Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council

Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan

FINAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2021

moore & associates

TJKM

Table of Contents

Table of Exhibits

moore & associates

This page intentionally blank.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is intended to provide a concise summary of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan contained within the following chapters.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the project as well as the status of recommendations from the prior plan.

Adopted in 2003, Chapter 461 of the Texas Transportation Code requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) be responsible for identifying duplication of and gaps in the provision of public transportation services, inefficiencies in service provision, and equipment that is being underused by public transportation providers. In addition, federal surface transportation legislation was enacted in 2005 with a very similar requirement. The federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires locally developed coordinated public transportation-human services plans for federally-funded transportation providers. TxDOT fulfills both obligations by requiring each TxDOT Planning Region to prepare and submit a Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan every five years beginning with the preparation of each TxDOT Planning District's initial plan in 2006. This represents the third update of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (Plan) for Planning Region 21.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) served as the lead agency for the Regional Coordinated Transportation Plan. The Development Council's Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) functioned as the project steering committee. A competitive procurement took place in mid-2021, resulting in the selection of Moore & Associates, Inc. to prepare the update.

The Five-Year Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan consists of three core components: Transportation Resources Inventory, Needs Assessment, and Gap Analysis. These project components are supplemented by additional materials required by TxDOT which examine Planning Region 21's goals, assess its ability to implement recommendations, and set forth performance measures by which progress can be measured.

The prior Five-Year Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan was completed in February 2017. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council served as the lead agency for the prior update as well.

Chapter 2 presents the Transportation Resources Inventory. The Transportation Resources Inventory is far from simply a listing of providers. It is useful not only to regional planning bodies but to stakeholders and end-users as well. To that end, the Inventory includes considerable relevant information about transportation providers in the region, including service area, who is eligible to use the service, and other relevant information. The Inventory also provides a concise summary matrix identifying which services are available within each individual county. Included within the Inventory are organizations that provide transportation services for their clientele, even if they do not operate a transportation service themselves.

While there is, on paper, public transit service in each of the three counties within the project area, the reality is that coverage can be spotty within some of the rural portions. Historically, transit service levels reflect a balance between quantifiable demand and available resources.

Social service transportation tends to be focused chiefly within the more populated portions of the project area. These services may offer transportation only within a certain community (as opposed to the county as a whole). Some level of taxi service is available in every county, though most taxi services do not maintain an online presence.

Recommendations arising from the Transportation Resources Inventory include:

1. Regional travel training program to address the knowledge gap identified by community stakeholders.
2. A one-stop "mobility information" call center.
3. Improve availability of information regarding transportation services provided by social service organizations within the project area.
4. Encourage taxi and shuttle companies within the project area to establish/maintain online presence regarding their respective services.

Chapter 3 presents a Comprehensive Needs Assessment. A detailed summary of the methodology for preparing the Needs Assessment includes discussion of the stakeholder survey, community survey, and community pop-up events. A detailed discussion of project area demographics by county is also included. Fourteen observations included in the Needs Assessment help shape the scope of the transportation needs within the region.

The Gap Analysis, featured in **Chapter 4**, includes a series of observations and conclusions segregated by population and travel need. Development of the Gap Analysis compared the needs identified in Chapter 3 with the transportation services identified in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5, Planning for Comprehensive Services, offers a series of 24 strategies designed to address mobility needs and service gaps identified within the three-county project region.

Chapter 6 summarizes other recent planning efforts undertaken within the three-county project area. These include state and regional transportation planning efforts, corridor plans, and city comprehensive plans and active transportation plans.

Chapter 7 reviews the vision, mission, and goals and objectives previously adopted by the Development Council's Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel.

Chapter 8 assesses the region's ability to sustain planning efforts and implement the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan. This chapter also prioritizes the strategies identified in Chapter 8 into short-, mid-, and long-term horizons.

While all of the recommendations identified herein are important, some should receive higher prioritization due to urgency in solving a particular transportation issue, ease of implementation, or the

presence of available funding. The 24 recommendations presented in Chapter 5 are divided into three priority groups: Short-term, Mid-term, and Long-term. Inclusion of a recommendation in a longer-range tier does not indicate lesser importance; rather, higher priority may be placed on recommendations that can be implemented relatively quickly or without additional dedicated funding. Lower-tier recommendations will generally require additional funding to be secured or the negotiation of inter-agency agreements. Progress toward each recommendation should be reviewed on an annual basis using the performance measures identified in Chapter 9.

Those strategies are:

Priority: Short-term

- Synchronize future service changes.
- Implement recommendations presented in the 2030 Transit Development Plan.
- Improve schedule coordination thereby reducing wait-time.
- Link South Texas College campuses in McAllen and Weslaco.
- Expand public awareness (promote) Valley Metro's Flex route service feature.
- Provide more detailed transit service information.
- Expand public access to transit service information.
- Implement a travel training program.
- Improve access to public transit information via senior centers.

Priority: Mid-term

- Work with social service organizations to subsidize the purchase of multi-ride fare media.
- Provide regional trip planning via Google Maps.
- Develop partnership with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to address mobility needs outside regular service hours.
- Improve service frequency for inter-county transit service.
- Expand local service in San Benito.
- Expand transit service to include neighborhoods around Harlingen.
- Realign Edinburg transit routings.
- Produce a regional transit guide.
- Evaluate practicality of joint recruitment and training of drivers.
- Improve local bus stops.
- Prepare a Bus Stop Improvement Plan for each operator.
- Increase capital (vehicle) funding for non-profit operators.

Priority: Long-term

- Evaluate transit service delivery in Willacy County.
- Introduce service to McAllen Veterans Service Office.
- Implement a one-stop (transportation information) call center.

Chapter 9 provides a series of performance measures that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan. One or more action items, along with how to assess performance, is identified for each of the strategies identified in Section 9.2, along with recommended prioritization. Chapter 9 also assesses progress with respect to the statewide performance metrics used by TxDOT.

Following the chapters, a series of appendices include survey instruments, documentation of community engagement, and the 2021 RCTP roster.

Chapter 1 | Introduction

1.1 Project Background

Adopted in 2003, Chapter 461 of the Texas Transportation Code requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) be responsible for identifying duplication of and gaps in the provision of public transportation services, inefficiencies in service provision, and equipment that is being under-utilized by public transportation providers. In addition, federal surface transportation legislation was enacted in 2005 with a very similar requirement. The federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires locally developed Coordinated Public Transportation-Human Services Plans for federally-funded transportation providers. TxDOT fulfills both obligations by requiring each TxDOT Planning Region to prepare and submit a Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan every five years beginning with the preparation of each TxDOT Planning District's initial plan in 2006. This represents the third update of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (Plan) for Planning Region 21.

The Five-Year Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan consists of three primary components: an Inventory of Transportation Resources, a Comprehensive Needs Assessment, and a Gap Analysis. These core sections are supplemented by additional materials required by TxDOT which examine Planning Region 21's goals, assess its ability to implement recommendations, and set forth performance measures by which progress can be assessed.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology used in the development of the Coordination Plan Update sought to gain as much input from the community as possible, with a special focus on transportation needs and gaps faced by historically ride-dependent populations including seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income residents, and youth. To that end, the outreach employed included both individuals and stakeholders, which often serve as gatekeepers for specific populations. Development of the stakeholder list began with current members of the Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) and was expanded to include other organizations serving these target populations. All stakeholders were invited to participate in a stakeholder survey and RTAP meetings.

Outreach and engagement tactics were shaped in large part by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in outdoor pop-up events in lieu of traditional indoor workshops, as well as RTAP meetings conducted virtually. Other engagement activities included a bilingual project webpage, bilingual community survey, and bilingual community pop-up events. The project was also promoted via bilingual social media messaging and a bilingual direct mailer (postcard) sent to 15,000 randomly selected households. The project team also worked with stakeholders to promote access to the community survey.

Regular project updates were provided to the Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel, as well as presentations of the final Plan for approval and adoption:

- September 14, 2021 – RTAP presentation (PowerPoint included in Appendix C).
- October 20, 2021 – Project update presented to RTAP.
- *November 16, 2021 – RTAP presentation scheduled; RTAP meeting cancelled.*
- *December 14, 2021 – RTAP presentation scheduled; RTAP meeting cancelled.*
- *January 7, 2022 – RTAP presentation scheduled; no quorum.*
- January 14, 2022 – RTAP presentation; Plan approved (PowerPoint included in Appendix C).
- January 26, 2022 – Presentation to LRGVDC Board of Directors; Plan adoption.

1.3 Status of Prior Recommendations

The following table cites the status of the recommendations from the prior Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan as provided by the RTAP.

Activity	Status	Description	Outcome
Year 1			
Mobility Management	Complete	Stakeholders will organize work groups, seek funding, and determine who will perform which functions.	LRGVDC hired a Mobility Manager.
Conduct Regional Planning and Funding Activities	Incomplete	Secure funding and implement a regional short range transit planning process.	Program will be initiated in the future.
Mainline Regional Service	Incomplete	Initiate coordination planning.	Coordinated connection with other Transit providers of the region. (RGV Metro Express)
Rideshare/Vanpool Service	Complete	Implement planning for rideshare program	Discontinued in favor of micro-mobility programs established by both Metro McAllen and Valley Metro.
Implement various low/no cost coordination activities	Ongoing	Human service vehicle sharing, technical support to human service agencies	Human service coordination on training activities was completed. Other programs may be initiated in the future.
Sponsorship Program	Incomplete	The program should be designed and planned in the first year.	Program was never initiated.

Activity	Status	Description	Outcome
Year 2			
Mobility Management	Incomplete	One stop information center – Apps, website and telephone support • Customer marketing and education – Coordinated • Develop uniform fare structure • Shopper shuttle – Seek partners for service (e.g., HEB or Walmart)	• A Regional call center has been developed for LRGVDC Valley Metro Transit Service which includes the RGV Metro Express connecting Brownsville to McAllen. • Each Transit Agency has developed their own fare structure.
Human service coordination	Ongoing	Initiate activities of training, maintenance, and vehicle utilization.	Human service coordination on training activities was completed. Need to reassess activities on training.
Complete regional planning process	Ongoing	None provided in plan	Coordination is ongoing with RTAP members.
Main Line	Complete	Implement coordinated service. This is the essential element of regional connectivity, but will ultimately be dependent to some degree on local first mile, last mile service.	Transition of Metro Connect to Metro Express.
Untitled	Partially implemented	Implement revised Brownsville – South Padre Island service and implement Harlingen – South Padre Island service.	Service has been implemented to connect Brownsville to South Padre Island. Discussions are ongoing to connect Harlingen-Rio Hondo-South Padre Island.
Fixed-route/feeder service	Not implemented	Continue planning and funding efforts and secure arrangements for operators and commitments from leaders.	Planning discussion continues on Fixed-Route service.
Procure vehicles	Ongoing	Consideration should be given to purchasing more fixed-route buses with two doors and at least 30-foot buses. These buses should be heavy duty in nature.	Procurement discussion continues on Fixed-Route buses.
Fixed-schedule service	Not implemented	Implement in selected areas in place of paratransit.	N/A
Sponsorship program	Incomplete	This program should be implemented in Year 2	Program was never initiated.

Activity	Status	Description	Outcome
Year 3			
Mobility Management	Incomplete	- Implement uniform fare structure - Conduct other functions as appropriate - Monitor all service	- A Regional call center has been developed for LRGVDC Valley Metro Transit Service which includes the RGV Metro Express connecting Brownsville to McAllen. - Each Transit Agency has developed their own fare structure.
Untitled	Ongoing	Initiate education campaign for a dedicated funding base for a regional service including all urbanized areas in Hidalgo and Cameron County.	Discussions with RTAP members will continue on educational campaign.
Untitled	Ongoing	Implement Raymondville service and flex-route service throughout rural portions of the service area.	Ongoing discussion on Transit service.
Year 4			
Mobility Management	Incomplete	Ongoing activities.	
Fixed-route	Incomplete	Implement fixed-route services as funding allows.	
Shopper shuttle	Complete	Seek additional opportunities for service.	Several Valley Metro routes go through shopping locations in different service areas.
Untitled	Ongoing	Continue working toward dedicated funding.	
Local service	Ongoing	As funding allows, routes should be implemented based on priorities developed in the short-range plan.	
Fixed Schedule Service	Not implemented	Implement all other areas outside of fixed-route and feeder areas (as funding is available).	Planning discussion continues on Fixed-Route service.
Year 5			
Mobility Management	Ongoing	Implement new planning initiative for the next five years.	
Public Transit	Ongoing	Continue to implement service as funding comes available.	
Untitled	Ongoing	Continue working toward dedicated funding.	

Chapter 2 | Transportation Resources Inventory

2.1 Methodology

The methodology used to develop the Transportation Resources Inventory was two-fold. First, a stakeholder survey was distributed via first class mail and email to 92 organizations throughout the three-county project area. The stakeholder survey sought to collect information about populations served and services provided as well as transportation services offered. The stakeholder survey also requested recipients to identify existing transportation needs among the populations they served, which was used to develop the Needs Assessment.

Completed surveys were received from the following 18 organizations:

- 20/200
- Brownsville Community Health Center
- Community Hope Projects/Hope Family Health Center
- Family Crisis Center
- Hidalgo County Head Start Program
- Island Metro
- Mi Destino Adult Day Care, Inc.
- Neighbors in Need of Services
- Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center
- South Texas College
- South Texas Emergency Care
- Tropical Texas Behavioral Health
- United Way of South Texas
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL)
- Willacy County Veterans Office
- Workforce Solutions
- Workforce Solutions Cameron

Up to three follow-up attempts via email and phone were made for any entity for which a completed survey was not received. A full list of all organizations included in the stakeholder survey outreach (including those that did not provide a response to the survey) is provided in Exhibit 3.5.33.

The second strategy Moore & Associates, Inc. employed to collect transportation provider information involved research using online and RTAP resources, as well as follow-up telephone calls. Using both methods resulted in development of a much more robust and representative provider inventory.

2.2 Observations, Findings, and Conclusions

Observations

The majority of the stakeholders responding to the survey do not directly operate transportation. They most frequently provide clients with transportation guides and/or schedules and refer clients to transit provider guides or websites. Approximately half make telephone calls on behalf of clients and/or use Texas 211 to obtain additional information. The most common transportation need with which clients communicated having difficulty obtaining was essential shopping (such as for groceries or prescriptions), followed by medical trips, transportation to work or school, and access to veterans' services.

The majority of responding stakeholder organizations cited a lack of funding to meet current transportation/mobility needs, followed by insufficient organizational staffing and a lack of funding to support coordination activities. Several cited a lack of transportation services in the community, while others indicated inadequate public transit service.

The survey instrument asked stakeholders to comment on the following:

- Clients/members primary barriers to accessing transportation;
- Enhancements most needed to improve coordination of public transit and human service transportation; and
- Other issues, concerns, or information they believed were relevant to the project.

