
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<td>513 N. FM 1015 Progreso, TX 78579</td>
<td>(956) 982-4495</td>
<td>(956) 982-4478</td>
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<td>1214 &amp; 1216 W Monte Cristo Rd Edinburg, TX 78541</td>
<td>360-0309</td>
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<td>307 Villa Maria Blvd Brownsville, TX 78520</td>
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<td>Centro de Amistad Adult Day Care</td>
<td>1008 W Ferguson Pharr, TX 78577</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
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<td>585-6388</td>
<td>(956) 583-6311</td>
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<td>381-1155</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Dias Felices Adult Day Care</td>
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<td>787-4700</td>
<td>(956) 787-5828</td>
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<td>Dulce Hogar Adult Day Care</td>
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<td>El Mundo Feliz Adult Day Care</td>
<td>524 E Los Ebanos Blvd Brownsville, TX 78520</td>
<td>504-9974</td>
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<td>4601 E. Curry Dr Edinburg TX 78542</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
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<td>283-9822</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Mi Destino Adult Day Care</td>
<td>2805 W Memorial Ste A, La Feria, TX 78559</td>
<td>797-5411</td>
<td>(956) 797-5411</td>
<td>Diana Q. Rocha</td>
<td>Facility Director/President</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dianagrmt@yahoo.com">dianagrmt@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Sunglo Adult Day Care</td>
<td>317 N Stuart Place Rd Harlingen, TX 78552</td>
<td>425-2885</td>
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<td>no response to survey</td>
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### Appendix A: Contact Information for Health and Human Service Agencies and Programs and Workforce Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Mailing address</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
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<th>Contact Name</th>
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<th>Study Contact Notes*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Center for Independent Living</td>
<td>Valley Association of Independent Living (VAIL)</td>
<td>P. O. Box 5035 McAllen, TX 78502-5035</td>
<td>(956) 668-8245</td>
<td>(956) 631-7914</td>
<td>Mario Martinez</td>
<td>Mario Elena Cavazos</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mario Martinez and Maria Elena Cavazos interviewed by KFH Group (not surveyed because not a transportation provider)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Agency</td>
<td>Community Action Council of South Texas</td>
<td>P.O. Drawer 98 510 East Eisenhower Street Rio Grande City, Texas 78582</td>
<td>(956) 487-2585</td>
<td>956-380-4185</td>
<td>Noelia S. Ruiz</td>
<td>Transportation Program Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Noelia_ruiz@cacst.org">Noelia_ruiz@cacst.org</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>Hidalgo County Head Start Program</td>
<td>1901 W. State Hwy. 107 McAllen, TX</td>
<td>956-383-0706</td>
<td>956-380-2588</td>
<td>Oscar Palacios</td>
<td>Field Operations Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:oscar.palacios@hcsp.org">oscar.palacios@hcsp.org</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>HHSC Medicaid Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>(956) 661-5374</td>
<td>(956) 661-5395</td>
<td>Javier Rodriguez</td>
<td>Regional Contract Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:javier.rodriguez@hhsc.state.tx.us">javier.rodriguez@hhsc.state.tx.us</a></td>
<td>did not return survey; indicated by email that only general information could be provided; Leo Vela interviewed by KFH Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>LeFleur Medical Transportation (HHS Medicaid contractor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:joel.cura@lefleur.net">joel.cura@lefleur.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Migrant Health Promotion</td>
<td>536 S. Texas Blvd. Suite 117 Weslaco, TX 78596</td>
<td>(800) 461-8394 x1006</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lizzette Pacheco</td>
<td>Regional Director</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Tropical Texas Behavioral Health</td>
<td>1901 S. 24th Avenue Edinburg, TX 78539</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nancy Ochoa</td>
<td>Client Rights Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nochoa@ttbh.org">nochoa@ttbh.org</a></td>
<td>returned survey; Coni Diedrich and Nancy Ochoa interviewed by KFH Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>City of Hidalgo</td>
<td>704 E Texano Dr. Hidalgo, TX 78557</td>
<td>956-843-2286</td>
<td>(956) 843-6461</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no response to survey (emailed to Social Services 6/2/11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>City of Port Isabel</td>
<td>305 E. Maxam St. Port Isabel, Texas 78578</td>
<td>(956) 943-2682</td>
<td>(956) 943-2029</td>
<td>Edward Meza or Alonzo Echavarria</td>
<td>City Manager (Mr. Meza)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:citymanager@copits.com">citymanager@copits.com</a></td>
<td>did not return survey (emailed 6/8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Town of South Padre Island</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jesse Arriaga</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jarriga@myspi.org">jarriga@myspi.org</a></td>
<td>did not return survey; interviewed by KFH Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior services</td>
<td>Amigos Del Valle</td>
<td>1116 Conway Ave Mission, Texas 78572</td>
<td>956-581-9494 ext. 110</td>
<td></td>
<td>unceertain; survey mailed to Lydia Watson</td>
<td>Agency Operations Admin. Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lwatson@advrgv.org">lwatson@advrgv.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior services</td>
<td>City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center</td>
<td>121 N. Arroyo Blvd Rio Hondo, TX</td>
<td>956-748-3082</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antonia Perez</td>
<td>Senior Citizens Center Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cityofriohondo@gmail.com">cityofriohondo@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior services</td>
<td>LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging (AAA)</td>
<td>311 N. 15th St. McAllen, TX 78501-4705</td>
<td>956-682-3481</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jose Gonzalez</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:igonzalez@lrgvdc.org">igonzalez@lrgvdc.org</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce development.</td>
<td>Workforce Solutions Cameron</td>
<td>245 East Levee Street Brownsville, TX 78521</td>
<td>(956) 548-6700 x4514</td>
<td>(956) 548-6717</td>
<td>Maria E.G. Sosa</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:msosa@camwksinc.org">msosa@camwksinc.org</a></td>
<td>returned survey; Maria Sosa and Maria Rousseau interviewed by KFH Group</td>
</tr>
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### Appendix A: Contact Information for Health and Human Service Agencies and Programs and Workforce Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
<th>Mailing address</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Youth program</td>
<td>Southwest Key Program / La Esperanza Home for Boys</td>
<td>504 E. Washington Brownsville, Texas 78520</td>
<td>(956) 546-0373</td>
<td>(956) 546-0617</td>
<td>Isabel Rodriguez or Marissa Gonzalez</td>
<td></td>
<td>rodriguez@swkey <a href="mailto:MRGonzalez@swkey.org">MRGonzalez@swkey.org</a></td>
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**The surveys that were mailed to these agencies came back as insufficient address/unable to forward:**

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<tr>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Name of Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Friends Adult Day Care</td>
<td>292 Kings Hwy Brownsville, Texas 78521</td>
<td>(956) 546-2925</td>
<td>(956) 546-3801</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Trinidad Adult Day Care</td>
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<td>(956) 748-2657</td>
<td>(956) 748-2667</td>
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<td>Adult day care</td>
<td>Vida Health Care</td>
<td>2024 West University Drive Edinburg, TX 78539-2832</td>
<td>(956) 316-0153</td>
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* In each case of a non-responsive survey, agencies were contacted at least two times.
Appendix 4

Technical Memorandum No. 4:
Parallel Transit Planning Processes
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

“Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan”

Technical Memorandum No. 4: Parallel Transit Planning Processes

October 2011
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Technical Memorandum No. 4  
Parallel Transit Planning Processes

This memorandum outlines the transit planning efforts in the Lower Rio Grande Valley that are occurring simultaneously to the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan. The end result of this memorandum will include an understanding of the various planning efforts relevant to the coordinated plan and to ensure that these processes are coordinated where necessary.

For each process a summary describing recommendations, participants, and level of coordination will be included depending on the stage each planning process is in and the information that is available.

CURRENT PLANNING PROCESSES

Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Bus Stop Inventory

The Brownsville MPO is beginning a detailed bus stop inventory for the 700 plus bus stops in their region. This inventory will consist of a geospatial references as well as amenities and features of each stop. Data pertaining to the existence of signage and information, benches, shelters, accessibility, sidewalks and safety will be recorded for each stop. This inventory can be used to prioritize capital improvements for bus stops in the Brownsville area.

Part of the coordinated planning process is to help guide coordination in capital expenditures across the region. The Brownsville area is served by two public transit organizations and the data generated by this study will be valuable in future route planning and prioritization of capital improvements in the region.
Brownsville MPO Route Study

The Brownsville MPO is engaging in a route study as a result of the urbanized area change in designation under the 2010 Census from small urban to urban. As a result of this change, the Brownsville Urban System will no longer be able to use the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 grants for operating expenses. This study has the primary purpose of determining ways for the system to improve overall operational efficiency without sacrificing the current level of service.

Brownsville Metro, Valley Metro and The Wave are coordinating some regional transit services. Route studies will take into account these important coordinated services. As part of the coordinated planning and public outreach efforts, it has been noted that dissemination of information to the public regarding schedule and route changes is a top priority.

Commuter Rail Feasibility Study

Hidalgo County is conducting a feasibility study for the development of a passenger rail system connecting employment centers and major destinations throughout Hidalgo County. This project will assist Hidalgo County and the Hidalgo County Commuter Rail District in improving mobility and air quality, as well as reducing transportation-related energy consumption and GHG emissions.

The study will focus on corridors, stations, modes, operations, costs, and benefits. Initial station locations are along the US 83 corridor in Mercedes, Weslaco, Alamo, San Juan, Pharr, McAllen, and Mission and extending into North McAllen and into Edinburg. This study uses San Antonio and Tulsa commuter rail projects as a model for rail planning at a similar scale and geography. Due to the rapidly increasing populations along these corridors and the strategic station locations, the ridership projections for the commuter rail alternative in 2030 is 16,300 one-way trips per day. The feasibility study also shows that due to increased mobility across the corridor, opportunities for employment near station locations will increase. Total capital costs for the commuter rail alternative are projected to be between $270 million and $310 million.

As this plan moves from the feasibility analysis to the planning phase, it will be important to include McAllen Transit, Valley Metro, and Rio Metro in a coordinated effort to ensure proper connections throughout the region. Valley Metro has already begun planning for facilities that connect with the proposed rail line. There is currently no study taking place that includes passenger rail in Cameron County.
Pilot Vanpool Program Plan

Valley Metro’s pilot vanpool project, tentatively called “VMVan”, will provide an alternate transportation mode for commuters. The idea is to provide a low-emissions, eco-friendly vehicle to a group of passengers who will share trips to work. By sharing the ride, each trip is cost-effective for each rider. Vanpools can save valuable resources for both transit agencies and transit customers.

The group of riders determines its own travel itinerary (such as meeting at a central location or someone’s house) for every trip. The group also determines its own internal rules for the ride, including how to address tardiness, seating, use of the radio/stereo, cleaning duties, and related issues. One person (and a backup) serves as a driver, keeps the vehicle overnight, and gets an allocation for personal use. Another person serves as a bookkeeper and keeps track of daily mileage, revenue, and ridership. Valley Metro staff will train drivers, backup drivers, and bookkeepers prior to driving. The training will cover policies and procedures, driving safety, reporting, group dynamics, avoiding accidents and hazards, and other topics of relevance. The program includes a guaranteed ride home service barring any unforeseen circumstances with the trained drivers.

The project will be a small-scale pilot program in the first year. If it proves successful, the program will expand in subsequent years. After three years, the program is expected to be self-sustaining, so that all operations and maintenance costs will be fully funded through user fees.

As part of the coordinated planning public outreach effort, van pools have been discussed as an “outside of the box,” transit alternative particularly for colonias residents. Residents of local colonias may require additional training and expanded outreach efforts.

Colonias Travel Training

This activity is a joint collaboration between Migrant Health Promotion and Valley Metro to provide travel training to low-income/economically disadvantaged individuals living in colonias in Hidalgo County who need bus service to get to employment, training, child care, educational and vocational programs, social services, health care, and other programs. Community liaisons will train individual participants based on a curriculum developed by Migrant Health Promotion and Valley Metro. The objective is to teach clients how to effectively plan and make trips and to give them practical experience using the bus. The goals are to increase mobility and thereby increase use of the transit system.
This project addresses the following objectives from the Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan:

- Enhance the quality of the customer’s travel experience.

- Expand the availability of services to those who are unserved (or underserved). By providing an educational program that teaches individuals about public transportation and how to use it, this project will expand public transportation access to those who need it most in very low-income communities. In addition, this project is a service activity that addresses one of the key needs mentioned in the Regional Plan, the needs of colonias. Public outreach as part of the coordinated planning process has identified several colonias advocacy groups that can partner in this effort in the dissemination of training information to their constituents.

Valley Metro Service Expansion Plans

Valley Metro proposes to increase service and meet tremendous need by restructuring its route system and expanding service hours from 8,500 hours to 21,000 hours, in order to meet the needs of commuters to reach employment, training, schooling, daycare, and other work-related destinations. Service improvements will include:

- Expansion of service hours during the workday to fill gaps.

- Expansion of service hours after 5:00 p.m. to meet the needs of workers returning home or heading to evening jobs.

- Expansion of service to Saturdays to serve nontraditional work schedules.

- Restructuring of all routes to serve as many work-related locations as possible.

- Reduction of headways to about one hour to increase frequency.

- Use of clock face schedules to make the system easier to navigate.

- Addition of service from Mercedes to Harlingen to connect both counties.

- Addition of a route in Edinburg near the University of Texas Pan American and downtown to meet the need of workers and students in that city.
The needs assessment of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan identified regional connectivity and increased service to colonias residents as major unmet needs in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The Valley Metro service expansion planning makes needed connections between Hidalgo and Cameron Counties and creates new routes serving colonias, beginning to address the unmet needs identified in the needs assessment.

2010 Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP) Strategic Plan

The 2010 RTAP Strategic Plan outlines five major goals for public transportation supported by a RTAP mission statement and vision statement. These goals are specific and will be included in the listing of strategies in Technical Memorandum No. 5.

Mission Statement:

Regional Transportation Advisory Panel provides a platform for collaborative approaches to transit planning for seamless and efficient movement of people in the region.

Vision Statement:

People will be able to move throughout the region safely, reliably and efficiently by using a seamless transit network.

GOALS

Goal 1: Improve the quality of people’s transit experience

- Improve service delivery
  - RTAP will recommend for public transit agencies to acquire technology to track on time performance
    - RTAP will recommend adoption of a 95% on time performance standards: regional schedule variation (+/- 15 min) in FY 2013
    - Increase service frequency throughout the region, as transit agencies will seek to adopt the following standards before FY 2013:
      - Urban areas should have headways of one hour as a maximum
      - Rural areas should have headways of two hours as a maximum
  - Develop pilot plans for improved service via the FY 2011 Regional Transportation Coordination Plan (*revise after final draft of regional plan is completed)
    - Valley Metro will implement a commuter route from McAllen to Harlingen via FY 2012 JARC in October 2011 as well as a Harlingen to
Brownsville route via San Benito and Los Fresnos beginning in January 2012.

- Valley Metro will seek adding service from Harlingen to South Padre Island before 2014
- Valley Metro will seek adding a Mid-Valley Network before 2014
  - Valley Metro will develop an updated rural service plan based on 2010 Census data before 2014
  - Valley Metro will seek to produce an RFP for a rural service study in FY 2013

- Improve customer service
  - RTAP will seek to provide a workshop for customer service skills to the public transit agency staff in FY 2012
  - RTAP will recommend a uniform fare structure before FY 2013
    - Urban fixed routes
    - Commuter routes
    - Rural routes
    - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit

**Goal 2: Provide increased transit alternatives to people in the region**

- Public transit agencies will continuously integrate with multiple modes of non-traditional transportation
  - MPO’s will develop a regional map identifying sidewalks, hike & bike trails, bike lanes, bus routes, bus stops, bus shelters, etc. before FY 2013
- Expand vanpool through state JARC
- Add projects from the strategies and partnerships of the 2011 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan

**Goal 3: Coordinate transit agency functions**

- RTAP will complete a resource inventory in 2012 to identify agency capabilities
- RTAP will recommend a regional training calendar to the public transit agencies before the end of FY 2012
- RTAP will recommend uniform standards to the public transit agencies for the following:
  - Fleet standards
    - Urban
    - Rural
    - Commuter
    - ADA Paratransit
Technical Memorandum No. 4. Parallel Planning Processes

- Bus stops/shelters
  - Amenities and signage
- Brochures and time schedules
- System maps
- RTAP recommends to public transit agencies for anytime there are changes to time schedules, route alignments, or addition/subtraction of routes that they inform each other of such changes

Goal 4: Improve the image of transit across the region

- RTAP will continuously identify opportunities for transit promotion campaigns such as holiday promotions, Dump the Pump Day, Green Living Festival, etc.
  - Create an annual promotion event calendar starting in FY 2012
- RTAP will develop a coordinated outreach strategy to identify and educate stakeholders based on the findings of the FY 2011 Regional Coordination Plan in FY 2013
- RTAP will organize an annual newsletter to inform and educate local, state, federal officials and the general public on public transportation

Goal 5: Develop a sustainable fiscal system for transit in the region

- Transit providers will present an annual availability of funds report to the RTAP and other partner agencies beginning in FY 2012 including lapsing funds
- Non-transit agencies will request their annual state/regional transportation budget report to present to the RTAP beginning in January 2012
- RTAP will strategize the use of all previously identified funding, subject to their respective requirements
- Non-transit agency in-kind match identified as needed
- RTAP will recommend performance measures, identified in the FY 2011 Regional Coordination Plan, to the public transit agencies

The goals will be used to inform and establish the technical memorandum on planning for public transit in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
SUMMARY

At this time, there is a handful of transit planning activities taking place in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. While the processes are separate, it is anticipated that through this planning process these plans will be coordinated through this regional planning process.
Appendix 5

Technical Memorandum No. 5: Planning for Comprehensive Services – Strategies for the Future
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Technical Memorandum 5:
Planning for Comprehensive Services – Strategies for the Future

INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum describes a range of planning activities for consideration by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Transit Advisory Panel (RTAP). Planning for comprehensive services consists of a series of potential strategies for coordination/organizational and service related/operational activities that could enhance service quality and quantity. Planning for strategies integrates (coordinates) various programs including Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, Urban Formula, and Non-Urbanized formula programs. Also included are human service agency/workforce programs.

In this technical memorandum, the consultants will suggest a number of strategies for coordination and meeting the goal of quality service. The task for the RTAP is to select the strategies that most fit the needs as they determine. **Due to the very short time frame for this planning process, in order to complete the process on time, the deadline for receipt of comments is September 26th.**

Coordinated Planning

The intent of the coordinated plan is to bring the transportation elements of the various programs into one coordinated network. As discussed in Technical Memorandum No. 2: Transportation Resources, Medicaid is far and away the largest funder of human service transportation. This is estimated that Medical Transportation Program spends up to 95% of all human service agency funds available for transportation. Other funders of note include the Area Agencies on Aging (purchase services from a number of providers) and the workforce boards (typically give gas cards to clients). Unfortunately, Medicaid transportation has become an exclusionary
program, and due to a state decision, this program is in essence not open to coordination.

**Key Ingredients - Coordination**

It should be remembered that there are three critical ingredients for successful coordination. These include:

1. **Trust and Politics** - The entities considering coordination must trust each other and have few political entanglements that would discourage trust.

2. **Leadership** – There must be a leader(s) to make the business deal a success. If there is little interest or leadership, then coordination will not happen.

3. **A Good Business Deal** – Coordination requires that each partner in the process will benefit. The use of public paratransit services by human service transportation programs should be appropriately compensated by those agencies. Additionally, any demands placed upon public transportation should include the funding necessary to support it. For example, efforts to expand service in rural areas come at a price: reducing headways from once a day to twice a day doubles the cost.

**Funding Priorities - JARC, New Freedom, and Section 5310**

The JARC funds for access to employment for low income individuals, the New Freedom funding to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities, and the FTA Section 5310 funding for elderly and persons with disabilities all require a plan to coordinate these funds. As part of this plan (which is incorporated in this planning process), the next sections identify the priorities for these funds, as determined by the RTAP.