Barriers to accessing transportation

- Limited public transportation, including the limited number of stops in Harlingen.
- Frequency and headways of routes for McAllen Metro, Brownsville Metro, and Valley Metro.
- Limited paratransit availability.
- Eligibility for voucher assistance.
- Accessible sidewalks.
- Not enough bus stops/routes in rural areas.
- Not enough buses for routes from city to city and on a realistic time schedule.
- Lack of knowledge and availability.
- Not located on a bus route.
- Vehicle availability.
- Since we serve families at or below the poverty rate, it is economics.
- Often a lack of financial resources.
- Our clients have very few to no barriers accessing our free public transportation.
- The majority of clients that use our service are workers, every-day travelers, and tourists.
- Language communication.
- Availability, as [transportation] is not readily available and clients with disability can't walk to the bus stop.
- Where to call and schedule.
- No link between South Texas College Mid Valley and McAllen campuses.

- Low-income individuals; many do not have a vehicle for transportation.
- Elderly and have no one to drive them to appointments.

Most-desired enhancements

- More staffing specifically related to service planning.
- More dedicated funding to increase service.
- Increase bus stops and routes in rural communities.
- Provide assistive technology in buses and at bus stops (e.g., integrated voice announcement system).
- Increase availability of paratransit services.
- One company for a system that can be free from city to city and county to county.
- A registry of some kind. [*Note: no further clarification provided*.]
- Public transportation in rural services.
- Improve bus frequency.
- More buses or perhaps a rail system.
- Some enhancements that can be integrated into the coordination are multiple communication centers to allow for better communication between agencies to better connect customers from Point A to B in the most efficient way possible.
- Perhaps collective training for all.
- Provide public transit.
- Get information to have a database for which adult care centers are served by which insurance. This way they can coordinate care/transportation for others.
- Accessibility.
- Low fares.
- Better way to communicate with transportation services.
- More staff; an increase in pay and/or benefits may attract more drivers. Which will make the routes more reliable and increase frequency.
- Funding for Uber drivers, etc. to provide these services.
- Transportation in a timely manner. For example, if a veteran has an appointment at 8:00 a.m. they have to wait for pickup at 3:00 p.m.

Other issues, concerns, or information

- Accessible and paved walkways to get to the nearest bus stop for people who use mobility devices (such as canes, walkers, and wheelchairs).
- Accessible bus stops for wheelchairs under the canopies.
- Accessible bike share program.
- Not very many people know about Community Transportation services.
- Public transit systems are not designed to service low-density areas.
- Transport folks to the pharmacy, banks, and grocery stores.
- More funding and improve transit system.
- Add bus stops near our clinics.

Findings

Based on the input from community stakeholders the consultant has identified the following broad findings:

1. Low-income individuals often rely on public or social service transportation due to a lack of access to a vehicle.
2. There are numerous locations and individuals that are not adequately or effectively served by fixed-route or paratransit/demand-response service.
3. There is a need for more bus stops as well as bus stops that are more accessible to persons using mobility devices.
4. There is a limited knowledge regarding public transportation, including which entity provides services and how to schedule rides.

Conclusions

While numerous fixed-route transportation providers operate service within the urbanized areas, and Valley Metro provides service in some of the less populated potions of the project area, there are still significant gaps between the service provided and the needs of individuals in the community. These will be addressed in greater detail through the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis.

2.3 Recommendations

Initial recommendations arising from the Transportation Resources Inventory are presented below. Additional recommendations will be addressed in the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis.

1. A regional travel training program could help to address the knowledge gap identified by stakeholders. This could be provided by a regional organization (such as LRGVDC) through coordination with stakeholders, or by contracting with a stakeholder that already provides such services to expand its program.

2. A one-stop "mobility information" call center could address both the knowledge gap and the need for coordinated communications between transportation providers. For example, a one-stop call center could serve as a clearinghouse for various adult day care centers, as identified above, or assist riders who need to travel between counties or urbanized areas. This may also help identify services available to residents of rural areas who may not be familiar with local transportation options.

3. Social service organizations should be encouraged to provide basic information about any transportation services they provide as part of their public information (e.g., website). While it may be assumed information about services available to clients or members will be communicated as part of the client relationship, the availability of transportation assistance may influence an individual's decision to seek services from a particular organization. This information should be detailed enough for someone needing transportation to be able to determine if it could meet their needs and if they could meet eligibility requirements.

4. Taxi and shuttle companies that have an online presence should be encouraged to include the counties and/or cities they serve on their website or Facebook page. This will help individuals seeking transportation to know what options are available to them with respect to taxi service.

2.4 Transportation Resources Inventory

Unless otherwise indicated, the impact of COVID-19 cited within individual entries reflects the entity's status at the time outreach was conducted in October 2021.

Transportation Planning Organizations

Organization Information:	Description of Organization:	Area Served:
Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority 3461 Carmen Ave. Rancho Viejo, TX 78575 956-621-5571 crma.org	Cameron County RMA assists the citizens of South Texas by providing congestion relief, traffic safety, enhanced mobility and viable alternative routes in the era of time conservation. Cameron County RMA works closely with TxDOT on several ongoing highway and freight rail infrastructure projects in Cameron County. Cameron County RMA has authority to undertake projects related to highways, rail, air and seaport, as well as the ability to undertake projects in Mexico.	Cameron County

Organization Information:	Description of Organization:	Area Served:
Hidalgo County Commuter Rail District 1615 S. Closner, Suite J Edinburg, TX 78539 956-318-2600 https://www.hidalgocounty.us/811/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 Hidalgo County Commuter Rail Study (feasibility study), completed for Hidalgo County in August 2011, concluded that future commuter rail is feasible for the area, and recommended "Hidalgo County work with study area cities to explore the creation of a regional transit authority that will subsume the roles of both providers" (Valley Metro and Metro McAllen). As of 2013, the Commuter Rail District was governed by a five-member Board of Directors. The most recent agenda posted to the Hidalgo County website was for a meeting in May 2014, so it is not clear whether the Rail District is still active. (Unable to reach anyone by phone for additional information.)	Hidalgo County

Organization Information:	Description of Organization:	Area Served:
Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority 203 W. Newcombe Ave. Pharr, TX 78577 945-468-4762 www.hcrma.net	The Hidalgo County RMA's purpose is to provide Hidalgo County with opportunities to accelerate needed transportation projects, through the direction of a local board making local choices about local mobility needs that enhance the quality of life and economic growth for all residents in the region. The Hidalgo County RMA updated its Strategic Plan – Capital Improvement Plan in April 2019. The Hidalgo County RMA primarily contributes work to highway infrastructure projects; transit does not appear to be a focus.	Hidalgo County

Organization Information:	Description of Organization:	Area Served:
Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council 301 W. Railroad Weslaco, TX 78596 956-682-3481 www.lrgvdc.org	The LRGVDC promotes cooperation among local units of government and provides forums and opportunities for them to work with economic interests and citizen groups in order to improve the region's health, safety, and general welfare and to plan for future development. Members include cities, school districts, educational entities, governmental units, and several members at-large.	Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties

Organization Information:	Description of Organization:	Area Served:
Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization 617 W. University Dr. Edinburg, TX 78539 1034 E. Levee St. Brownsville, TX 78520 www.rgvmpo.org	The RGVMPO is a federally-funded program that works with Rio Grande Valley communities and the Texas Department of transportation to plan for the region's future transportation needs. The RGVMPO is responsible for the regional planning process for all modes of transportation. The MPO provides technical assistance to the local governments of the Lower Rio Grande Valley in planning, coordinating, and implementing transportation decisions for this area. The RGVMPO administers all federal funds for urban transportation improvements in the Rio Grande Valley, including: road and highway expansion, maintaining the existing infrastructure through pavement management systems, safety transportation planning (includes the creation of designated freight routes and bicycle/pedestrian paths), emergency response planning, rail studies and transit planning.	Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr counties

Organization Information:	Description of Organization:	Area Served:
Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Pharr District Headquarters 600 W. I-2 Pharr, TX 78577-1231 956-702-6100 https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/district/pharr.html	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 for the 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 is located within the TxDOT Pharr District. TxDOT has funding oversight for state public transportation funding through the Public Transportation Division (PTN). PTN, through its Public Transit Coordinators, works closely with transit systems and oversees state funding. TxDOT manages, provides oversight, and disperses funding for FTA grants to rural and small urbanized areas, and selected Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grants.	Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, Starr, Willacy, and Zapata counties

Public Transportation Providers

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data (2019):
Brownsville Metro 755 International Blvd., Brownsville, TX 78520 956-541-4881 www.brownsvilletx.gov/2191	Public transportation in Brownsville. Fixed-route service available to the general public. Provides curb-to-curb ADA paratransit transportation for qualifying individuals with disabilities. Eleven routes: Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 14 operate Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Route 30 operates Monday through Saturday, three hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. Seven of the routes operate on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Fixed-route: Base fare $1.00, Student $0.75, Senior/ADA $.50 ADA Paratransit: Base fare $1.50 Multi-ride tickets and passes available	Ridership: 1,553,994 Vehicles: 30 Budget: Operating: $7,104,550 Capital: $1,831,627
Provider Type: Public	**Eligibility:** General public; ADA certification required for ADA paratransit service.	**Impact of COVID-19:** The first bus departs from the La Plaza Terminal at 6 am with the final bus departing the terminal at 5:30 pm (normally 8 pm). Resumed regular schedule January 2, 2022. Masks required.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data (2019):
Island Metro 321 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX 78597 956-761-8187 www.myspi.org	Deviated fixed route system operating within South Padre Island and Port Isabel. Four fixed-routes operate between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., seven days per week.	Fare-free	Ridership: 447,372 Vehicles: 6 Budget: Operating: $1,548,053 Capital: $3,879,959
Provider Type: Public	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Resulted in ridership decline. Extensive vehicle cleaning and sanitizing.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Jag Express 3201 W. Pecan, Pecan Plaza – B 1.311, McAllen, TX 78501 956-872-4444 www.southtexascollege.edu	The JagExpress Yellow Line is operated by South Texas College, with all stops located on campus. Two buses operate from Monday through Thursday and only one bus operates on Friday. Valley Metro operates the JagExpress Green Line, which includes service to locations through the Valley. Multiple buses operate Monday through Friday with limited service on Friday. The Purple Line, which serves Mid-Valley and Nursing and Allied Health campuses as well as Pharr City Hall, is currently suspended.	Fare-free	Not available
Provider Type: Public	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Face masks required onboard. Purple Line suspended for FY 2021-2022.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data (2019):
Metro McAllen 1501 W. Hwy 83, Suite 110, McAllen, TX 78501 956-681-3510 www.mcallen.net/metro	Public transportation within McAllen. Fixed-route service is available to the general public. Provides demand-response paratransit service for qualifying individuals with disabilities. Four routes operate from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday. Three routes operate 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Two additional routes operate Monday through Friday only. A downtown shuttle also operates from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.	Fixed-route: Base fare $1.00, Senior/ADA/ Medicare/Student $0.50 with ID, children 6 and under and transfers free ADA paratransit: Base fare $0.50	Ridership: 637,360 Vehicles: 14 Budget: Operating: $3,339,038 Capital: $683,138
Provider Type: Public	**Eligibility:** General public; eligibility requirements for paratransit service	**Impact of COVID-19:** Masks required. Reduced bus capacity to 50 percent. (Returned to full capacity in May 2020.)	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data (2019):
LRGVDC - Valley Metro 301 W. Railroad, Weslaco, TX 78596 800-574-8322 www.lrgvdc.org/valleymetro.html	Flex-route service available to the general public in Cameron, Starr, and Hidalgo counties, with primary connection hubs in McAllen, Edinburg, Harlingen, Rio Grande City and Brownsville. Curb-to-curb demand response service is available to the general public in Willacy, Starr and Zapata counties. Valley Metro also operates the Jag Express Green line. Micro-transit service is available to the general public in Hidalgo County, Edinburg, and Cameron County.	Flex-route: Base fare $1.00, Student $0.50, Veteran $0.50, Senior (60+)/ADA $.50 Free transfers Children under 7 ride free UTRGV students (with ID) ride free on most routes	Ridership: 819,209 Vehicles: 49 Budget: Operating: $8,495,422 Capital: $2,407,385
Provider Type: Public	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Some routes temporarily suspended, masks required, social distancing onboard.	

moore & associates

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data (2020):
UTRGV 1201 W. University Dr., EASFC Building, Room 135, Edinburg, TX 78539 956-665-2036 www.utrgv.edu/pts	The University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley operates a free public bus service known as Vaquero Express. The Vaquero Express Connector route provides transportation between campuses located in Brownsville, Edinburg, Weslaco and Harlingen on a scheduled route. Additional routes provide connectivity to the Rio Grande City campus and the VABL building in Edinburg. Transportation within the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses is provided through the VOLT micro-mobility program, which uses zero-emission carts to provide service along designated circuits.	Fare-free	Ridership: 205,294 Vehicles: 39 Budget: Operating: $1,840,452 Capital: $0
Provider Type: Public	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Masks required, social distancing onboard, deep cleaning regimen implemented	