**Continue to Overcome Barriers**

Research has shown that most of the barriers associated with coordinated transportation are perceived, attitudinal, and often self imposed barriers, and are often due to a lack of understanding the regulations.

The key to overcoming barriers includes:

1. **Trust** – Building relationships between systems and jurisdictions.
2. **Leadership** – The key participants must want this to happen and must be actively involved.

3. **Knowledge** – Stakeholders armed with accurate information and knowledge is a powerful ally.

**Transportation Needs - Review**

Technical Memorandum No. 2 reviewed the needs of the service area. The most significant needs are as follows:

- **Regional Connectivity** - Connectivity is acknowledged to be one of the highest needs. Increases in connectivity throughout the region will grow in importance as people spread farther out seeking employment. Simply put, while most of the service area has coverage, the ability to get from one city to another, or to travel across the region is problematic. There is no regular daily service that connects the largest cities and persons wanting to use transit for commuting purposes cannot do so. Without daily service with multiple trips, service is not considered significant.

- **Colonias** - Some of the highest needs continue to be in the colonias spread all over Hidalgo County, with many in Willacy and Cameron Counties as well. These areas need regularly scheduled service throughout the day to meet a variety of needs including commuter, medical, and shopping.

- **Mexican Nationals** - There is no doubt that the continued growth in Mexico will contribute to high levels of ridership in the urban systems for Brownsville and McAllen, without any federal or state compensation for this extra burden.

- **Fixed-Route Need** - Harlingen – San Benito and Edinburg - Mission each has the potential demand and need for more fixed-route service within their cities. Cities of 60,000 population (for example) can sustain a 5 – 6 bus fixed-route system.

- **Minimum Service Level - Urban** – There is a need for more frequent service throughout the day on consistent schedules in the urbanized areas. In the urban areas the minimum standard should be Monday through Friday service at least 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a two-hour headway.
• **Rural Service** - Willacy County has additional needs that are not being met, for both local service and service to Harlingen. Rural parts of the other two counties also have some unmet needs.

**PLANNING FOR COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES**

The following sections present a number of activities that the RTAP should consider for inclusion in the final plan. First is the re-introduction of the 2006 strategies that were not implemented, followed by new strategies that should be considered for the future.

### Previous Strategies – Not Completed

In 2006 the initial strategies were developed. Some of these strategies have been deployed and some have not. Those that have not will be considered again by the RTAP to determine if they are still priorities.

#### Organizational/Coordination Activities

- Coordinate planning of the myriad operators through a Mobility Manager
- Establish one regional service entity – ten-year horizon
- Continue to coordinate human service transportation - mentoring
- Coordinate paratransit services
- Organize and maintain stakeholder’s committee and operators subcommittee

#### Service Activities

- Urban fixed-route
- Feeder service for persons with disabilities
- Coordinated “Main Line” service
- Fixed schedule service
- Rural job access
- Additional commuter needs – vanpools
- Serving the colonias
- Paratransit where necessary
- Through ticketing and coordinated fares
- Shopper shuttles
Key Premise

Excellent public transportation is the best way to address and coordinate the majority of human service client transportation needs. Therefore, efforts to support or improve public transportation should be fully supported by RTAP human service agencies and public transit systems as an essential element of coordinated transportation. Any coordination effort should start with maximizing the use of fixed-route services and fixed schedule services (in rural areas).

The RTAP is asked to select their priority strategies from this listing, which includes those strategies from the original plan that are still relevant. Those selected will be placed in the draft plan to be delivered shortly after all comments have been received. That draft will also include: implementation guidance, potential partners, staffing, funding, and governance structure (as appropriate).

The first part of this effort includes reviewing 2006 strategies that are still viable and have not been implemented. This will be followed by the listing of strategies for 2011.

Viable 2006 Coordination/Planning Strategies

These strategies continue on from 2006 and have not been implemented at this time.

2006 Coordinating Strategy No. 1 (Modified for 2011) - Development of Regional Mobility Management

Determine Mobility Management Functions. The Mobility Management functions can all be considered as either separate projects taken on by the RTAP and individual members or through a mobility manager. What functions should be addressed and what entity will do them? The list of mobility management activities includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. One Stop Information - One stop information center and website where people can get information on various services.

2. Customer Marketing and Education - Develop a comprehensive Customer Education and Marketing Program.
3. **Leadership** - Provide centralized leadership and assist RTAP with partnerships.

4. **Coordination and Technical Support** - Assist non-profit agencies with coordinated New Freedom and JARC Program applications.

5. **Mentoring Program** - Coordinate mentoring and education.

6. **Facility location** - Coordinate land use issues.

7. **Coordinated Training** - Coordinate training efforts between all operators of service.

8. **Regional Planning Activities** - Coordinate planning efforts and focus on regional connectivity.

9. **Customer Service** - Create Regional Standards for Customer Care

10. **Coordinating Fare Structure** - Rationalizing fares across the region

11. **Group Procurement** - Developing economies of scale through group purchases

12. **Monitoring and Coordinating Regional Planning Efforts** - Organizing and staffing various committees in urban and rural areas.

13. **Ridesharing** - Functioning as the rideshare coordinator.

14. **Vehicles** - Distribute retired vehicles

It should be kept in mind that these functions can also be accomplished without a Mobility Manager, but it would require leadership and a commitment by the transit operators and key stakeholders. These Mobility Manager efforts can be funded through JARC and New Freedom Funding as well as Section 5311 and Section 5310 funds.

**Develop Process to Select Mobility Manager(s).** Assuming that the RTAP desires a mobility management function, the RTAP should select the type of entities where the Mobility Manager or function would be housed and their affiliation with an organization. These entities often include:

- transit systems,
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) (urban areas),
• Councils of Governments,
• Human service agency,
• Nonprofit entity
• in at least one state the Department of Transportation funds the Transit Association, which hires the mobility managers, or
• A Mobility Manager can be an independent entity with their own board.

Due to funding constraints, the local match for a Mobility Manager may have gone away and a consolidated Mobility Manager may not be politically viable. Therefore, a second option would be to select the activities that the RTAP wants to implement from the above list and seek organizations (from the above list) to perform the various functions.

Seek Funding to Implement the Mobility Manager. Both New Freedom and JARC Program funds can be used to support a mobility management function. If the RTAP desires to fund/seek a New Freedom or JARC grant (for up to 80% federal funding for up to three years) this strategy becomes an excellent option if local match can be obtained.

2006 Coordination Strategy No. 2 – Human Service Coordination Opportunities – A Mentoring Program

While a large number of Section 5310, volunteer, adult day centers, and other agencies with small scale operations will not get involved in a large scale coordination effort; there are areas where these agencies can benefit from coordination. A mentoring program can include support from the larger systems in: driver training, maintenance, insurance, and vehicle replacement programs, for example. These efforts can pay immediate dividends to those small one or two vehicle services. A vehicle replacement program will allow the larger systems to lease vehicles ready to be retired (but well maintained) to these small providers and requiring the agency to participate in training and maintenance programs. Minimal funding is required to initiate these activities through the Mobility Manager. The Workforce Boards and Area Agency on Aging shall participate in these efforts.

2011 Coordination/Planning Strategies

In addition to the strategies developed in 2006, there is another strategy that should be put in place.

2011 Coordination Strategy No. 1: Develop a Regional Plan for Services. Currently all planning is done incrementally with routes being developed one or two at a time. This strategy calls for the development of a regional plan to connect the entire
region and all of the transit systems (including adjacent Starr County). This planning effort will give all of the operators an opportunity to work together. This effort should include all of the transit systems and MPO.

2011 Coordination Strategy No. 2: Coordinate Procurements. This strategy has been initiated by some of the systems in a group vehicle procurement. This is an excellent start and should be expanded as appropriate. It is also discussed in the context of mobility management. It is highlighted here because of the benefits and ease of implementation. This is a non-threatening activity that benefits all and builds trust among the operators – an essential element of success. The advantages of group procurements include:

- Lower cost - A better price for each unit
- More variety - More vendors responding to an RFP
- More attention - After the procurement is complete.

Some other procurements that could lend itself to a group procurement include:

- Bus stop amenities –shelters, benches, signs, etc.
- Technology – Distinct operational advantages when all systems are operating with the same technology platform
- Maintenance equipment, supplies or services

2011 Coordination Strategy No. 3: Coordinate Driver and Dispatcher Training. This strategy is motivated in a similar manner to the above strategy – it is non-threatening and very useful for all operators. The first step would be to develop similar policies and procedures, followed by an agreed upon driver and staff training program and course. One or more entities would be selected to conduct the training at a site agreed upon.

2011 Coordination Strategy No. 4: Transit Traveler Information. This is also a non-threatening strategy. This “One Stop Shop” will be able to provide basic information about traveling throughout the region. Customers will call or access the web to gain scheduling and other information for all of the systems and agency transportation as appropriate. It is important that the TTIS program not try to do too much too quickly, therefore it is recommended that the second phase begin after the first phase has been perfected. The second phase of this project is the interactive component where customers will be able to plan out their route and get concise directions, fares, and eventually can book a trip and pay for it on-line, hence the smart aspects of this phase.
**2011 Coordination Strategy No. 5: Fare Structures.** In order to make service easier for the customer, fares and ticketing should be coordinated so that customers do not have to pay a variety of fares for a regional trip. Passengers should be able to purchase tickets to ride the regional system, local bus service and intercity service at each of the major transfer points. Customers should be able to purchase one ticket at their origin depot and ride throughout the region – or out of the region on Valley Transit. Fares can be a valuable tool in guiding customer choice. Local fixed-route service should be encouraged through the lowest fares. Paratransit service should have the highest fare reflecting it’s higher per trip cost. The higher the fare, the lower the ridership – paratransit as a last choice. The fares should be compatible across the system, for example:

- Commuter service – Should cost no more than $3 - $5 each way
- Local Service – Local fixed-route or flex route service or fixed schedule service should have a fare of $.50 to $1.00
- Paratransit fares should be double fixed-route

**SERVICE STRATEGIES**

Without question, the best way to coordinate services is to provide quality public transit as most persons with disabilities can use public transit if properly planned. The majority of the input received, as part of this planning process, indicated that regional connectivity is the key need. People in Edinburg needing to go to McAllen or Harlingen; people in Pharr needing to go to San Benito; and people from all over needing to get to South Padre Island. Many persons pointed out that they need daily service and need it for work, school and many other needs.

These strategies call for continuing to build the regional network through:

- a route structure that operates at least six days per week
- multiple trips throughout the day
- a schedule conducive to work trips

Without these elements, there is no connectivity as anything less than this level of service is not dependable. The extensive network of public transit needed in the Valley would serve all members of the public and to target job access services for human service agency clients as well as residents of colonias and other low income residents.
2006 Service Strategy No. 1 – Local Services

The study process revealed that new or expanded fixed-route or flex route service has potential in the following communities:

1. Harlingen – San Benito – These communities can be served as one transit system as they are contiguous. The population of these communities warrants at least four buses. The area is currently served by one fixed-route vehicle. The demographics include: low income of the population, low availability of autos, and the reasonable densities in these cities. It is expected that this system if operated appropriately, can generate eight one-way trips per vehicle hour within the first year of implementation.

2. Edinburg - Mission – Edinburg can sustain a 3 – 4 bus system as its population/density, University, and proximity to McAllen all can serve to enhance ridership. It would be most advantageous if Edinburg and the other cities in the McAllen area coordinate closely with McAllen transit system to provide a seamless service covering both cities (which are contiguous). This service could also generate eight one-way trips per vehicle hour.

3. Expansion of Existing Urban Service – Brownsville and McAllen are growing rapidly. Brownsville will become a large urban area and in essence will lose its operating match from the Federal Government. Corresponding growth is occurring in the Colonias ringing these cities. These two cities will be seeking JARC and New Freedom funding to ensure that these communities and other growing areas receive service.

2006 Service Strategy No. 2 – Coordinated Main Line Service

The Main Line includes the express and local service to be provided on the U.S. 83 corridor from Brownsville to McAllen as well as the

Previously this service was provided by Valley Transit as express service – operating on the highway, with limited stops; and local service from Harlingen to McAllen operating on Business 83 with stops throughout the corridor. Valley Transit no longer provides this service. Valley Metro is currently planning or implementing a variety of new services, including limited regional service.

2006 Service Strategy No. 3 – Develop and Implement Feeder Network

This very important activity will bring scheduled dependable service to the rural communities outside the U.S. 83 urban corridor. This service is designed to provide the highest level of service possible and to ensure regional connectivity by opening the
regional “main line” to persons not living along that corridor. This would be accomplished by operating feeder buses to outlying communities such as Progreso, Edcouch, and Raymondville. These buses would provide a timed meet service with the local and express (where possible) main line service to ensure a timely trip throughout the region – or connecting to Valley Transit/Greyhound’s network across the country. The feeders will bring employees to their jobs. This will be particularly useful for workers going to low income jobs on South Padre Island. The feeders could operate at varying headways, depending on demand, but all should be operated at least 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. five days per week for basic work and school needs. Service should provide service to the supermarkets and other big box stores which are on US 83, typically .5 to 1 mile from Business 83. Service will be designed to enhance options for commuters and students (where appropriate).

This service will bring new access to low income residents with disabilities. The vehicles will be lift-equipped and will be able to flex off of the route as needed. It will be funded with JARC funds as well as local funds and/or Section 5311(F).

2006 Service Strategy No. 4 – Fixed Schedule Service

The need for dependable scheduled service became evident in the outreach phase. Fixed scheduled service is to replace one-on-one paratransit throughout the service area. The paratransit service is very expensive and cannot possibly reach as many persons as a scheduled service that can group trips. Fixed schedule service operates in designated rural areas according to a posted schedule. The bus will be in a specific area at a specific time. Passengers can be picked up at their door or at designated stops in the area. The vehicle then proceeds to the designated destination area (typically the largest town in the county). Service is limited to specific days and times. The level of service would be dependent on the need. Fixed schedule service allows the transit system to group more trips and eliminate the one-on-one trips typical of rural demand-response service. This type of service would operate in the rural portions of each county in the service area. Some areas may receive five days a week service, while others may receive one day per week service. Section 5311 and New Freedom funding should be sought.

2006 Service Strategy No. 5 - Paratransit Service

Paratransit service should be reserved for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service in the cities and remote exceptions in the rural areas. Paratransit should be considered a last resort due to its expense.
2006 Service Strategy No. 6 – Shopper Shuttle Services

With peak hour vehicles available for other services during mid-day, it may be possible to offer shopper shuttle services to sponsors willing to support the transit system. The shopper shuttle targets neighborhoods with high numbers of transit dependent populations (Colonias), typically elderly and persons with disabilities and frequent destinations (e.g. Wal-Mart, HEB, and medical centers), and can be very effective during off peak hours. Often these arrangements pay for themselves through funding from the retailers, who in return, receive the business, advertising/promotion, and they get involved in a positive way with their communities.

There are numerous examples (in Texas and across the country) of this type of service being successful with supermarkets and discount “big boxes.” Typically, shuttles target transit dependent persons (elderly, disabled, and low-income persons) in their neighborhoods. Service is usually for shopping and medical.

2006 Service Strategy No. 7 - Develop Sponsorship Program

Transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue for the system. Some rural systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, the system should sell sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program should be implemented first, in order to determine the level of funding that can be attained. The local operators will work together to develop a sponsorship program designed to interest private businesses in sponsoring service and purchasing advertising on buses, websites and written materials. The sponsorship program will allow for varying levels of service.

2006 Strategy No. 8 – Establish a Regional Rideshare Program

Currently in the Lower Rio Grande Valley area there is no mechanism to aid in the formation of vanpools or carpools. Valley Metro states that they are preparing to implement a pilot program. Analysis of the commute patterns revealed a great opportunity for ridesharing between the three counties. Ridesharing is typically composed of a central database for matching individuals with similar commute trips into carpools or vanpools. These successful vanpools can grow into fixed routes over time.

Carpools include in-formal or formal arrangements by and between individuals to share a ride to work or on other regular trips. Vanpools are typically a formal arrangement by a group of 7 to 15 individuals that share a similar commute trip. Often
these arrangements are facilitated by a governmental authority. Many vanpools pay for themselves as well, while others receive some subsidy.

Some issues that need to be further studied to implement a Lower Rio Grande Valley region-wide rideshare program include:

- Who will implement the regional rideshare program?
- The issues and cost savings surrounding the use of lease operated passenger vans verses public owned passenger vans. Again however if the vans are full, they can pay for themselves.
- What combination of minivan and full sized van?
- The best subsidy and cost structure to optimize reporting and increase customer utility.
- The level of safety associated with 15-passenger vans and the impact of driver training courses for mitigating accident rates.

### 2006 Strategy No. 9 – Non-Traditional - Market Development/Shopper Shuttles

Lower Rio Grande Valley’s unique geography and development pattern makes traditional transit and commuter service difficult or impossible to operate in many areas of the county. There are a number of nontraditional services that are low cost in nature and flexible enough to meet a variety of needs.

The nature of the non-traditional family of services is that service is not implemented (and costs are not incurred) until demand has met minimum thresholds. Market development service requires a minimum number of riders for a group to request service. Ridesharing, vanpooling, and carpooling are other approaches that can help meet the needs of commuters in a very cost-effective manner.

It makes sense from a planning, management, and operations standpoint to coordinate all of these non-traditional services together as part of the overall public transit program provided by the regional transit system.

### Shopper Shuttles

With peak hour vehicles available for other services during mid day, it may be possible to offer shopper shuttle services to sponsors willing to support the transit system. The shopper shuttle targets neighborhoods with high numbers of transit
dependent populations and frequent destinations (e.g. Wal-Mart, HEB, and medical centers), and can be very effective during off peak hours. Often these arrangements pay for themselves through funding from the retailers, who in return, receive the business, advertising/promotion, and they get involved in a positive way with their communities.

There are numerous examples (in Texas and across the country) of this type of service being successful with supermarkets and discount “big boxes.” Typically shuttles target transit dependent persons (elderly, disabled, and low-income persons) in their neighborhoods. Service is usually for shopping and medical.

2011 Service Strategy No. 1 – Connectivity – Seamless Connections

In order to develop a regional network, it will be essential to provide for seamless connections between systems. Without these seamless connections built around a regional transit plan, there will be no regional network.

Key elements to a seamless network include the following elements:

- Operates regularly throughout the day
- Transfer facilities are at appropriate location with passenger amenities, where appropriate
- Timed meets between buses that guarantee that the buses will connect. Without this element, failure will be inevitable

NEXT STEPS

The decision regarding which strategies to accept for inclusion in the plan begins at this point. After reviewing the strategies with the RTAP and receiving direction in selecting the potential strategies that are most relevant and that address the needs, then the consultant team will develop a draft plan that expands upon the selected strategies with an implementation plan, staffing, funding, and governance issues. In addition, the lead and participating entities and partners will be discussed. The draft plan will then go out for public comment.
Appendix 6

Technical Memorandum No. 6:

Organizational and Staff Structure and Process to Sustain Planning and Services
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

“Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan”

Technical Memorandum No. 6:
Organizational and Staff Structure and Process to Sustain Planning and Services

October 2011

KFH Group, Incorporated
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Technical Memorandum No 6:
Organizational and Staff Structure and Process to Sustain Planning and Services

This technical memorandum describes the organizational structure, infrastructure, and process to sustain regionally coordinated transportation planning activities in the region. The key elements of this memorandum as required in the work plan include:

1. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Corporation (LRGVDC) role as the lead agency and staffing capacity to carry out regional transportation planning activities;

2. Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) member roles; Committee membership, structure, and how the Committee will operate, including discussion of the use of by-laws or other tools to enhance operations and effectiveness;

3. How LRGVDC will routinely and meaningfully reach out to RTAP members; how the LRGVDC will regularly reach out to engage other stakeholders including riders, potential riders, and other members of the public;

4. How the LRGVDC and RTAP will regularly update this regionally coordinated transportation plan.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The LRGVDC is the lead agency for the three county region. As the lead agency, LRGVDC role includes:

- Organizing the RTAP, setting meetings, the agenda, and the overall coordination effort
• Providing staff support to the RTAP

• Managing administrative requirements of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)

• Responsibility for development and update of the coordinated planning process

• Working closely with RTAP members and the transit operators

• Organizing and conducting outreach efforts

• Special projects and other assignments as necessary

The LRGVDC is an active lead agency that has been in this role since the beginning of this coordinated effort in 2006. It has actively engaged each of the transit systems, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and has been able to maintain the interests of a variety of human service agencies in the five years since the start of this process.