Private Transportation Providers

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Caring Senior Service of McAllen 1321 W. Pecan Blvd #C McAllen, TX 78501 956-687-9494 www.caringseniorservice.com	Personal care providers help seniors maintain independence by providing transportation, errand services, and other support for daily living.	Varies (based on an hourly rate). Cost of service may be covered by long-term care insurance or VA benefits.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** Seniors or others who need help living independently at home	**Impact of COVID-19:** Mask requirement for both caregivers and clients. No reduction in service due to COVID.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Greyhound 755 International Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520 956-546-2264 www.greyhound.com	Greyhound Lines, Inc. is the largest provider of intercity bus transportation, serving more than 2,400 destinations with 13,000 daily departures across North America. Provides access to the nationwide Greyhound intercity network, Canada, and Mexico. Greyhound serves stations in Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen, and McAllen. Service operates every day, with schedules dependent on destination.	Fares vary by destination. Discounted fares available to children under 12 and seniors 62+.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Face masks required onboard. Enhanced cleaning practices. Continuous cabin air refresh system.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Lifeline RGV, LLC 4601 Buddy Owens McAllen, TX 78501 956-683-8181 lifelinergv.com	Lifeline RGV is a private non-emergency medical transportation provider that can accommodate wheelchair and non-ambulatory patient transport.	Varies depending upon service provided. Service accepts Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, and private pay.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
MedEx Transportation Services 3002 S. Jackson Rd McAllen, TX 78503 956-630-4443 www.facebook.com/medexmcallen	Private-pay service offering non-emergency medical transportation (ambulance, wheelchair, and auto).	Wheelchair: starts at $65 round-trip	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Med-Life EMS 2031 E. Griffin Pkwy, Ste B-1, Mission, TX 78572 956-720-0125 www.medlifeems.com	Med-Life EMS is a private, family-owned company providing non-emergency transportation throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley.	Varies depending upon service provided. Service accepts Medicare, Medicaid, TriCare, private insurance, and private pay.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Omnibus Express 1501 W. Hwy 83 McAllen, TX 78501 956-994-9386 755 International Blvd Brownsville, TX 78520 956-544-3391 www.omnibusexpress.com	National and international daily transportation with a modern and environmentally-friendly fleet to provide you with an affordable, safe and enjoyable trip. U.S. coverage area includes Texas, Arizona, California, and most southern states. Mexico coverage area extends southwest of Mexico City.	Fares vary by destination. 25% discount for children 2-11 years and seniors 65+ years.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Enhanced vehicle cleaning. Some cross-border services may be affected by COVID-19.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
South Texas Emergency Care Foundation 1705 Vermont St. Harlingen, TX 78550 956-364-2711 www.stec-ems.org	South Texas Emergency Care Foundation, Inc., provides ground ambulance (emergency and non-emergency) service to most of the Rio Grande Valley. Ground services are provided to Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties; as well as the unincorporated areas of other counties in South Texas.	Varies depending upon service provided. Service accepts Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, and private pay.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Tornado Bus Company/ El Expreso Bus Company 1501 W. Hwy 83, McAllen, TX 78501 956-682-3004 755 International Blvd Brownsville, TX 78520 956-547-9052 www.tornadobus.com	Tornado Bus Company strives to offer the safest and most efficient transportation service. Headquartered in Dallas, TX. Offers service as far north as Chicago, IL and south into central Mexico.	Fares vary by destination.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Face masks required onboard.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Trailways 1501 W. Hwy 83, McAllen, TX 78501 956-686-5479 www.trailways.com	Trailways operates a network of independently-owned bus companies throughout the U.S., and also partners with other carriers such as Greyhound.	Fares vary by destination. 15% active military and veteran discount.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Face masks required onboard and at all Trailways facilities. Enhanced cleaning of vehicles.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Valley Transit Company P.O. Box 530010, Harlingen, TX 78553 956-423-4287 www.valleytransitcompany.com www.greyhound.com (for ticketing)	Valley Transit is a full-service bus company serving South Central Texas and Northern Mexico with more than 50 daily schedules, as well as connections to nationwide travel on Greyhound Lines. Subsidiary of Greyhound. Also offers airport shuttles to airports in Brownsville, Harlingen, and McAllen.	Fares vary by destination.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Vitalis Medical Transport Services 200 E. Fern Ave. McAllen, TX 78501 956-661-1114 vitalis-mts.com	Provider of non-emergency medical transportation in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties.	Varies depending upon service provided.	Not available
Provider Type: Private	**Eligibility:** General public	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Social Service Transportation Providers

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
American Cancer Society – Road to Recovery Program 1200 E. Ridge Rd, Suite 1, McAllen, TX 78503 956-982-8320 800-227-2345 www.cancer.org	For individuals who cannot drive themselves or have no other means of getting to their treatment, American Cancer Society Road to Recovery volunteers donate their time to provide cancer patients a much-needed lift.	No cost for eligible patients	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Patients traveling to cancer-related medical appointments; other eligibility requirements may apply	**Impact of COVID-19:** Rides on hold indefinitely due to COVID-19.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Amigos Del Valle 3148 Crosspoint Blvd, Edinburg, TX 78539 956-213-9400 www.advrgv.org	Amigos Del Valle (ADV) provides services and advocacy for low-income families in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, with a special emphasis on seniors. ADV operates affordable housing communities for seniors and persons with disabilities, provides a wellness program to persons living with critical illness, provides meals and other services to seniors (including transportation), and operates Meals on Wheels.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Senior Programs: Rio Grande Valley seniors (60 years or older) and adults with disabilities (18-59 years old). Wellness Program: Individuals with a qualifying diagnosis.	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley 955 W. Price Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520 956-541-0220 www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org	Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley is the charitable branch of the Diocese of Brownsville. Services include disaster response, emergency assistance, humanitarian respite, counseling services, and the summer food program. Transportation services include transportation to medical appointments outside of the Valley for low-income individuals under the Emergency Assistance Program.	No cost for eligible applicants	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Must meet income and other requirements of the Emergency Assistance Program.	**Impact of COVID-19:** Offering virtual counseling services.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
City of La Joya Senior Center 920 Leo Ave, La Joya, TX 78560 956-585-7572 www.cityoflajoya.com/senior-center	Offers congregate meals and other support for seniors in La Joya. May offer transportation to congregate meals.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Age 60 years and older	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
City of Los Fresnos Senior Center 204 N. Brazil St, Los Fresnos, TX 78566 956-233-4350	Offers congregate meals and other support for seniors in Los Fresnos. Provides transportation to the senior center.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Age 60 years and older	**Impact of COVID-19:** Center closed due to the pandemic, and was delivering meals to seniors. Has reopened and is again offering congregate meals.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center 121 N. Arroyo Blvd, Rio Hondo, TX 78583 956-748-3082 www.riohondo.us/senior-citizens-center	Provides services and programs to senior adults age 60 and older, including transportation services.	Free, donations appreciated	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Individuals age 60 and older who are clients of the senior center	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

moore & associates

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Disabled American Veterans McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic, 901 E. Hackberry Ave., McAllen, TX 78503 956-618-7100 Texas Valley Coastal Bend HCS, 2106 Treasure Hills Blvd., Harlingen, TX 78550 956-366-4500 www.dav.org/veterans/i-need-a-ride	Disabled American Veterans' volunteer transportation program provides free transportation to VA medical facilities. Transportation services may be available. Contact the Hospital Service Coordinator at the McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic or Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System in Harlingen.	None	Unknown
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Veterans receiving services through the VA	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Family Crisis Center 616 W. Taylor Harlingen, TX 78550 956-723-9305 192 N. 3rd Street Raymondville, TX 78580 956-689-5150 www.familycrisisctr.org	The Family Crisis Center, Inc. provides free and confidential services to victims of family violence, and adult & child victims of stranger and non-stranger sexual assault in northern Cameron County and all of Willacy County. Services include emergency transportation to a safe place.	None	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Friendship of Women, Inc. 95 E. Price Rd, Bldg. C Brownsville, TX 78521 956-544-7412 www.fowinc.com/programs--services.html	Friendship of Women, Inc. provides comprehensive services such as emergency shelter, crisis intervention, and legal advocacy to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their families. Services include emergency transportation to a safe place.	None	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Hidalgo County Community Service Agency – Senior Companions Program 2524 N. Closner Blvd. Edinburg, TX 78541 956-383-6240 hidalgocsa.org/senior-companions	HCCSA's mission is to improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency of the low-income and vulnerable households of Hidalgo County by providing *effective, efficient, and comprehensive* services through *partnerships* and *direct funding. Senior Companions provides transportation to medical appointments, delivers groceries, and provides support for homebound veterans.*	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Eligible clients	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

moore & associates

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data (2021):
Hidalgo County Head Start Program 1901 W. State Hwy 107, McAllen, TX 78504 956-383-0706 www.hchsp.org	Provide high-quality child development services to young children and families in Hidalgo County in the areas of education, health, mental health, nutrition, and social services to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy. Provide school bus transportation for some children to Head Start programs.	None	Ridership: 2,000 one-way trips per month Vehicles: 30
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Children must be 3 or 4 years old and families must meet income eligibility guidelines to be eligible for Head Start. Anyone served by the organization is eligible for transportation services.	**Impact of COVID-19:** Fewer children have been attending programs due to COVID.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging 301 W. Railroad, Bldg. D, Weslaco, TX 78596 956-682-3481 1501 N. 28th St, Ste A2, Harlingen, TX 78550 956-412-0958 www.lrgvdc.org/aging	Helps to provide an opportunity for a high quality of life of older persons through the development and expansion of a comprehensive and coordinated social service delivery system at the regional level. Transportation assistance includes providing information about community transportation services, transportation to and from individual nutrition and senior centers, and medical transportation.	None	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Persons who are 60 years of age or older.	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

moore
& associates

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Mi Destino Adult Day Care, Inc. 2805 Memorial Rd #A La Feria, TX 78559 956-797-5400	Provides adult day care services. Transportation is provided for clients to access essential services (pharmacy, bank, grocery store, etc.)	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Services available to enrolled/eligible clients	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Mission Housing Authority 1300 E. 8th St, Mission, TX 78572 956-585-9748	Mission Housing Authority provides a variety of housing, drug elimination, and family self-sufficiency programs. In support of these programs may provide some transportation services.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Eligible program participants	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data (2021):
Neighbors in Need of Services (NINOS), Inc. – Head Start/Early Head Start Programs (Cameron and Willacy counties) 22887 State Hwy 345, Rio Hondo, TX 78583 956-399-9944 www.ninosinc.org	Provides high-quality child development services to young children and families in Cameron County in the areas of education, health, mental health, nutrition, and social services to ensure school readiness. Provides transportation to Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Transportation to NINOS programs where available.	Unknown	Ridership: 250 one-way trips per month Vehicles: 20
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Eligible enrolled clients (pregnant women, children, and children with disabilities ages 0-4)	**Impact of COVID-19:** Centers were closed due to COVID-19. Provided daily schedules and resources to continue programs at home. Now that transportation has resumed, social distancing calls for an increased number of routes.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Southwest Key Program/La Esperanza Home for Boys 504 E. Washington St, Brownsville, TX 78520 956-621-5800 www.southwestkey.org	Southwest Key exists to create opportunities and improve the quality of life for thousands of youth and families each day by providing safe shelter, alternatives to incarceration, career development and quality education. This is done through three areas of programming: Immigrant Children's Shelters, Youth and Family Services, and Workforce Solutions. May provide transportation for enrolled clients.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Male adolescents between 10 to 17 years of age	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Su Clínica 1706 Treasure Hills Blvd, Harlingen, TX 78550 956-365-6000 *Additional locations in Brownsville, Raymondville, and Santa Rosa* www.suclinica.org	Su Clínica is a non-profit community health center that has served the residents of Cameron and Willacy counties since 1971. Some transportation assistance may be available to access clinic services.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Registered patients	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Texas Health and Human Services – Medical Transportation Program 877-633-8747 www.hhs.texas.gov	Non-emergency medical transportation services are available for a Medicaid beneficiary or their child. These services include rides to doctor's office, dentist's office, hospital, drug store or any place that provides covered health care services. Services may also include money for gas, meals and lodging for children and youth staying overnight to get covered health care services, and payment for some out-of-state travel. Trips are coordinated through a Medicaid health plan or the Department of Health and Human Services.	No cost to eligible patients	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Individuals enrolled in Medicaid, Children with Special Health Care Needs, and Transportation for Indigent Cancer Patients programs.	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Tropical Texas Behavioral Health 1901 24th Ave, Edinburg, TX 78539 956-289-7000 www.ttbh.org	Dedicated to providing person-centered mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities and substance use disorder services for individuals of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties. Provides limited transportation services to clients that do not have access to transportation or do not qualify through Medicaid.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Eligible clients	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
United Way of South Texas 113 Pecan Blvd. McAllen, TX 78501 956-686-6331 unitedwayofsotx.org	United Way of South Texas provides transportation assistance by purchasing bus vouchers from the City of McAllen and distributing them through program partners.	None	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Must meet program eligibility requirements	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

moore & associates

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System 2601 Veterans Drive Harlingen, TX 78550 956-291-9485 www.texasvalley.va.gov	The Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) provides qualified veterans transportation services to participating VA medical facilities. The VA may provide travel pay or transportation to non-VA health appointments. The health care system also provides a Rural Mobile Medical Unit that serves locations in the Lower Rio Grande Valley twice a month.	None	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Veterans receiving services through the VA	**Impact of COVID-19:** Unknown	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Workforce Solutions – Cameron County 851 Old Alice Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520 956-546-3141 601 E. Harrison St, Harlingen, TX 78550 956-423-9266 www.wfscameron.org	The primary goal of Workforce Solutions is to provide job seekers with the skills, and business with the talent, they need to be successful. Provides gas cards or other transportation subsidies.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Enrolled/eligible clients	**Impact of COVID-19:** Received additional program funding	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Workforce Solutions – Hidalgo County 2719 W. University Dr, Edinburg, TX 78539 956-380-0008 901 Travis St, Ste 7, Mission, TX 78572 956-519-4300 2290 W. Pike Blvd, Ste 100, Weslaco, TX 78596 956-969-6100 www.wfsolutions.org	The primary goal of Workforce Solutions is to provide job seekers with the skills, and business with the talent, they need to be successful.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Eligible/enrolled clients	**Impact of COVID-19:** Impacted the total number of clients accessing programs and services.	

Provider Information:	Description of Service:	Fare/Cost:	Operating Data:
Workforce Solutions – Willacy County 700 FM 3168, Ste 3, Raymondville, TX 78580 956-689-3412 www.wfsolutions.org	The primary goal of Workforce Solutions is to provide job seekers with the skills, and business with the talent, they need to be successful. Provide transportation support for eligible clients.	Unknown	Not available
Provider Type: Social service	**Eligibility:** Eligible/enrolled clients	**Impact of COVID-19:** Impacted the total number of clients accessing programs and services.	

Taxi and Shuttle Operators

Additional transportation services are provided by private companies offering taxicab or shuttle services. Service from these providers is typically scheduled by the individual either in advance or on-demand. Costs for these services are typically on a per-mile basis plus a base rate or a flat rate for the trip. Trip costs and days and hours of operation may vary widely between providers.

Lyft and Uber ride-hailing services are also available in portions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Actual availability varies depending on the number of active drivers in a given location. Both platforms can be accessed via mobile apps.

Note: Inclusion of any for-profit taxicab or shuttle within this inventory does not constitute an endorsement of the service. Exclusion of any active entity is unintentional and should not reflect negatively on that entity.