The LRGVDC is well staffed to manage this project assigning a professional transit planner to manage the effort and spend approximately 25% of his time on the coordination efforts. He is supported by Valley Metro management and LRGVDC administrative staff including procurement, finance, and senior management.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY PANEL

The RTAP is composed of all transit systems (4) and MPOs (3) in the region, as well as human service agencies and other stakeholders. The RTAP has a flexible set of by-laws developed in 2009 and amended in 2010, that are straightforward and do not limit membership. At the same time, members are held to a standard that if not met, subjects them to a loss of voting privileges. This approach to the organizational structure mirrors the most successful approaches in the state and across the country. The RTAP has expressed satisfaction with this approach. The bylaws are shown in Appendix A. They spell out many of the actions of the RTAP which are also summarized below.
Member Roles

Members are expected to participate in meetings and if they miss three meetings in a row are subject to loss of voting rights. Each member of the RTAP will work for the good of regional coordination. Members are free to address any aspects of the plan, especially related to mobility management functions and can take on responsibility for any of the functions.

Membership

To become a voting member any person must attend three meetings in a row and demonstrate an interest in public transit and human service transportation. The meetings are open and there is an opportunity for a non-voting participant to express their views and participate in discussions. All types of human service agencies, advocates, political subdivisions, public and private transportation providers, and planning organizations are encouraged to join – with one designated representative (each) on the RTAP.

This model allows for an open process that is truly grass roots. There is no top down selection of members. Self selection and participation are all that is required.

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure is simple and flexible. The RTAP elects three officers; a chair, vice chair, and secretary. These three officers form an Executive Committee which oversees all activities for the RTAP and makes recommendations to be voted on. The lead agency works closely with both the RTAP and the Executive Committee.

Operational Elements

The RTAP meets bi-monthly or as called by the Executive Committee or a majority of the voting members. During the Plan study process, the Committee met monthly. The RTAP is not empowered to make decisions – their responsibility is to make recommendations. No entity will be bound by their decision.

Organizational Tools

The by-laws are an excellent tool to guide the group. They are simple to use and effective. The RTAP has modified this document once and flexibility allows changes as
needed. There are no recommendations to change any part of these by-laws at this time.

SUMMARY

The current organization of the RTAP has been functioning effectively for over six years. Membership is open to any interested entity or individual that expresses a commitment to the process. This is truly grass roots as envisioned by those developing the process at the Federal level. It is recommended that this process continue with modifications as the need arises.
Appendix A

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY
REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY PANEL
BYLAWS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

ADOPTED
October 15, 2009
Amended
August 18, 2010

I. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) is to improve the coordinated delivery of public transportation in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The goals of the RTAP are to:

   A. Generate efficiencies that encourage and increase public transportation ridership growth,
   B. Improve customer/rider satisfaction,
   C. Foster cooperation and coordination between stakeholders,
   D. Share resources and knowledge, and
   E. Advocate for regional objectives.

2. The RTAP is an advisory group only and does not have authority over its member organizations. At no time will a decision by the RTAP be legally binding on its members.

3. Each member of the RTAP will work for the good of regional coordination.

II. MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

1. The RTAP will be composed of stakeholders who have an interest in promoting public transportation in the region. Recommended membership may include, but is not limited to, representatives of the following agencies:

   A. Public transportation agencies,
   B. Private transportation agencies,
   C. Human service agencies,
   D. Workforce boards,
   E. Metropolitan Planning Organizations,
   F. Veterans groups,
   G. Aging and disability service agencies,
   H. Adult day care and assisted living organizations,
   I. Medical transportation agencies,
   J. Universities and educational institutions
K. Elected Officials, and  
L. Municipalities and counties.  
M. Other Interested Parties

2. RTAP member organization must submit the name and contact information of their representative (one per organization) and alternate(s) to the Lead Agency to be included in the membership rolls. This information should be updated immediately if a change occurs.

III. MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings will be held on a bimonthly basis, or as necessary. The Lead Agency is responsible for establishing the date, time, and location, and giving notice (including an agenda) to all members and the general public at least one (1) week before the date of the meeting.

2. Meetings will proceed in an orderly fashion, giving all members an opportunity to be heard and following Robert’s Rules of Order.

3. Special meetings may be held at any time when called by a majority of the RTAP.

4. Minutes of the meetings shall be kept and shall be submitted to members at the next meeting for approval.

IV. VOTING

1. A simple majority of voting members (51%) will constitute a quorum. In the absence of a quorum, no formal action shall be taken except to adjourn the meeting to a subsequent date.

2. All official action shall require a simple majority of the votes represented by the members present at a meeting during which a quorum has been established.

3. Voting members shall include those listed in Exhibit A.

4. A representative of the Texas Department of Transportation will serve as an ex officio, non-voting member.

5. Voting members will be in ex-officio status after missing three (3) consecutive meetings.

6. Members with ex-officio status wishing to regain voting privileges must attend three (3) consecutive meetings before voting privilege is reinstated by majority vote.

7. New membership can request voting privileges at any meeting and can be granted with majority vote.
V. ATTENDANCE

1. The Lead Agency will keep records of attendance of all meetings. Voting members who have missed two consecutive meetings shall be informed of their absences by letter. They will be asked if they wish to change their member representative due to the absences.

2. There will be a one-month grace period where the member entity can appeal an ex-officio status. Members then vote to enforce the status or not.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Lead Agency will be elected for a two-year term. (Amended 8-18-2010)

2. The lead agency will be responsible for administrative support to the RTAP including but not limited to the following:
   i. Minute taking and reporting
   ii. Scheduling meetings
   iii. Distribution of agendas
   iv. All federal and state required reporting
   v. Regional grant development

3. The lead agency shall present to the RTAP for review all federal and state required reporting and regional grant development prior to submittal.

VII. OFFICERS

1. Officers shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. (Amended 8-18-2010)

2. The RTAP shall elect a Chair, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary for a two-year term after adoption of these by-laws. Subsequently, every two years, these positions will be filled via election by the membership. (Amended 8-18-2010)

3. The Chair will be responsible for conducting meetings, reporting RTAP activities to the Executive Board of the Lead Agency, and representing the RTAP to the general public. (Amended 8-18-2010)

4. The Vice-Chair will be responsible for conducting meetings when the Chair is not present. The Secretary will be responsible for conducting meetings when neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair is present.

VIII. COMMITTEES

1. Together, the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary will serve as the Executive Committee.

2. In addition to conducting meetings, the Executive Committee will have the following functions:
   
   A. Recommend major objectives and goals to the RTAP,
   B. Recommend resolutions and initiatives to the RTAP, and
   C. Direct and oversee regional mobility management activities
3. Executive Committee meetings may be scheduled by that Committee as necessary and recommendations or proposed action items will be presented to the general RTAP membership for a final vote.

5. Members may create additional standing and ad hoc committees as needed.

IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Any member of the RTAP who has a financial, personal, or official interest in, or conflict (or appearance of a conflict) with any matter pending before the RTAP, of such nature that it prevents or may prevent that member from acting on the matter in an impartial manner, will offer to the RTAP to voluntarily excuse him/herself from discussion and voting on said matter.

X. AMENDMENTS

1. These Bylaws shall be in full force and effect at such time as they have been approved by a 51% vote of the membership.

2. These Bylaws may be revised by approval of 51% of the votes of the membership. Changes in the Bylaws must be presented at least one meeting before the meeting in which a vote will take place. No Bylaw change shall be made that has not been presented for discussion at a previous meeting.
Appendix 7

Technical Memorandum No. 7:
Leveraging Resources/Sustainability
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

“Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan”

Technical Memorandum No. 7: Leveraging Resources/Sustainability

October 2011

KFH Group, Incorporated
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Leveraging Resources/Sustainability

Seeking funding is always one of the most challenging roles for a transit manager. In fact, there are few sources that can be reliably utilized year in and year out. Research has shown that it often takes an entrepreneur who operates like a business to be able to draw down funds from a variety of sources. Even more difficult is sustaining this effort over an extended period of time. This technical memorandum describes how the region will leverage other resources to sustain regionally coordinated transportation planning activities beyond FY 2012. The first part of this chapter will review potential funding sources, followed by review of approaches to access these funds.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

As stated above, there are simply limited sources of funds available; however the good news is that many of the transit systems in the region are not accessing all of the opportunities available, so there is room for growth.

The sources of funding come from five basic sources:

1. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Funding – There are a variety of FTA funding sources. As a rule these funds must be matched with other funding sources and the availability of matching funds is often an inhibiting factor. Operating assistance is funded at a 50% match, while capital expenditures are matched by the federal government at 80%.

2. Local and State Sources of Funds – This can include: human service contracts/funding (including Medicaid), local and state government contributions.

3. Dedicated Sales Tax – There are mechanisms in Texas State law that allows a variety of entities to seek up to a 1 cent sales tax.
4. **Private Sector Sponsorships and Advertising** – Many transit systems across the country have embraced the private sector as a source of sponsorship and/or advertising (traditional to transit).

5. **Other Sources** – These include foundation grants and other fund raising techniques.

These sources will be described in detail in the next section.

**FTA Funds**

FTA funds are used by transit systems as a matter of course. Most of the funds are managed by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) with the exception of large urban areas who are direct recipients of FTA funds. TxDOT’s Public Transportation Division (PTN) works closely with transit systems. TxDOT manages, provides oversight, and disperses funding for:

- **Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities)** - Financial assistance for purchasing capital equipment or service, to be used to transport elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

- **Section 5311 (Non-Urbanized or Rural Area)** - financial assistance to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized (rural) areas for any needs.

In the non-urbanized (populations under 50,000) and small urbanized (population 50,000 to 200,000) areas of Texas, TxDOT also manages, provides oversight, and disperses funding for the following additional FTA programs.

- **Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC))** - The JARC Program provides funding for developing new or expanded transportation services that connect low income persons to jobs and other employment-related services, and to transport residents of urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities.

- **Section 5317 (New Freedom)** - The New Freedom Program provides funding to assist individuals with disabilities to access and use transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. Projects funded through the New Freedom Program must be both new and go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In the large urbanized areas (200,000 or greater), funding under Section 5307, the JARC and New Freedom programs flows from the FTA to the designated recipient in...
each area. In addition other funding sources may be available for facilities development and technology from time to time.

**State and Local Funding**

The State of Texas provides funds that can be used to match federal funds. These funds are currently being utilized. Local funding comes from cities and counties that contribute to the transit system as is being done by many of the cities and towns in the service area.

Contracting with human service agencies is also an important source of revenue in Texas and across the country. The Medical Transportation Program (MTP) represents about 90% of the available local funding for human service transportation. These funds are not only a valuable source of revenue for the system, they are also very important as matching funds. Federal law permits the use of federal human service contract revenue (Medicaid included) as local match for FTA funds.

**Dedicated Sales Tax**

Based on the experiences of other transportation authorities, this is a difficult and potentially very time consuming effort that is in essence asking voters to approve an additional tax – assuming that the city or county is not at their maximum of 2%. Just getting to the point where agreement can be reached to initiate an election can be very difficult, made more so as additional political jurisdictions become involved. If it is successful at any level, from a ¼% to 1% tax rate, it will ensure adequate local funding to meet most if not all of the local costs for operating the service.

An authority may not adopt a sales and use tax rate, including a rate increase, that when combined with the rates of all sales and use taxes imposed by other political subdivisions of the state having territory in the authority exceeds 2% in any location in the authority. The combined rate of all sales and use taxes imposed by the district and all other political subdivisions of this state may not exceed 2% in any location in the district.

**Private Sector Funding**

A number of transit systems in Texas and around the country have had success in developing sponsors and partners for service. Companies such as HEB and Walmart (for example) have been known to sponsor transit service (sponsorship potential is detailed in Appendix A).

Advertising, another form of private sector funding, is very popular in Texas and has been done since the beginning of the 20th Century. An excellent example is Capital
Metro’s bus wrap program. In Lubbock, the transit system generates over $200,000 in private funding of various types, including shopper shuttles, partnerships, and advertising. This was also discussed in detail in the 2006 plan and is carried over here as well.

Other Sources

Unfortunately these sources are limited in number, dollar amount, and duration. They are of limited value on any type of sustaining level. In order to access these funds, management must monitor a wide variety of web sites and be looking weekly for opportunities.

ACCESSING FUNDS FOR TRANSIT

While any transit system management team can secure federal, state, and some local funds just by virtue of their existence and filing, grant request with the appropriate agency. A transit system can subsist on these basic funds, but the ability to grow and meet the ever expanding needs will be stunted by a perennial shortage of funding.

There are many systems that have chosen a different path. These systems, often managed by entrepreneurs seek out other sources of funding to pay for more than very basic services. National research conducted by the KFH Group, Inc. (TCRP Report No. 70 Guidebook for Change and Innovation at Rural and Small Urban Transit WWW.TCRPONLINE.org) tells us that these entrepreneurs have found ways to generate revenue to pay for their services. Some aggressively sell their services, one has developed an innovative approach to procuring vehicles for regional needs, one developed a partnership program that generates significant revenues, and another receives significant funds through advertising. Most do not depend solely on state and federal transit assistance for their funding. One of the striking features of these systems is how they tend to operate like a business. One of the innovators is perceived in the community as a private business, rather than the arm of county government that it is.

Managers do not appear to let funding issues get in their way. They realize that if the service has merit, someone will pay for it. The innovators receive funding from the traditional state, federal, and local governments. They also receive an assortment of funds from large corporations, human service agencies, sponsors/partners, malls, colleges, a military base, and hospitals, as well as a number of other sources for providing transportation, advertising, or other related services, such as a Medicaid brokerage. The report found the following characteristics related to resources:
1. **Not Dependent on Government Funds** – Diversity of funding sources/revenue is the key for most businesses. Indeed, this financial independence from limited funds should be a number one priority for every transit system. One Board member commented that the agency’s culture requires that it not be “victimized by the ebb and flow of federal dollars” but develop some independent revenue sources.

2. **Entrepreneurial Spirit** – For the successful operators aggressive sales and private business practices are keys to finding funds. The innovators typically have unique ways to fund their system. One of the managers interviewed had 25 years experience in retail business. He has taken his sales background and applied it to transit, organizing the business to bring in customers and offering them various “products” through the transit organization. Another manager summed up her practices as “sell, sell, sell.”

3. **Advertising** - Advertising has been a revenue source for transit for over 100 years. It is an excellent source of funding that a number of the innovators take advantage of. Many systems have a formal bus wrap program, generating significant revenues.

4. **Sponsorships and Partnerships** – Many successful systems have business and agency sponsors that contract for service, advertise, or sponsor transit. These businesses can generate funds for service and can help generate funds for the system from other sources. These sponsors will pay for advertising. In the end, large big box stores and their parent companies have a lot more money than local governments, typically strapped for revenue.

5. **Distributing Resources** – One system has a very innovative way to build community resources by distributing used vehicles to a variety of organizations and then supporting those vehicles with driver training, maintenance, and insurance. In return, the agencies support and do not compete for Section 5310 funding.

6. **Leveraging Funds: Taking Advantage of Matching Funds** – Smart management teams maximize their use of matching funds to generate the most federal revenue possible. They do not leave federal funds on the table, for want of local match. For example, one system has an agreement with a maintenance vendor that if they pay them within five days of invoice, they get a 10% contribution from the vendor. That money is eligible match. Those systems that have MTP funds typically generate significant local match through that source.
Summary: Thrive or Survive

Funding a transit system is an ongoing task that management must allocate considerable time to accomplish. Getting beyond the limited funding available from FTA and TxDOT requires entrepreneurial skills that go beyond transit management. It is far more akin to sales and promotion - essential to business and essential to transit.

Managers should seek training in sales and promotion and seek out opportunities in other areas. There is no choice: Thrive or survive.
Appendix A

New Sources of Local Revenue: Developing a Sponsorship Program for Transit

Transit has a long history of providing advertising on and in buses for additional revenue for the system. Some rural systems have engaged in advertising over the years, but a sponsorship program is more than simply advertising. Instead of the usual selling of just one form of advertising, the system should sell sponsorship packages. Since sponsorship and advertising funds are an important source of local funding, this program should be implemented first, in order to determine the level of funding that can be attained.

IDENTIFYING THE SERVICE

As discussed above, the program is designed to sell a service to both public and private sponsors. Possible services for sale can include (but should not be limited to):

Sponsorship Services at Any Level

- Recognized as a sponsor on the system how to ride guide (system map and schedule)
- Sponsored by... on all system literature and advertising
- Decal on side or back of the bus
- Advertising on transit benches
- Advertising on shelters
- Adopt a shelter or route
- Internal bus advertising
- Dedicated shuttle
- Special promotions sponsorship

Higher Level Sponsorship Services

- Company logo on the system map
- Placing of a shelter for customers and/or employees
- Placing of a stop conducive to customers and/or employees - this could include going into a parking lot and stopping next to the facility
• Route named for sponsor
• Bus Wrap

If properly packaged, these services have considerable value to businesses such as:

• Large Retailers – Walmart, Target, and HEB are excellent examples, the malls and other grocery stores are others.

• Hospitals – There are a number of examples of wrapped buses for hospitals, medical groups, and pharmacies.

• Large Local Based Corporations – Are there any large corporations based in the area?

• Small Local Based Companies – Any local company can participate at a number of levels.

• Fast Food Restaurants – Wrapped buses are popular with some of the largest chains

• Television, Radio Stations, and Local Newspapers – There are also opportunities with these organizations. They can give the system valuable advertising.

**Develop Sponsorship Levels and Packages**

After determining what will be for sale, the following activities should be accomplished:

• **Price the Items** – Attach value to each item for sale. Check with firms that wrap buses to determine the cost of a wrap. Items should be priced competitively with similar types of advertisements, such as billboards, and television and radio advertising. Think big! Both large and small firms should have opportunities. Set up multiyear packages for semi-permanent advertising such as bus wraps, shelter and bench signs.

• **Develop Sponsorship Packages** – After pricing the various services to be provided, the system should put them in sponsorship packages to maximize revenue. Each level of sponsorship should have a name to it. For example; gold, silver, bronze, etc, or a name to connote transit - Examples can include:
  -- High End Sponsor (Five star, platinum, etc.) – the value of these services is significant. High end services should only go to those sponsors willing to
pay over $10,000 per year (with 3 year contracts). Various packages can be combined based on a customer/sponsors need. These high end services include, but are not limited to; bus wraps, a shelter in front of facility, with advertising, route named after sponsor (e.g. mall route, Hospital route or College route), routing conducive to the sponsors business, and logo on the system map. Each of these services should be worth up to $10,000 per year and more if they are combined.

-- Mid Level Sponsors – These sponsors should have access to a variety of packages that include; advertising on a shelter(s), bench(s), and internal advertising. Decal on back of the bus, and name in the riders guide are also available. Other opportunities can include sponsoring special promotions.