Provider Information:	Areas Served:	Service Notes:
AAA Taxi Service, 956-686-1650	McAllen and surrounding area	Operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
ABC Taxi Cab, 956-504-0818	Brownsville, South Padre Island, Harlingen, and Matamoros	Taxi and airport transportation. Open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Al Gon Valley Taxi, 956-279-4970	Hidalgo County and surrounding area	*Could not be reached to verify information.*
All Star Taxi, 956-507-4900, www.allstartaxico.com	Harlingen and surrounding area	Operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
American Border Cab, 956-664-1863	McAllen	*Could not be reached to verify information.*
American Taxi, 956-686-8077	McAllen	Operates 24 hours per day with reservation.
Banda's Taxi, 956-631-7977	McAllen	Operates 24 hours per day with reservation.
BB's Taxi, 956-761-1111, bbstaxi.com	South Padre Island, local airports	Roadside assistance, taxi, airport shuttle, and private vehicle options. Operates 24 hours per day.
Bell's Taxi, 956-687-3042	McAllen	Operates 24 hours per day with reservation.
Checker Cab, 956-541-6800	Brownsville	Operates 24 hours per day with reservation.
City Taxi Services, 956-630-2025, citytaxiservicesllc.net	McAllen and surrounding area.	Operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Cobra Taxi, 956-588-0091	McAllen	*Could not be reached to verify information.*

Provider Information:	Areas Served:	Service Notes:
Ernie's Taxicab, 956-631-5649, www.erniestaxicab.com	Lower Rio Grande Valley and Reynosa. Based in McAllen.	Operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Bilingual drivers. Newer vehicles.
Fiesta Taxi, 956-682-0605	McAllen	No night service
Imperial Taxi Services, 956-309-4533, imperialtaxiservicestx.com	Mission, McAllen, Pharr, Edinburg, Palmview, La Joya, Penitas, San Juan, Alamo, and Donna.	Open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Javi's Taxi, 956-683-1146	McAllen	*Could not be reached to verify information.*
JJ's Taxi, 956-761-9292	South Padre Island	Operates until midnight with reservations.
Let's Ride Taxi, 956-392-3902	Harlingen	Operates 10 am to 10 pm.
Mark's Taxi, 956-777-3937	McAllen and Reynosa	Night service available with reservation.
Medrano's Transit Cab, 956-620-6330	McAllen	Open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Mexico Taxi, 956-686-7900	McAllen	*Could not be reached to verify information.*
Palma's Taxi, 956-457-5833	Lower Rio Grande Valley and Reynosa	Open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Philly's Cab Company, 956-793-0201, www.phillycabco.com	Edinburg and surrounding areas	Open 7 days per week. Available 24 hours with advance reservations.
Red Top Taxi, 956-687-3411	McAllen	Open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
RGV Yellow Cab, 956-994-8294	Edinburg	Open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Rio Grande Valley Private Car Service, 620-899-6828	Based on South Padre Island. Service to all area airports.	Prices vary depending on destination, time, and season. Recommend booking 2 days in advance.
Shadow Taxi, 956-821-7858	McAllen	*Could not be reached to verify information.*
South Padre Surf Shuttle, 956-443-1406, www.spisurfshuttle.com	To/from Harlingen and Brownsville airports and South Padre Island, Port Isabel, and Laguna Vista.	Rates from $30 per person. Reservation-based service.
South-West Taxi, 956-778-9720	Harlingen	Open 24 hours per day, based on reservation.
SPI Shuttle, 956-621-8647, www.spi-shuttle.com	South Padre Island, Port Isabel, Laguna Heights, and Laguna Vista (or 100 miles from South Padre Island).	Small to medium groups. Five-person minimum for all tours.
Valdez Taxi, 956-687-7596	McAllen	*Could not be reached to verify information.*

Provider Information:	Areas Served:	Service Notes:
Yellow Cab Express, 956-320-8294, brownsvilletaxi.com	Brownsville and surrounding Rio Grande Valley, Los Fresnos, Rancho Viejo, and Matamoros.	Hours of operation 7:30 am – 12:30 am.
Yellow City Taxi, 956-631-8294, www.yellowcitytaxi.com	McAllen	Operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

2.5 Transportation Resources by County

Name of Provider	Cameron	Hidalgo	Willacy
Brownsville Metro	x		
Island Metro	x		
Jag Express		x	
Metro McAllen		x	
Valley Metro	x	x	x
UTRGV	x	x	
Caring Senior Service of McAllen		x	
Greyhound	x	x	
Lifeline RGV, LLC	x	x	x
MedEx Transportation Services		x	
Med-Life EMS	x	x	x
Omnibus Express	x	x	
South Texas Emergency Care Foundation	x	x	x
Tornado Bus Company/El Expreso Bus Company		x	
Trailways		x	
Valley Transit Company	x	x	
Vitalis Medical Transport Services	x	x	x
American Cancer Society - Road to Recovery Program	x	x	x
Amigos Del Valle	x	x	x
Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley	x	x	
City of La Joya Senior Center		x	
City of Los Fresnos Senior Center	x		
City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center	x		
Disabled American Veterans	x	x	
Family Crisis Center	x		x
Friendship of Women, Inc.	x		
Hidalgo County Community Service Agency - Senior Companions Program		X	
Hidalgo County Head Start Program		x	
LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging	x	x	x
Mi Destino Adult Day Care, Inc.	x		
Mission Housing Authority		x	
Neighbors in Need of Services - Head Start/Early Head Start Programs	x		x

Name of Provider	Cameron	Hidalgo	Willacy
Southwest Key Program/La Esperanza Home for Boys	x		
Su Clínica	x		x
Texas Health and Human Services - Medical Transportation Program	x	x	x
Tropical Texas Behavioral Health	x	x	x
United Way of South Texas		x	
VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System	x	x	x
Workforce Solutions - Cameron County	x		
Workforce Solutions - Hidalgo County		x	
Workforce Solutions - Willacy County			x

This page intentionally blank.

Chapter 3 | Comprehensive Needs Assessment

3.1 Methodology

This section presents an analysis of current demand specific to public transportation services as well as population forecasts for the Lower Rio Grande Valley; specifically, Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties.

The demand forecast reflects a multi-prong approach. First, overall population growth trends based chiefly on data and estimates from the federal decennial census as well as the American Community Survey. Second, demographic analysis specific to historically transit-dependent populations including seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, zero and/or single-vehicle households, and youth. Third, input received directly from residents within the project area as well as 18 community stakeholder organizations. Targeted engagement of community stakeholders is important as these organizations often function as advocates or spokespersons for demographic cohorts who often are unwilling or unable to participate in traditional public engagement activities.

In preparing the Needs Assessment Moore & Associes, Inc. also considered land-use (i.e., development patterns) as it pertains to the provision of public transportation service, inventoried the human services agencies throughout the project area (details of which are presented in the Transportation Resources Inventory), and compiled an objective assessment of current public transportation offerings via-a-vis actual as well as latent and future demand.

3.2 Demographics[1]

The three counties included within the project area reflect a level of diversity with respect to persons residing therein. Collectively, these counties comprise an area of more than 3,361 square miles, serving as home to more than 1,300,000 residents. Hidalgo County is the most populous of the three, while Willacy County is the least with slightly more than 21,000 residents.

---

[1] All demographic data drawn from the American Community Survey, 2019 Five-Year Estimates. Accessed via data.census.gov on 6/28/21.

Exhibit 3.2.1 Population by county
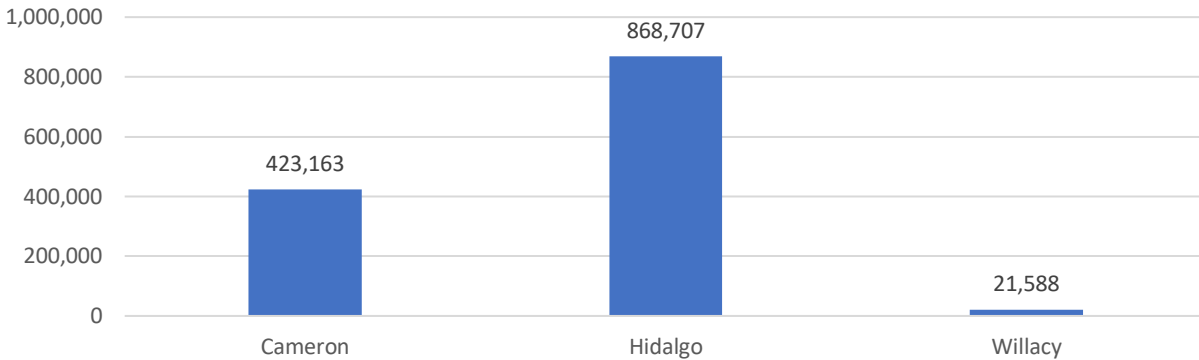
Forecast changes in population[2] for the three counties is mixed through 2050. Cameron County is expected to experience continued growth through approximately 2031, followed by a decline that increases over time. By contrast, Hidalgo County is expected to grow significantly throughout the next 30 years, with the greatest growth occurring during the decade between 2020 and 2030. Willacy County's population is expected to experience increasing declines each year through at least 2050. The overall population of the three-county area will continue to experience growth, but the rate of growth is expected to decline significantly between 2040 and 2050.

Exhibit 3.2.2 Population forecast through 2050[3]

County	2020	2030	2040	2050
Cameron	427,881	438,143	431,963	413,140
Percent change		*2.4%*	*-1.4%*	*-4.4%*
Hidalgo	870,366	956,044	1,010,557	1,032,926
Percent change		*9.8%*	*5.7%*	*2.2%*
Willacy	22,134	21,642	20,581	19,234
Percent change		*-2.2%*	*-4.9%*	*-6.5%*
Project area	**1,320,381**	**1,415,829**	**1,463,101**	**1,465,300**
Percent change		*7.2%*	*3.3%*	*0.2%*

Hidalgo County has the highest concentration of individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latino (92.5 percent). Willacy County's concentration of Hispanic/Latino residents (88.2 percent) is only slightly below that of Cameron County.

---

[2] Texas Demographic Center, Texas Population Projections Program, 2018 Sex and Race/Ethnicity Total Population database. https://demographics.texas.gov/data/tpepp/projections/ Downloaded 10/28/21.
[3] Note: estimates used in population projections may differ from population data obtained through the American Community Survey.

Exhibit 3.2.3 Hispanic/Latino population by county
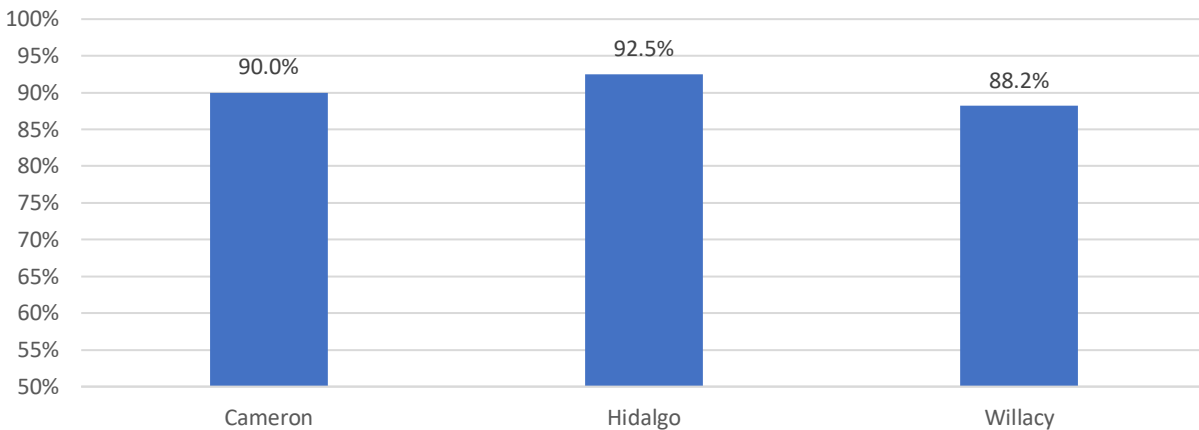
The incidence of households identified as limited English-proficient (LEP) varies modestly throughout the project area. The highest percentage of LEP households is in Hidalgo County (19.5 percent). The majority of LEP households indicated speaking Spanish. Cameron and Willacy counties have similar percentages of LEP households (15.9 percent and 14.4 percent, respectively).

Exhibit 3.2.4 LEP households by county
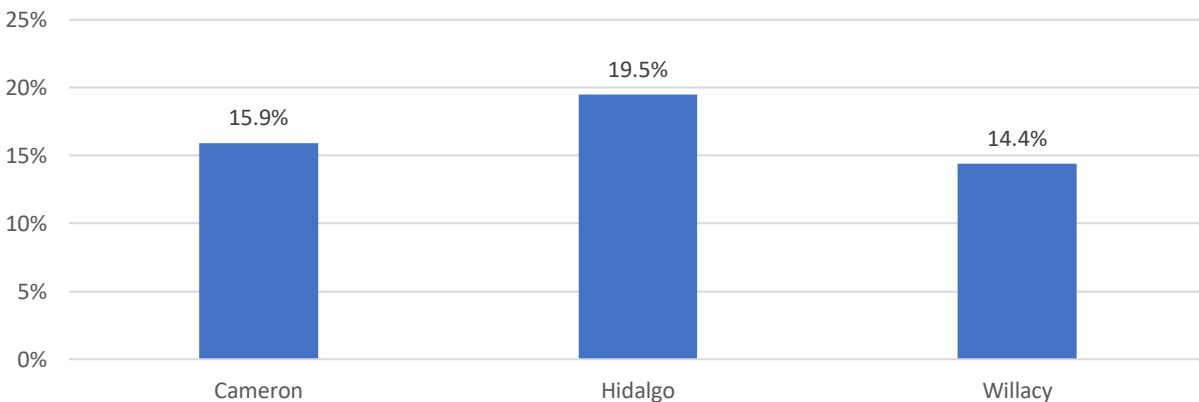
Youth represent one of the demographic cohorts which is historically ride-dependent. While many youth may have access to a vehicle after obtaining a driver license, an increasing number of youth postpone learning to drive to age 18 or beyond. School-provided transportation is an important means of travel for many within this demographic group.

The percentage of youth within each county is similar, ranging from 32.1 percent in Hidalgo County to 24.1 percent in Willacy County. The average concentration of youth within the project area is 28.7 percent. The project area has a slightly higher concentration of youth compared to Texas at-large (26.0 percent).

Exhibit 3.2.5 Youth population by county
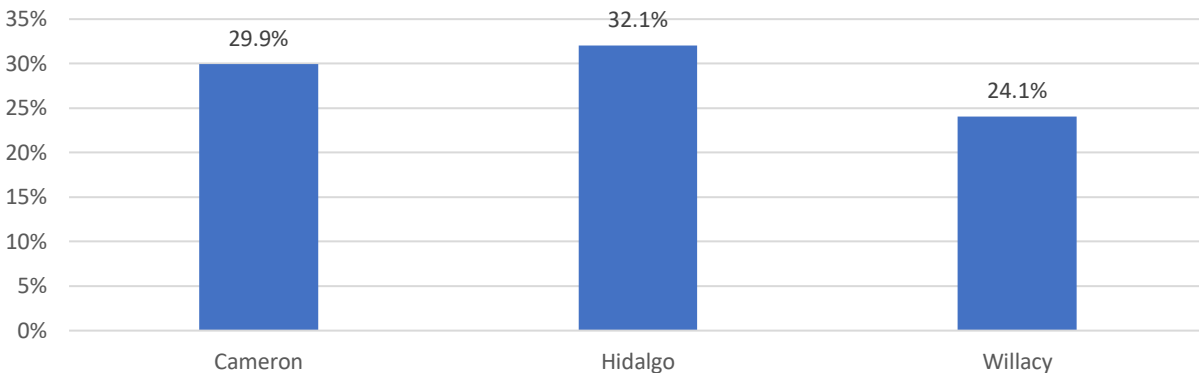
Within Cameron County, areas with the greatest concentrations of youth (greater than 35 percent) include the neighborhood bounded by Tyler Avenue, South F Street, and US Hwy 77 in Harlingen; the neighborhood east of Hwy 499 and north of East Harrison Avenue in Harlingen; the neighborhood southwest of US Hwy 77 and north of West Batts Street in San Benito; border communities including Los Indios, La Paloma, and Encantada-Ranchito-El Calaboz; the eastern portion of Olmito (east of US Hwy 77); the neighborhood bounded by Austin Road, Iowa Avenue, Hwy 4, and Central Avenue in Brownsville; eastern portions of Brownsville (including South Point, Villa Pancho, and Reid Hope King); east of Los Fresnos; and west of Port Isabel.