-- Entry Level Sponsor – Small local sponsors have a place in sponsorship as well. Packages can include; advertising on benches, and internal advertising. Certain special promotions should be priced for the entry level sponsor, and recognition as a sponsor should be on promotional material

- **Create Promotional Material** – Develop materials to sell the sponsorships. The material should be of high quality.

- **Recruit Supporters** – Community and political leaders as well as can be recruited to help sell the packages. Attempt to get local media outlets to assist.

- **Sell Sponsorships** – After all of the preparation has been completed, the sales can be initiated. Both large and small sponsors should be sought. For larger firms, first attempts should be with local contacts. If attempts with large firms fail at the local level - contact regional or corporate offices.

**Limits on Advertising**

The system should set up standards for advertising on the system. Advertising should be tasteful, within the normal bounds of advertising accepted in the community. It is recommended that the system refuse any advertising of a political, religious, or adult oriented content or intent. This will only cause controversy where none is wanted. For example, an urban transit system recently had a large advertisement on buses with the picture of a young man in his underwear (an underwear advertisement). While that might be acceptable in that city (although controversial), it definitely would not be acceptable in most rural areas (and most other places in the United States).
Advertising should be of a quality design and application. All advertising should meet quality standards developed through the system. It should be professionally designed and installed - it must look good.

**Development and Implementation of the Program**

The system will need to determine if it wants to develop and implement this program in house or work through an advertising/marketing firm to sell the sponsorships on a percentage agreement. Developing and implementing the program is a considerable effort, and therein lays the trade-offs of the two approaches. While the work is harder and time consuming, the potential revenues are greater (if properly implemented).

If the system chooses to seek outside assistance, they should first meet with a number of firms to determine their interest, and then seek quotes through a competitive procurement.
Appendix 8

Technical Memorandum No. 8:
Performance Measures
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

“Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan”

Technical Memorandum No. 8: Coordinated Transportation Plan Update: Performance Measures

October 2011
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Performance measurement is an important component of transportation programs and particularly a demonstration program, providing an assessment of the program’s operation and its effectiveness in meeting its stated goals. Performance measurement also supplies important information that can be used to inform and educate community partners and stakeholders on the progress of the program. Evaluation of a demonstration program additionally serves to assess the potential for transitioning the program from pilot to permanent, ongoing status.

The setting of goals and objectives was the first step in guiding the process. The second step is to identify the different types of quantitative and qualitative performance measures followed by setting of specific measures for each of the strategies to be developed.

Performance measures should be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Therefore, operating data such as trips provided, as well as input from users and operators, should be components of the evaluation process. These various techniques to measure performance are outlined in this chapter.

DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF RTAP STRATEGIES

The RTAP will also develop appropriate measures to monitor the success of individual strategies approved as part of the plan. It should be pointed out that while this technical memorandum discusses performance measurement concepts and the types of measures based on the project goals, specific measures attached to strategies will be discussed when reviewing strategies in a subsequent chapter.

There are a number of basic concepts that were used to identify appropriate system performance indicators, and that will be used in the setting of performance measures for individual strategies. These include:

- Aligning the performance measures to the established vision, goals, and objectives;
- Aligning the performance measures to strategies identified through the coordinated planning process;
- Keeping the performance measures simple and using a small number of measures. For example, TCRP Reports Nos. 124 and 136 recommend between five and six measures for rural and urban paratransit;
- Measuring both:
  - Efficiency of services - “doing the right things”
  - Effectiveness of services - “doing things right”
- Ensuring each measure has a stated purpose;
- Recognizing that data collection and analysis is expensive and time consuming;
- Measuring performance using as few indicators as needed. If it is not a problem, measure it on a sample basis as needed.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

All public transit systems that receive funds or benefit from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Urbanized Area Funding Program (Section 5307) or the rural transit program (Section 5311) are required to file an annual National Transportation Database (NTD) report. The data required for this report are defined in the annual
NTD reporting manual for all transit modes. (The annual Reporting Manual is published each year and is available on the NTD website at [www.ntdprogram.gov](http://www.ntdprogram.gov). When feasible, quantitative data should be based on the NTD terms and definitions.

Following are transit specific performance measures that can be applied to operational strategies. Each of these performance measures evaluate different aspects of a service as noted:

- **Passenger Trips per Vehicle Hour or Vehicle Mile** – These are key measures of productivity.

- **Operating Cost per Vehicle Hour or Vehicle Mile** – These measures determine the basic cost of providing service.

- **Operating Cost per Passenger Trip** – This measure is a reflection of the cost per hour and the system productivity. The higher the productivity, the lower the cost per trip.

- **Safety Incidents per 100,000 Vehicle-Miles** – A basic measure of safety.

- **On-Time Performance** – A measure for determining the quality of service being provided.

- **Annual One-Way Trips per Capita** – This measure helps depict the impact of the service in the community.

Quantitative data related to non-operational strategies are not always applicable, however in many cases numbers can be used to measure success. For example, where a strategy may include developing a brochure to guide medical facilities in locating at or near a bus route, a quantitative measure can include: number of brochures distributed to the medical and human service communities. In addition, an outreach strategy that involves a mobility manager approach may include quantitative data on the number of phone contacts, the number of website hits, or the number of people who received travel training.

**QUALITATIVE DATA**

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) should also collect qualitative data about the program on a periodic basis, obtaining feedback from users as well as from agencies and operators. This information will help
assess the degree to which the project or demonstration program is meeting its goals. Qualitative data may also:

- Suggest revisions and improvements to the program.
- Help assess the impact of a strategy on the community, going beyond just the data and numbers.
- Provide information that can be used to report broader outcomes to elected officials, funding partners, and other key community stakeholders, and help to educate them on the importance and the overall benefits of coordinated transportation.

When obtaining and assessing the qualitative data, in general the following should be considered:

- **User Benefits** – Direct benefits to users from increased access to services and activities (i.e., medical services, employment, education facilities, shopping).
- **Economic Benefits** – Economic impact of expanding access to jobs shopping, and other community locations, as well as the expanded business opportunities for taxi providers.
- **Public Service Support** – Support for government agency activities and programs by allowing access to medical services to avoid more acute and expensive medical problems, helping reduce welfare dependency and unemployment, and providing ability to live independently and reduce care facility costs.
- **Equity Benefits** – Increased economic and social opportunities for people who may be economically, physically and socially disadvantaged
- **Option Value** – Value people place on having a service available, even if they do not currently use it, i.e. during emergencies or when a family member suddenly can no longer drive.

**PROGRAM INTERVIEWS**

A possible technique for gathering both quantitative and qualitative information is to conduct interviews with projects, particularly with the variety of community transportation programs that are funded through the Job Access and Reverse Commute...
(JARC) and New Freedom Programs. These interviews can be conducted in person or over the phone, and can provide a wide range of information that can be used to evaluate services that are originating from the coordinated transportation planning process. An example of a form that can guide the interview process is located in Appendix A. This form is designed for an interview of a New Freedom-funded project, but can easily be modified for projects funded through other programs or to gain information on specific types of services such as a mobility management effort.

The information and data obtained through the interview process can be used beyond the evaluation process. For instance, it can be used for peer-sharing efforts with other projects in the area, and to help identify opportunities for additional supports or trainings that may be needed to ensure the success of the project.

USER FEEDBACK

Participants should have opportunities to give feedback and input on the program. There are several options available, and this input can be obtained in through different techniques:

A short user survey could be posted on the website of the administrator of the program. This would be a very straightforward survey asking basic questions about the user’s trips and specific questions about the most recent trip taken. The survey would also ask for input on key aspects of the program, with questions such as:

- Thinking about your most recent trip, please rate each of the following:
  - Timeliness of arrival for your pick-up:
    - Good
    - Satisfactory
    - Needs improvement
  - Driver courtesy:
    - Good
    - Satisfactory
    - Needs improvement
  - Was the vehicle clean and in good working condition?
    - Good
    - Satisfactory
    - Needs improvement
  - Overall rating of the trip
    - Good
    - Satisfactory
    - Needs improvement
A written survey could also be administered to users of the program as a mail-out, mail-back instrument. To increase the response rate, return postage could be provided. This would allow users who do not have computers to provide feedback. Such a survey might be done six to nine months after initiation of the demonstration program to obtain early experience with the program. Depending on survey results, an annual survey thereafter would be adequate.

Another option to obtain user feedback would be periodic telephone follow-up with a small number of randomly chosen users to check on their most recent trips. Assuming the fare media identified the user, the redeemed paper media would be used to randomly choose users to contact. Such telephone follow-up would be very brief and could also serve to verify trip reporting from the taxi companies.

Service quality information can also be obtained through a “secret shopper” method, whereby a designated representative or representatives of the program administrator schedules and takes a trip, with an objective of collecting specific information about the trip that is taken. It is important to recognize that such data are individual trips and the information cannot be attributed to the program as a whole. But “secret shopper” data can be useful to add to service quality information collected through other methods.

MONTHLY AND ANNUAL REPORTING

The performance data identified above should be summarized on a monthly basis and provided to involved and interested groups, including the participating jurisdictions and the RTAP. During the first six months however, it is recommended that service be monitored on a weekly basis to detect any negative trends quickly. Data from the early months of the program can be particularly useful for fine-tuning practices and this should be the focus for the demonstration program during the first six to nine months. After one year, the program should be reviewed in detail to determine areas in need of adjustment or revision.

Funding for the program should be reviewed. Are funding sources expected to continue? Do the subsidy levels for individual users need adjustment based on available funding and use levels by the participants? If funding seems stable for the near-term future, the program’s status as demonstration can be assessed; it may be appropriate to move the program beyond its demonstration phase.
GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The RTAP has identified the following performance measures that will be monitored to assess the extent to which the coordinated public transportation system is achieving the goals of the RTAP Plan.

About the Performance Indicators: The Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Transportation Advisory Panel does not directly implement transportation services, but instead provides coordination support to numerous agencies that do implement these services in the region. The RTAP intends to track the performance of the Coordinated Regional Public Transportation System through the following System Performance Indicators. The RTAP may also develop additional performance measures to track coordination activities themselves.