Within Hidalgo County, the highest concentrations of youth (greater than 40 percent) are located to the west (including Sullivan City, La Joya, and Citrus City) and the east (including Hargill, Monte Alto, and Stockholm). Other concentrations are located south of Doolittle, east of Weslaco/west of Indian Hills, South Alamo, and Doffing.

Within Willacy County, the greatest concentration of youth lies in the large census block group comprising the western "panhandle" of the county (including Lasara), the portion north of Raymondville (including Yturria), and the eastern area (including San Perlita). Within this area, the concentration of youth is greater than 24 percent. However, the youth population throughout Willacy County does not vary greatly from one census block group to another.

Exhibit 3.2.6 Cameron County youth population

Legend

% of Population Under 18 Years Old

- < 20%
- 20% - 25%
- 25% - 30%
- 30% - 35%
- > 35%

— Transit Lines
☐ City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
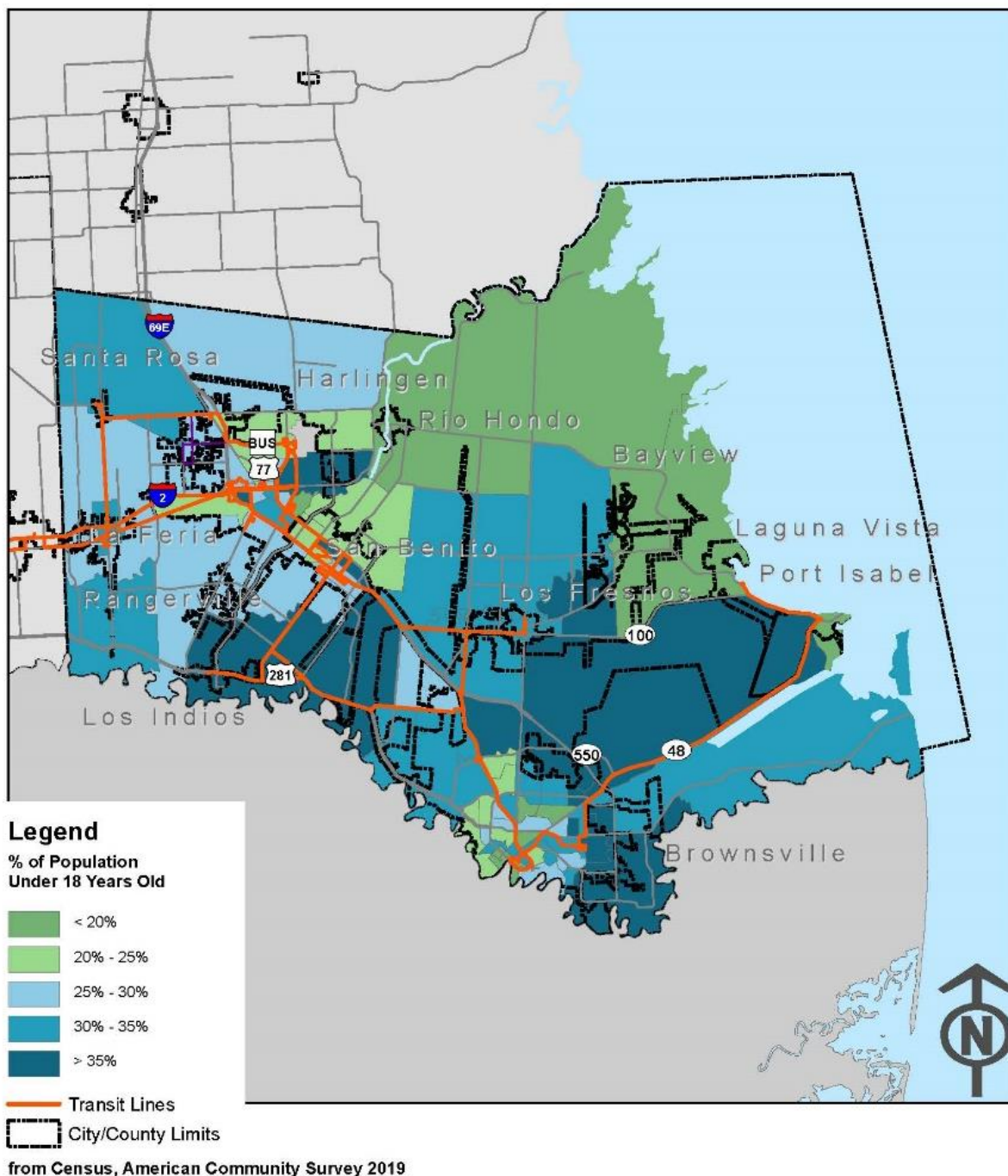
Exhibit 3.2.7 Hidalgo County youth population
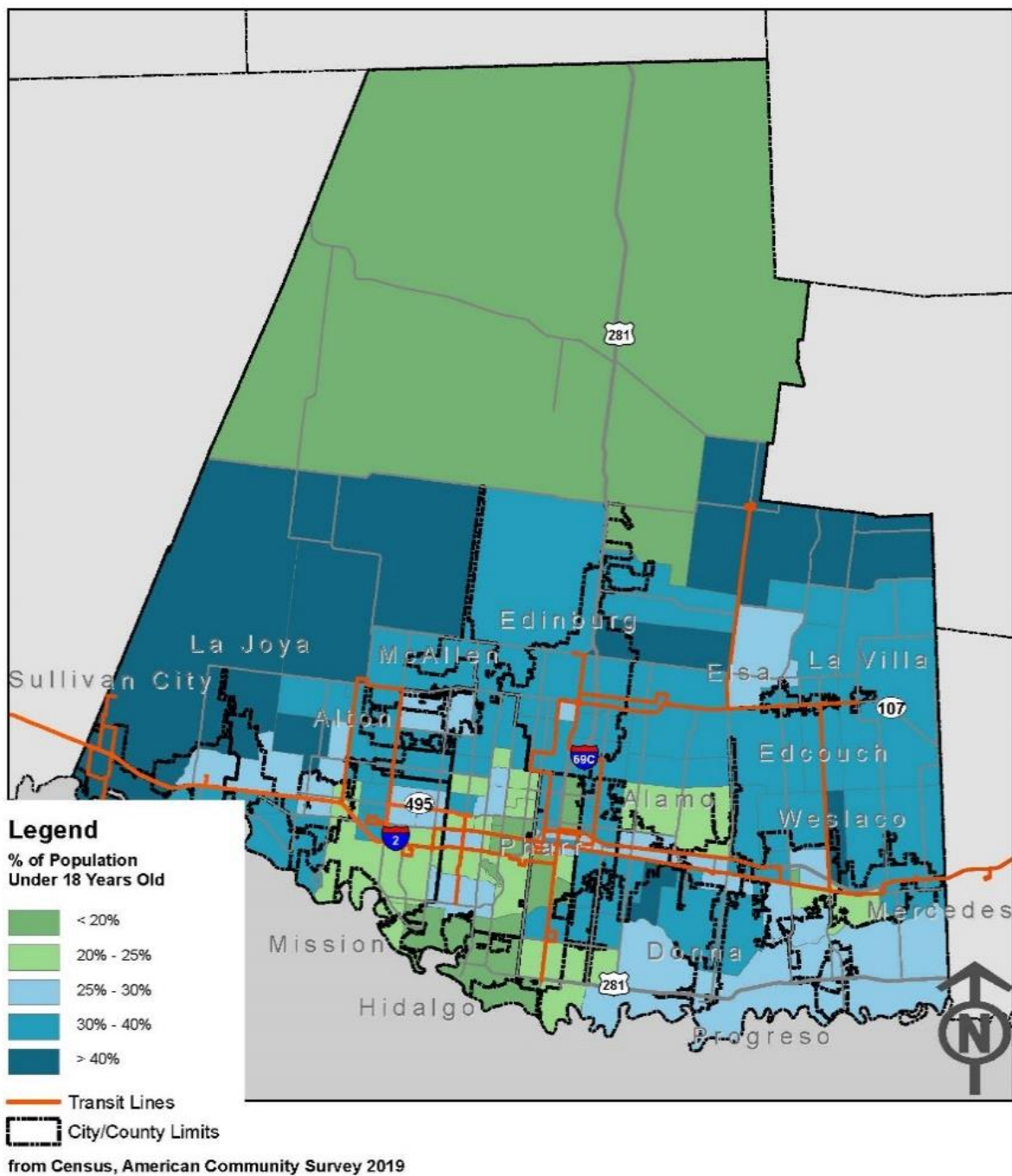
Exhibit 3.2.8 Willacy County youth population

Legend
% of Population
Under 18 Years Old

- < 21%
- 21% - 22%
- 22% - 23%
- 23% - 24%
- > 24%

City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019

moore & associates
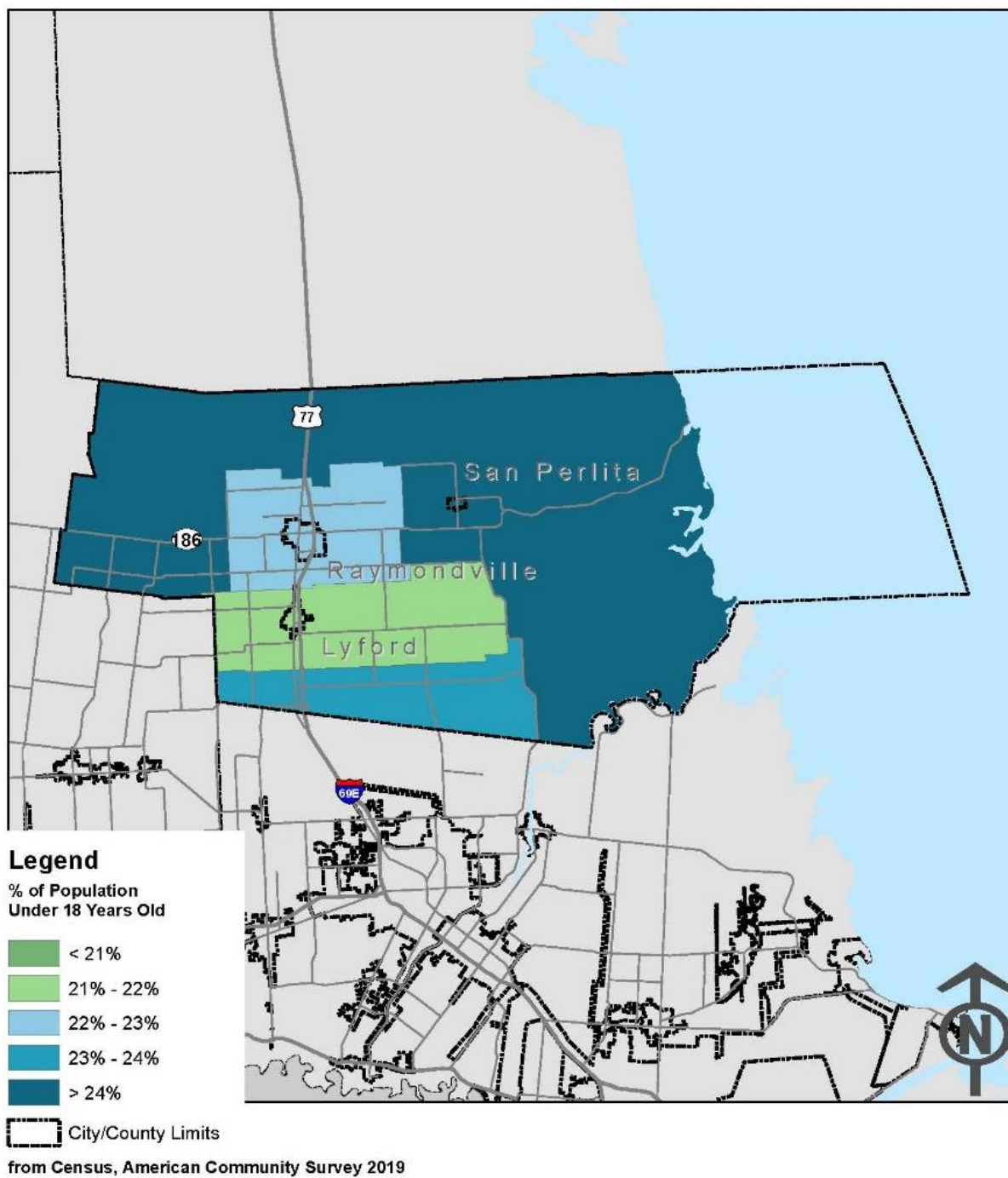
Similar to youth, persons age 65 and older also represent a traditional ride-dependent population. While many seniors retain both the ability to drive and access to a vehicle past age 65, this demographic cohort includes those who have lost this ability, whether due to health or absence of a vehicle.

The highest concentration of seniors resides within Cameron County (13.9 percent). The lowest concentration is in Hidalgo County (11.4 percent). The average concentration of seniors in the study area is approximately 12.9 percent. By contrast, Texas at-large has a concentration of 12.3 percent.

Exhibit 3.2.9 Senior (65+) population by county
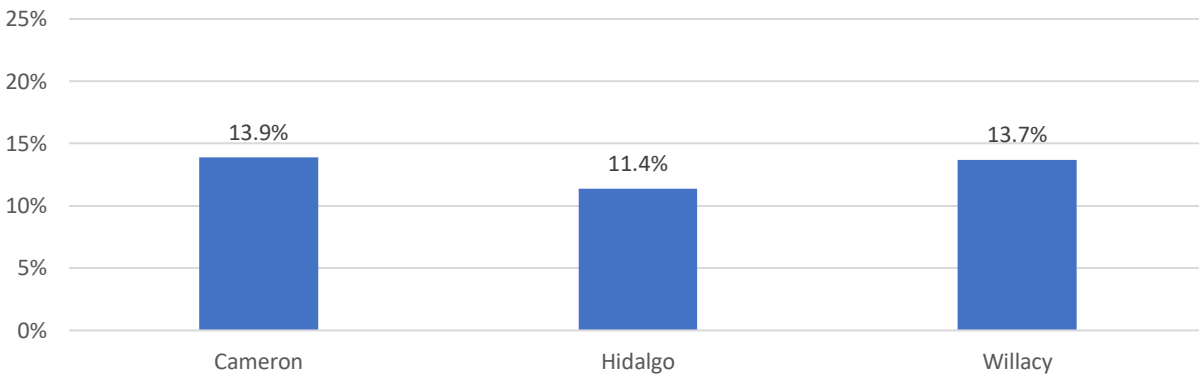
Within Cameron County, areas with the greatest concentrations of seniors (greater than 25 percent of the population of the census block group) include Port Isabel; from Bayview east to the coast and south to Hwy 100; Cameron Park (Colonia) in Brownsville; and the neighborhood west of University of Texas-RGV's Brownsville campus bounded by Palm Boulevard, Madison Street, Mexico Boulevard, and Hwy 4 (including portions of downtown Brownsville).

Within Hidalgo County, the highest concentrations of seniors (greater than 20 percent of the population of the census block group) are located to the north and east of La Joya; the area south of Business 83 just east of Palmview South; the neighborhood bounded by US Hwy 83, Bicentennial Blvd., Interstate 2, and 23rd Street in McAllen; the neighborhood between the McAllen Historic Business District and Interstate 2 to the east (including Newport Landing); the neighborhood between Interstate 2 and Business 83 (west of Donna High School) in Donna; and eastern Weslaco down to Llano Grande.

Within Willacy County, the greatest concentration of seniors (greater than 30 percent of the population of the census block group) lies in the census block group south of Raymondville that includes the community of Lyford.

Exhibit 3.2.10 Cameron County senior population

Legend

**% of Population
65 Years Old and Older**

- < 10%
- 10% - 15%
- 15% - 20%
- 20% - 25%
- > 25%

— Transit Lines

City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
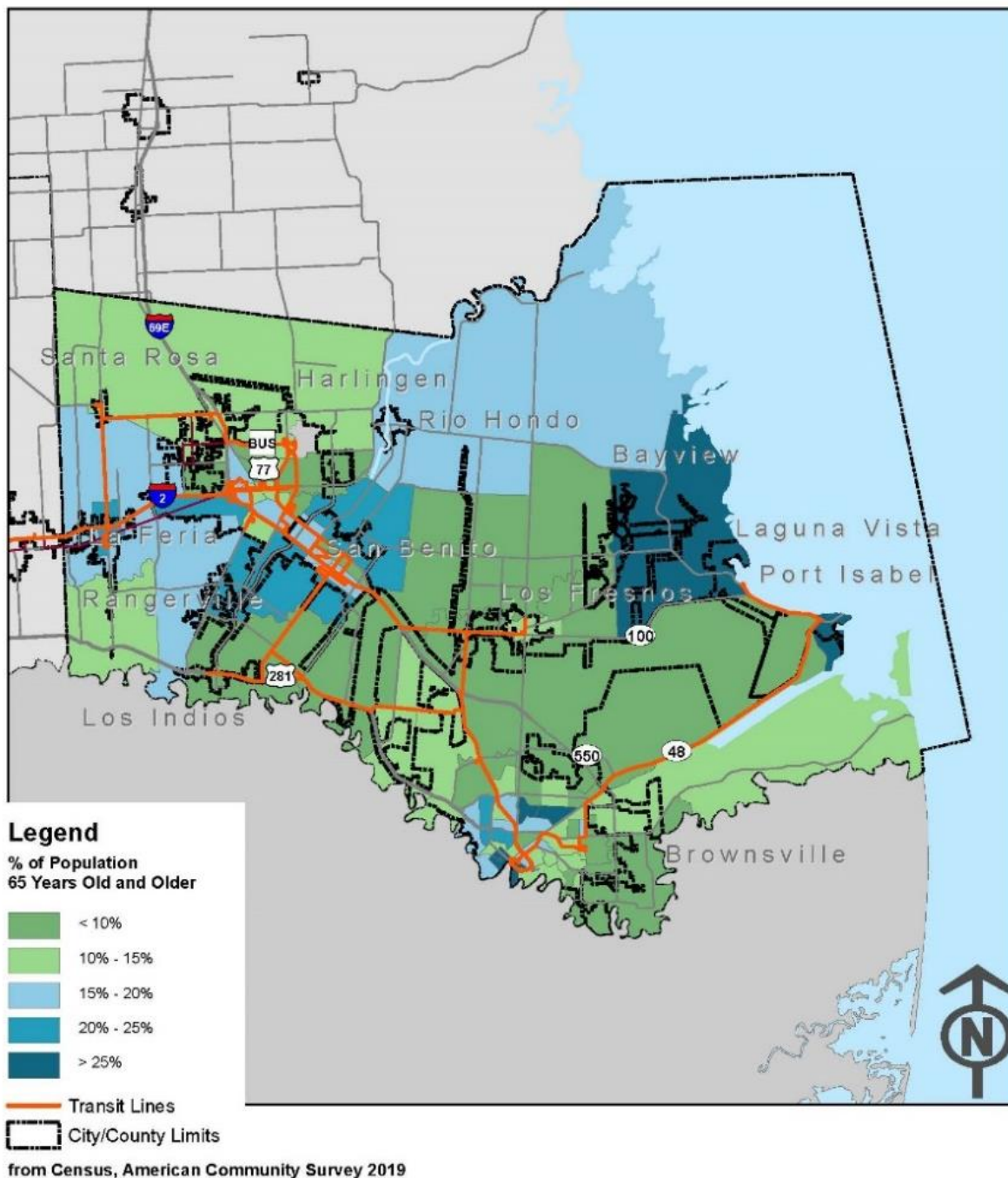
Exhibit 3.2.11 Hidalgo County senior population
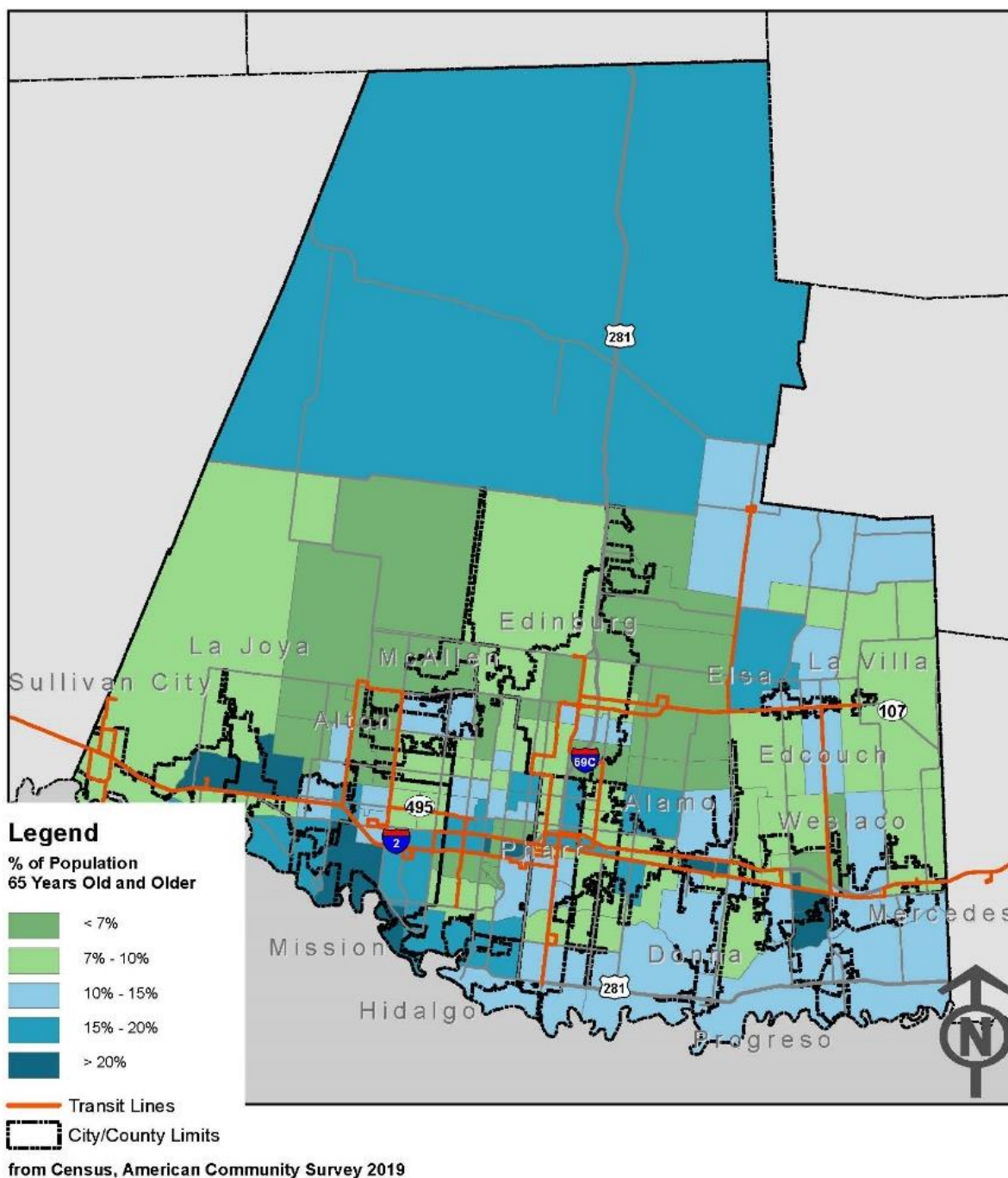
Exhibit 3.2.12 Willacy County senior population

Legend

**% of Population
65 Years Old and Older**

- < 10%
- 10% - 15%
- 15% - 20%
- 20% - 30%
- > 30%

City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019

moore
& associates
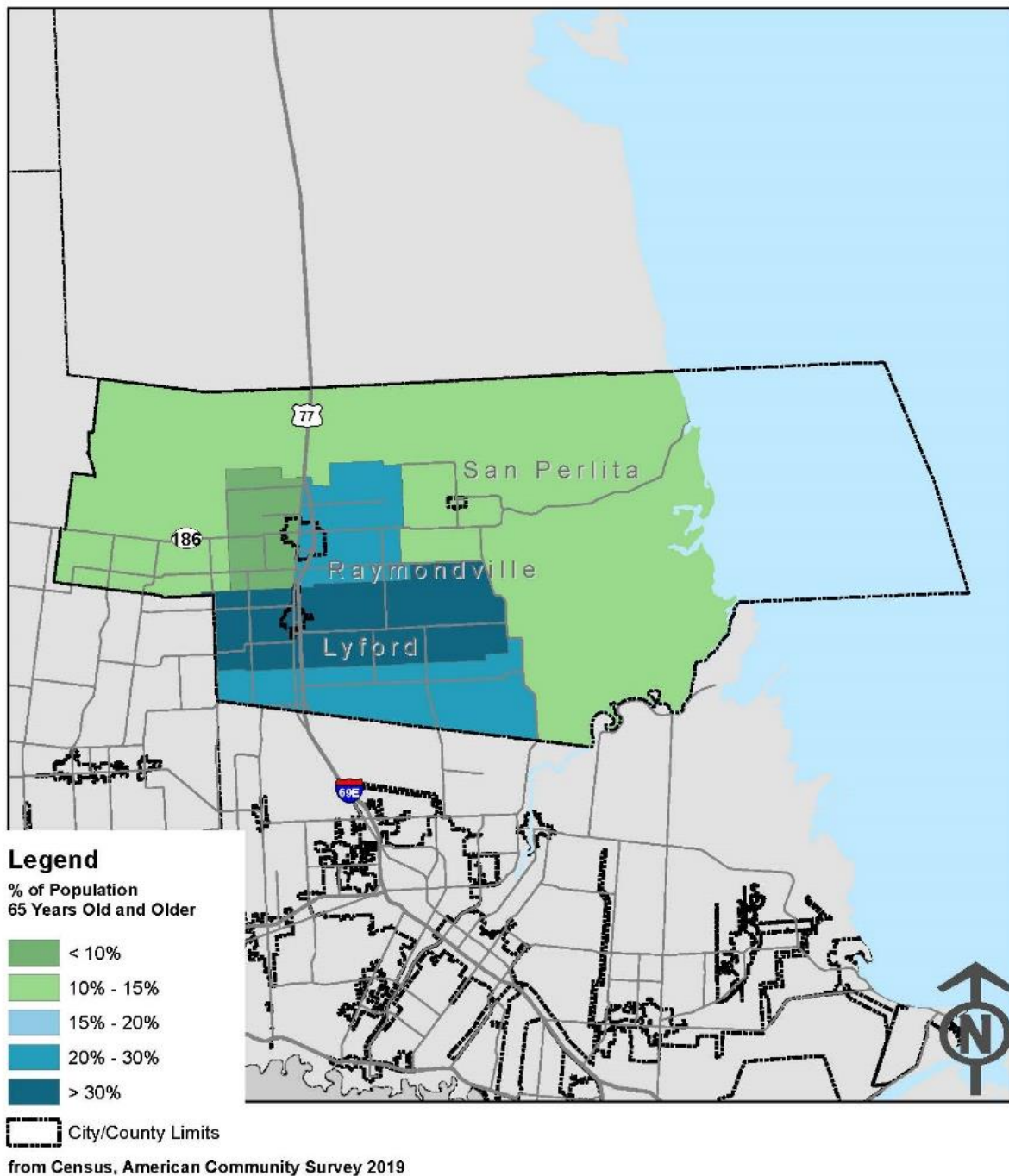
Persons with disabilities often rely on family or friends for transportation. The American Community Survey (ACS) categorizes disabilities to include hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living challenges. Some persons with disabilities may experience difficulties in multiple categories, and individual transportation needs often vary. Social service organizations sometimes provide transportation services to the clients they serve.

The percentage of persons with disabilities varies throughout the project area. Hidalgo County has the lowest concentration at 11.4 percent, while Willacy County has the highest (16.8 percent). The average concentration of persons with disabilities in the project area is approximately 13.5 percent.

Exhibit 3.2.13   Disabled population by county
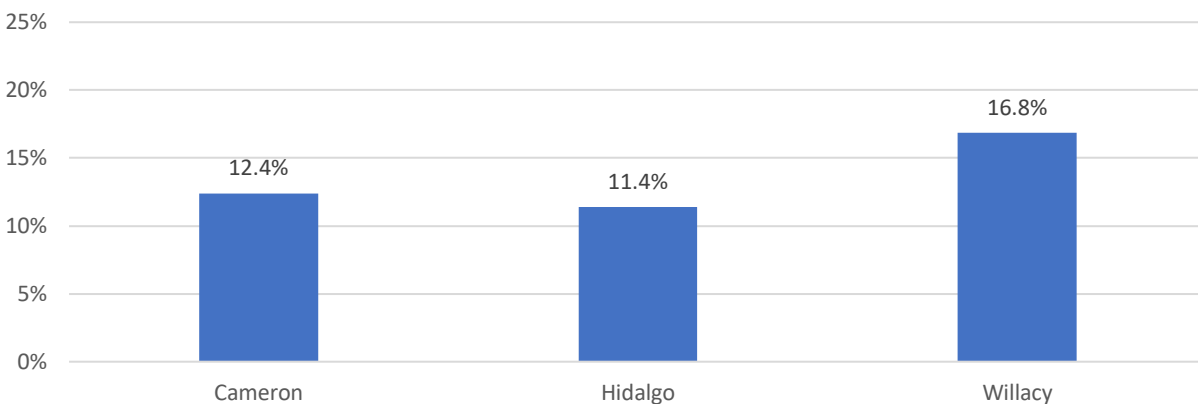
Within Cameron County, areas with the greatest concentrations of persons with disabilities (greater than 20 percent of the population of the census block group) include the communities of Rio Hondo, Arroyo Gardens, La Tina Ranch, Primera, and Combes; the border area east of UTRGV Brownsville (primarily near Calle Milpa Verde); and the neighborhood west of University of Texas-RGV's Brownsville campus bounded by Sixth Street, Madison Street, Mexico Boulevard., and Hwy 4 (including portions of downtown Brownsville).