Goal 1: Improve the quality of people’s transit experience

I. Improve service delivery
   o RTAP will recommend for public transit agencies to acquire technology to track on time performance
     ▪ Performance Measure: RTAP will recommend adoption of a 95% on time performance standards: regional schedule variation (+/- 15 min) in FY 2013
   o Increase service frequency throughout the region, as transit agencies will seek to adopt the following standards before FY 2013:
     ▪ Performance Measure: Urban areas should have headways of one hour as a maximum
     ▪ Performance Measure: Rural areas should have headways of two hours as a maximum
   o Develop pilot plans for improved service via the FY 2011 Regional Transportation Coordination Plan (*revise after final draft of regional plan is completed)

A. Valley Metro will implement a commuter route from McAllen to Harlingen via FY 2012 JARC in October 2011 as well as a Harlingen to Brownsville route via San Benito and Los Fresnos beginning in January 2012.
   ▪ Performance Measure: One-way trips per vehicle trip, one-way trips per hour, cost per one-way trip
B. Valley Metro will seek adding service from Harlingen to South Padre Island before 2014
   ▪ Performance Measure: Implementation of morning and evening commuter service at hours conducive to work schedules. Once
service is implemented measures will be operational: one-way trips per vehicle trip, one-way trips per hour, cost per one-way trip.

C. Valley Metro will seek adding a Mid-Valley Network before 2014
   - *Performance Measure:* Implementation of new service. Once service is implemented measures will be operational: One-way trips per vehicle trip, one-way trips per hour, cost per one-way trip.

D. Valley Metro will develop an updated rural service plan based on 2010 Census data before 2014
   - *Performance Measure:* Valley Metro will produce to produce an RFP for a rural service study in FY 2013

E. Improve customer service
   - RTAP will seek to provide a workshop for customer service skills to the public transit agency staff in FY 2012
   - *Performance Measure:* Customer service skills workshop held for all transit systems in the region.
   - RTAP will recommend a uniform fare structure before FY 2013

F. Urban fixed routes

G. Commuter routes

H. Rural routes

I. ADA Paratransit
   - *Performance Measure:* Implementation of a regional fare structure

**Goal 2:** Provide increased transit alternatives to people in the region

I. Public transit agencies will continuously integrate with multiple modes of non-traditional transportation
   - *Performance Measures:* Successful completion of each activity

II. MPO’s will develop a regional map identifying sidewalks, hike & bike trails, bike lanes, bus routes, bus stops, bus shelters, etc. before FY 2013
   - *Performance Measures:* Successful completion of each activity

III. Expand vanpool through state JARC
   - *Performance Measure:* Number of fully functioning vanpools
IV. Add projects from the strategies and partnerships of the 2011 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan
   • Performance Measures: Number of service hours placed, one-way trips is also an important indicator

Goal 3: Coordinate transit agency functions

I. RTAP will complete a resource inventory in 2012 to identify agency capabilities

II. RTAP will recommend a regional training calendar to the public transit agencies before the end of FY 2012

III. RTAP will recommend uniform standards to the public transit agencies for the following:
   • Fleet standards
     o Urban
     o Rural
     o Commuter
     o ADA Paratransit
   • Bus stops/shelters
     o Amenities and signage
   • Brochures and time schedules
   • System maps

IV. RTAP recommends to public transit agencies for anytime there are changes to time schedules, route alignments, or addition/subtraction of routes that they inform each other of such changes
   • Performance Measures: Successful completion of each activity

Goal 4: Improve the image of transit across the region

I. RTAP will continuously identify opportunities for transit promotion campaigns such as holiday promotions; Dump the Pump Day, Green Living Festival, etc.
   • Create an annual promotion event calendar starting in FY 2012

II. RTAP will develop a coordinated outreach strategy to identify and educate stakeholders based on the findings of the FY 2011 Regional Coordination Plan in FY 2013
III. RTAP will organize an annual newsletter to inform and educate local, state, federal officials and the general public on public transportation
  - Performance Measures: Successful completion of each activity

**Goal 5:** Develop a sustainable fiscal system for transit in the region

I. Transit providers will present an annual availability of funds report to the RTAP and other partner agencies beginning in FY 2012 including lapsing funds

II. Non-transit agencies will request their annual state/regional transportation budget report to present to the RTAP beginning in January 2012

III. RTAP will strategize the use of all previously identified funding, subject to their respective requirements

IV. Non-transit agency in-kind match identified as needed

V. RTAP will recommend performance measures, identified in the FY 2011 Regional Coordination Plan, to the public transit agencies
  - Performance Measures: Successful completion of each activity

**SUMMARY**

Performance monitoring of the implemented strategies is an important component of the planning process, allowing the RTAP, transit management, stakeholders, and participating jurisdictions to assess the services provided, the resources required to fund the program, and the users’ response to the program. Performance monitoring for a demonstration program is particularly critical as it allows for adjustments and revisions to ensure the program is operating as intended. Decisions can then be made as to the transition of the program to ongoing status. When the strategies are developed they will address the performance data that should be collected, indicating the entity responsible for collecting the data, the frequency of data collection, and monthly and yearly reporting.

Performance assessment should also involve a more qualitative review of the program. This should include methods to obtain feedback from users of the programs, such as user surveys, and input from the taxi companies and drivers participating in the program. Such information will supplement the quantitative assessment based on hard data.
APPENDIX 9
Economic Activity, Income and Work Travel Information

Lower Rio Grande Valley – Hidalgo County

Direction and Distance to Work - Hidalgo County

Legend

- Open Water
- Perennial Ice/Snow
- Developed, Open Space
- Developed, Low Intensity
- Developed, Medium Intensity
- Developed, High Intensity
- Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)
- Consolidated Shore
- Deciduous Forest
- Evergreen Forest
- Mixed Forest
- Shrub/Scrub
- Grasslands/Herbaceous
- Pasture/Hay
- Cultivated Crops
- Woody Wetlands
- Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands
- Highways

2006 National Land Cover Dataset
2010 U.S. Census
The map above illustrates the approximate number of workers by city in Hidalgo County on a compass rose indicating the direction and distance traveled to work.

**Residential Workforce Size, Direction and Distance to Work**
Some transit agencies provide service specifically to help riders access work. Examples of work-related transit include targeting specific travel patterns for workers traveling along distances into urban area or providing shuttles for employees of major employers willing to contribute to the service’s cost.

**County Economic Activity**
Hidalgo County has sizable portions of job commutes which are not contained within the county, but vast majority employees live and work within the county limits.

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**Residents’ Work Travel Pattern**
This map below illustrates the quantity of destinations of Hidalgo County workers’ primary jobs.
The map above illustrates the approximate number of workers by city in Cameron County on a compass rose indicating the direction and distance traveled to work.

**Residential Workforce Size, Direction and Distance to Work**
Some transit agencies provide service specifically to help riders access work. Examples of work-related transit include targeting specific travel patterns for workers traveling along distances into urban area or providing shuttles for employees of major employers willing to contribute to the service’s cost.

**County Economic Activity**
Cameron County has a mixture of community types in relation to the region, but the majority of jobs in the county are for employees that live within it.
Resident’s Work Travel Pattern
The map at below illustrates the quantity of destinations of Cameron County worker’s primary jobs.
General Population Information and Population Density

2010 Population Density
Population density is measured as persons per square mile. The map above illustrates population density in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in 2010 by Census Block - the smallest geography available from the Census Bureau. Population density has profound impact on transit service efficiency. Concentration of transit attractors and generators, or common origins/destinations, are also important for efficient transit service.

Population Change by City / Town
From 2000 to 2010, the fastest growing cities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley were Alton, Edinburg, Hidalgo, Mission, and Pharr. All of these cities are located in Hidalgo County in the areas surrounding McAllen, making it the largest and fastest growing urban area in the region.
Veteran Status
The Veteran’s Administration (VA) provides medical care for veterans. If needed, the VA may also provide transportation to appointments. Opportunities to coordinate general public transit and transportation for veterans may exist.
Demographic Characteristics and Transit Need Analysis

Transit Need Index - Lower Rio Grande Valley

Transit Need Index (TNI)
A Transit Need Index (TNI) is a method to combine demographic characteristics of typical transit need populations for comparison across the entire agency service area. The TNI map above combines the four factors (to the left) along with total population to identify where concentrations of potential transit need are located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley as of 2010.

Demographic Transit Need Factors
Researchers and transit planners investigate the demographic characteristics of transit service areas to plan and design services. The primary source for demographics
information is the Census Bureau’s website, which contains both decennial census and American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Four demographic characteristics are typical indicators of a need for public transit: population age 65 and over, individuals in poverty, people with a disability, and households with no vehicle available.

Population with Some Disability - Lower Rio Grande Valley
Poverty Rate - Lower Rio Grande Valley

Legend

- Green: 0% - 20%
- Yellow: 21% - 35%
- Orange: 36% - 45%
- Red: 46% - 60%
- Black: 61% - 80%
- Blue: Water Bodies
- Gray: Highways

2000 U.S. Census - Block Groups
Households with No Vehicle - Lower Rio Grande Valley
History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is a four-county region located at the southern tip of the Texas border with Mexico. It consists of Starr, Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties, Hidalgo County currently being the most populous of the four. The urban development in the area centers around McAllen, Harlingen, and Brownsville.

Because the region is located near and along the mouth of the Rio Grande River delta, the land has historically provided good agricultural use. Originally the region was mostly quasi-desert rangeland, but with the introduction of large-scale irrigation in 1898 and the construction of the railroad in 1904 the region was able to develop rapidly. In the 1990s and 1920s massive migration to the Valley occurred from both Midwestern farmers and immigrants from Mexico.
Development in the 1940s intensified along U.S. Highway 83 to include homes, stores, processing plants, and other related agricultural centers. Crops such as cotton, sorghum, sugarcane, and various vegetables were all traded in the area, but citrus became the most important good for the region since its introduction in 1904.

Vacationers and tourism became important to the Valley in the second half of the 20th century as many U.S. northerners began to make their winter homes in the region’s cities. The region has also grown economically through the creation of maquiladoras and the NAFTA agreement made during the 1990s.