Within Hidalgo County, the highest concentrations of persons with disabilities (greater than 20 percent of the population of the census block group) are located in Elsa; central Weslaco north of Business 83; the neighborhood between Interstate 2 and Business 83 in Pharr; the neighborhood bounded by US Hwy 83, Bicentennial Blvd., Interstate 2, and 23rd Street in McAllen; the area around Abram and to the east along the border; and the area near La Joya north of US Hwy 83.

Within Willacy County, the greatest concentration of persons with disabilities (greater than 23 percent of the population of the census block group) lies in the southernmost census block group that includes Sebastian and portions of Santa Monica.

Exhibit 3.2.14 Cameron County disabled population

Legend
% of Population
with a Disability

- < 10%
- 10% - 12%
- 12%- 17%
- 17% - 20%
- > 20%
- Transit Lines
- City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
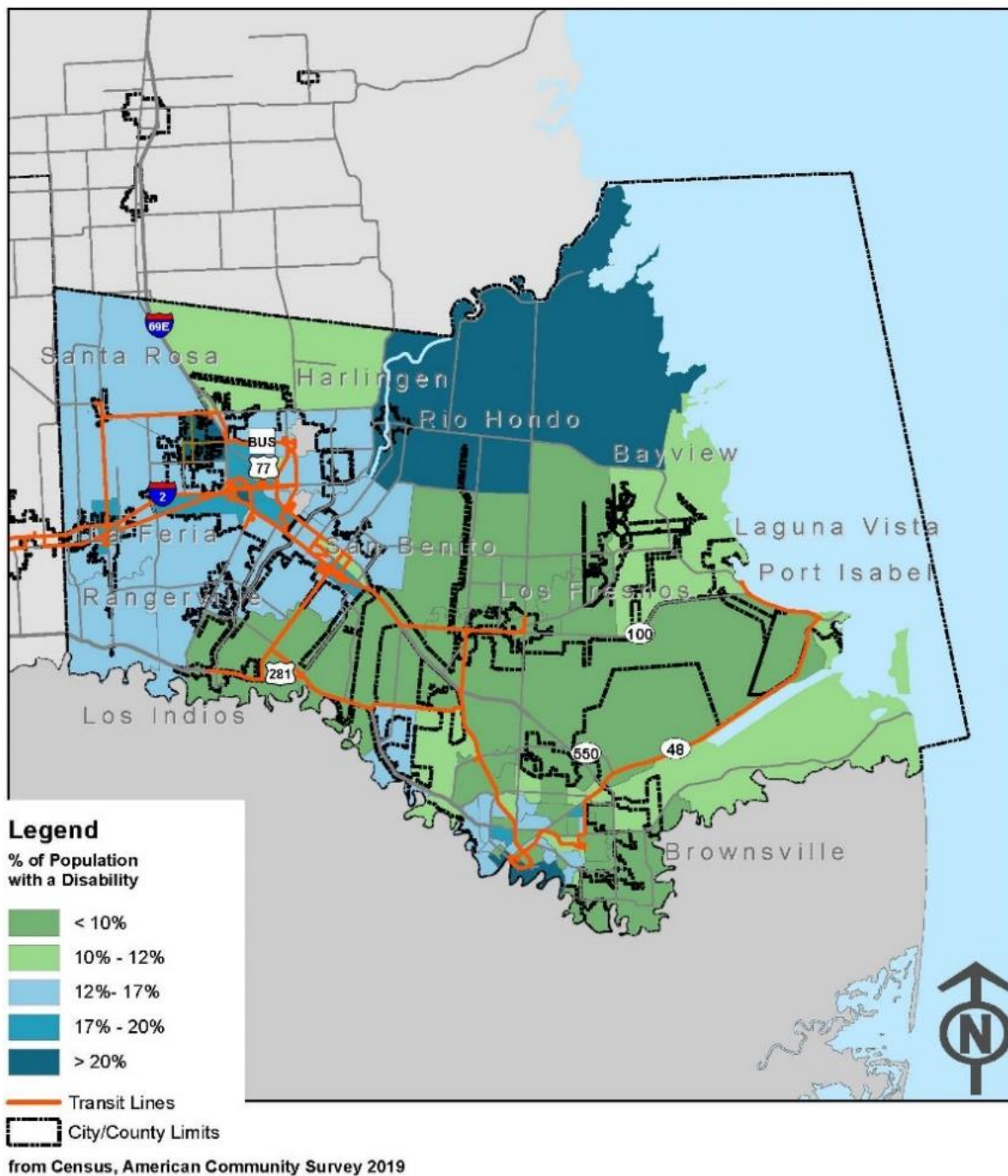
Exhibit 3.2.15 Hidalgo County disabled population

Legend
% of Population
with a Disability

- < 10%
- 10% - 12%
- 12% - 15%
- 15% - 20%
- > 20%

—— Transit Lines

⬚ City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
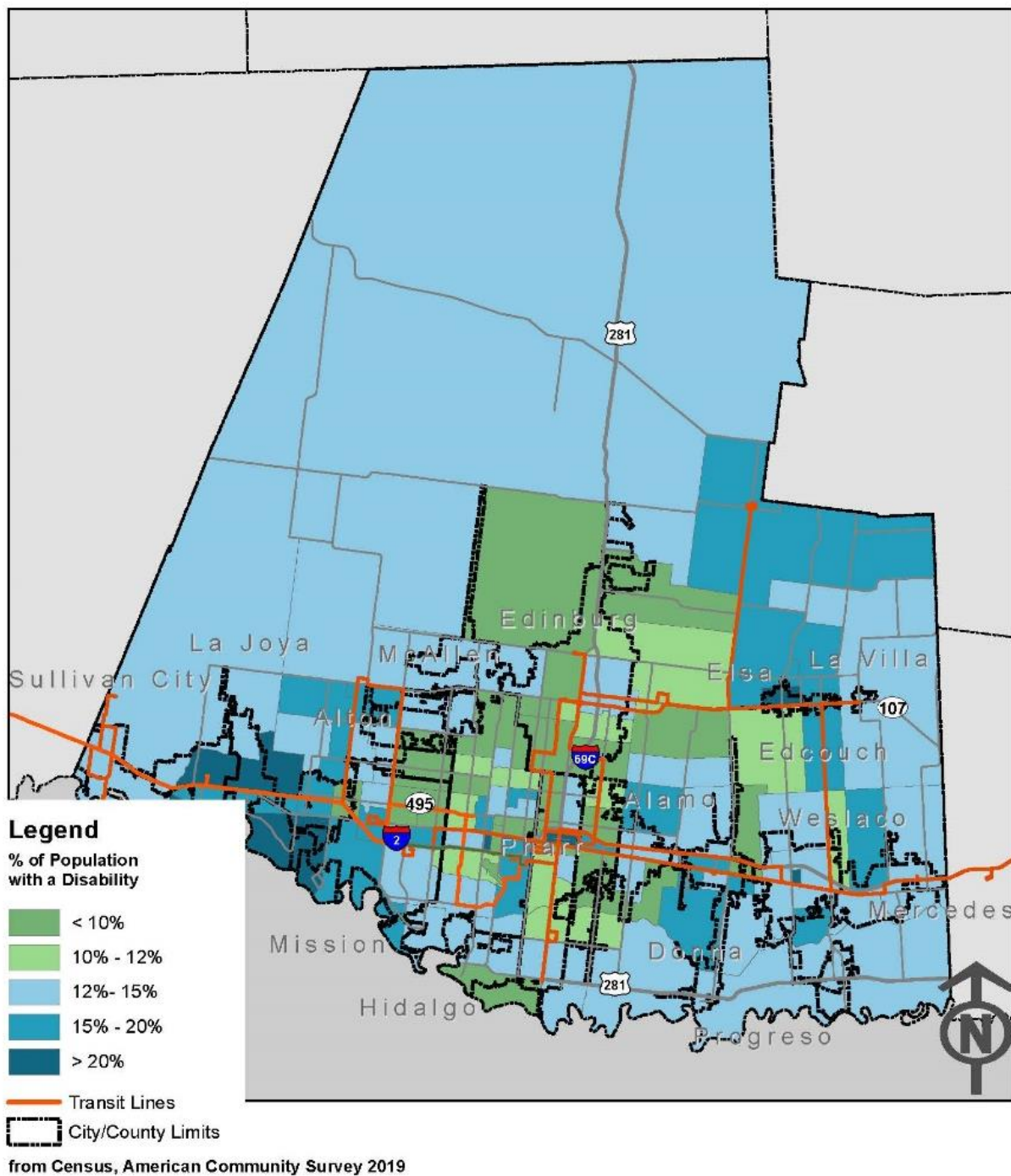
Exhibit 3.2.16 Willacy County disabled population

Legend

% of Population
with a Disability

< 20%
20% - 21%
21% - 22%
22% - 23%
> 23%

City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
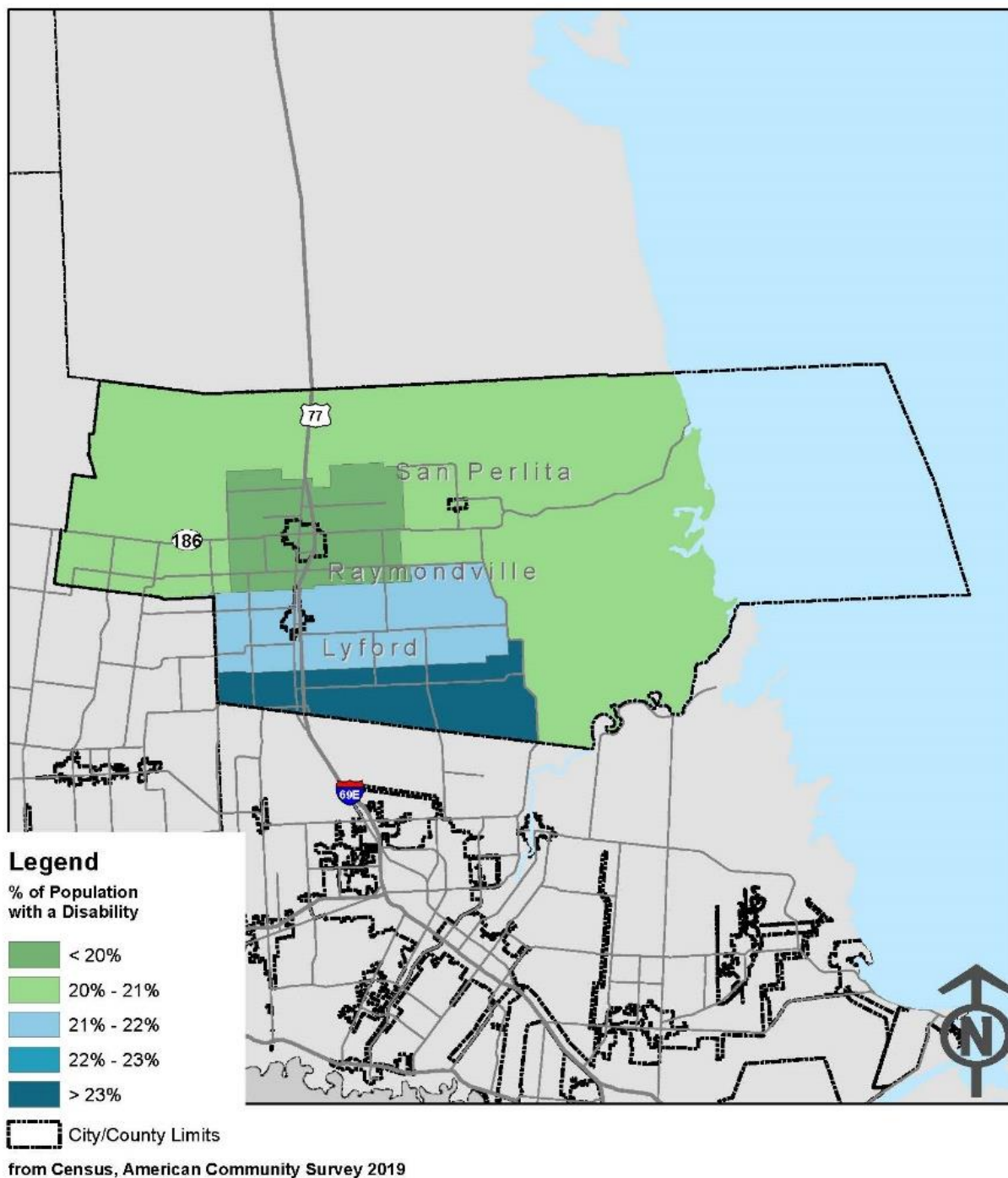
Household income can also be an indicator of ride-dependence, especially if income translates to lack of access to a personal vehicle.

On average, approximately 35 percent of individuals in the project area live below 125 percent of the poverty thresholds as identified by the federal census. In 2019, the federal poverty threshold for a four-person household was approximately $26,170, and 125 percent of that threshold would be $32,713. The percentage of persons with an income at 125 percent of the poverty threshold represents individuals living just above the poverty line, yet are still considered to be low-income.[4]

Cameron County has the lowest population of persons living at 125 percent of the poverty threshold (34.2 percent), followed by Hidalgo County (34.9 percent). Willacy County has the highest (37.3 percent).

Exhibit 3.2.17   Population living at 125 percent of poverty threshold by county
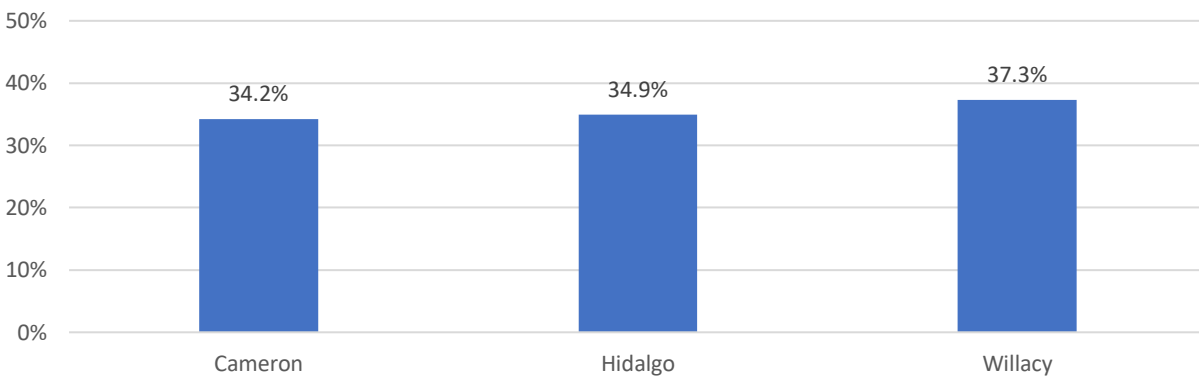
"Mean income" is a measure of the average household income for all households within a given county. Cameron County has the second highest average household income. Hidalgo County has the highest average household income, while Willacy County has the lowest average household income.

Exhibit 3.2.18 Mean household income by county

---
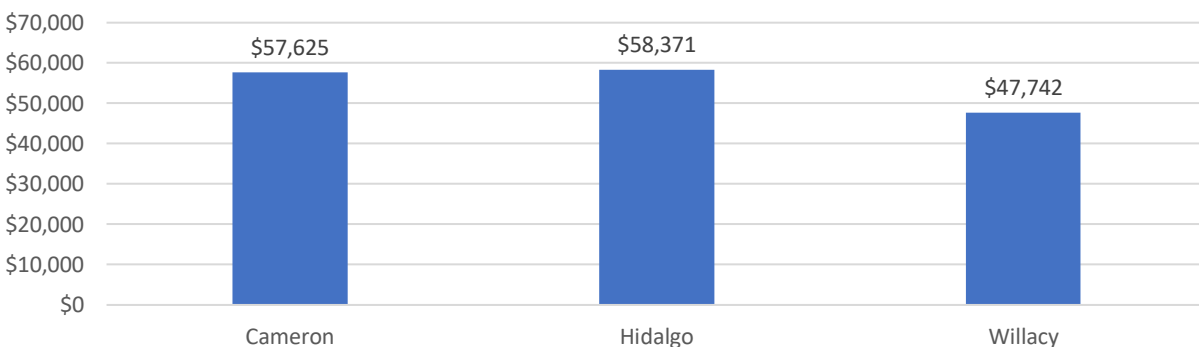
[4] Note: data regarding households living at 100 percent of the poverty threshold was not available.

In Cameron County, the area with the greatest incidence of persons living in poverty (greater than 48 percent) is downtown Brownsville west of International Blvd. and south of I-69E.

In Hidalgo County, areas with greater than 41 percent of the population living in poverty include the southwestern portion of the county, primarily north of Interstate 2; the vicinity of Hargill on the east side of the county; just west of Mission spanning Interstate 2; in Pharr just south of Interstate 2 in the vicinity of US 281; in McAllen south of Interstate 2 (west of the McAllen International Airport); an area near Alamo bounded by Owassa Road/Roosevelt Road to the north, Old La Blanca Road to the east, Interstate 2 and Kansas Road to the south, and Cesar Chavez Road to the west; eastern portions of Alamo and South Alamo and western portions of Donna and Scissors (all south of Business 83); north Mercedes and portions of Indian Hills; and the areas south of Mila Doce and Olivarez north of Interstate 2.

Within Willacy County, the greatest concentration of persons living in poverty lies in the large census block group comprising the western "panhandle" of the county (including Lasara), the portion north of Raymondville (including Yturria), and the eastern area (including San Perlita). Within this area, the concentration of youth is greater than 27 percent. However, the youth population throughout Willacy County does not vary significantly from one census block group to another (ranging from less than 18 percent to greater than 27 percent).

Exhibit 3.2.19 Cameron County population living in poverty

Legend

**% of Population
Living in Poverty**

- < 17%
- 17% - 27%
- 27% - 36%
- 36% - 48%
- > 48%
- Transit Lines
- City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
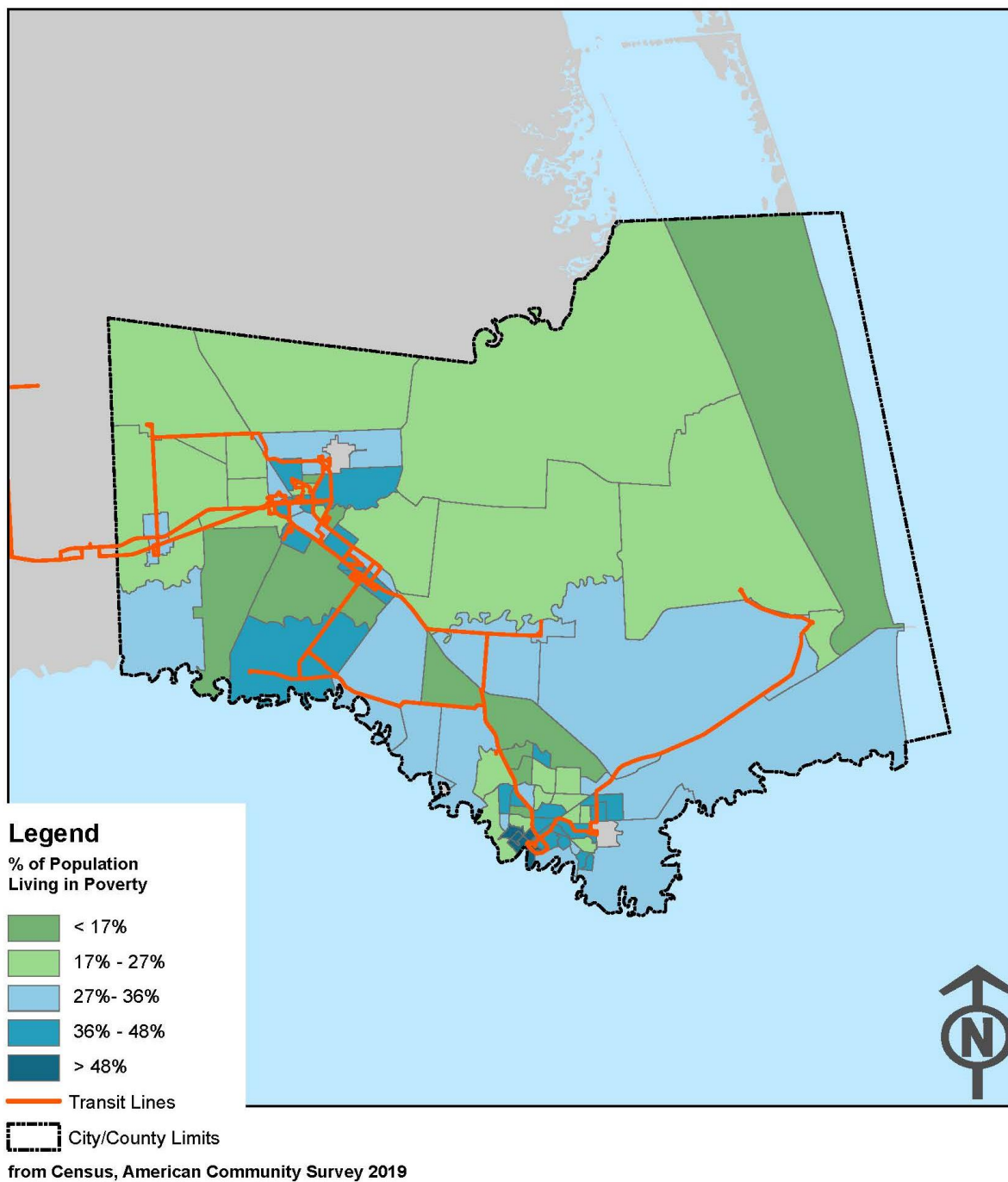
Exhibit 3.2.20 Hidalgo County population living in poverty

Legend
% of Population Living in Poverty

- < 19%
- 19% - 27%
- 27% - 33%
- 33% - 41%
- > 41%
- Transit Lines
- City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
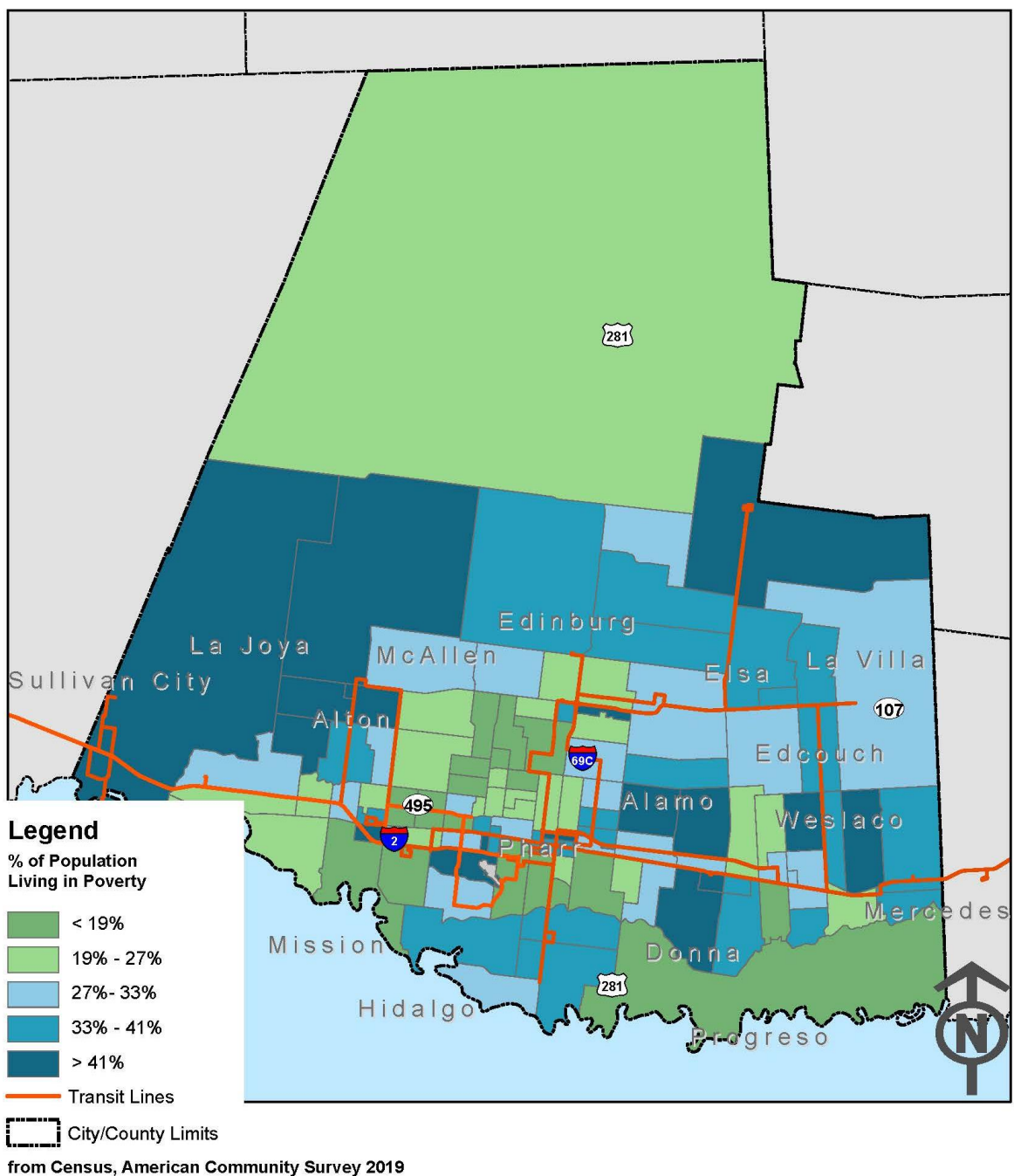
Exhibit 3.2.21 Willacy County population living in poverty

Legend
% of Population
Living in Poverty

< 18%
18% - 23%
23% - 24%
24% - 27%
> 27%

City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
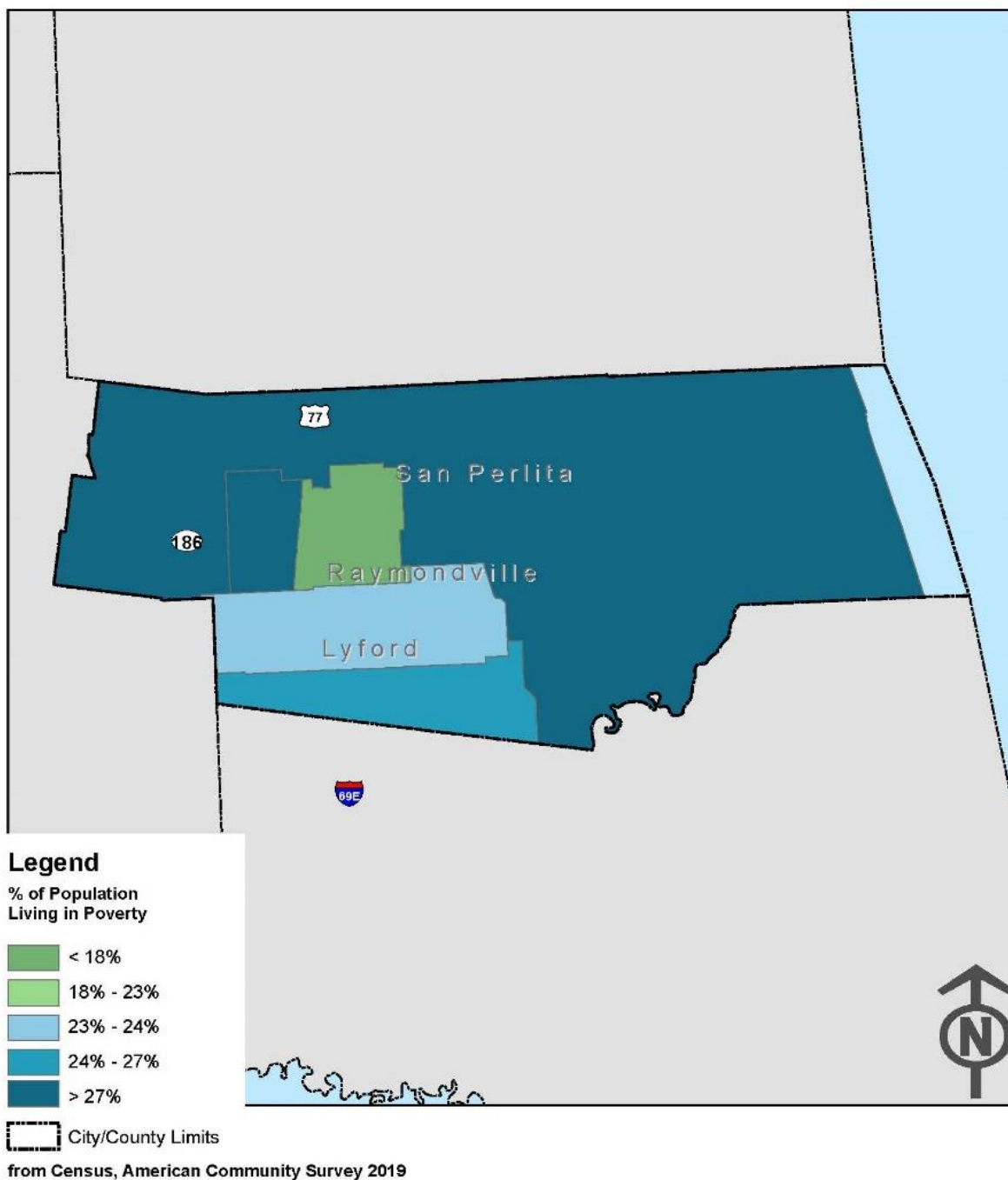
Further, access to a personal vehicle can be a significant indicator of ride-dependency. Households with no vehicles are the most impacted, although depending on the number of household residents of driving age and the condition of the vehicle, households with a single vehicle may also have one or more individuals who are ride-dependent.

Nation-wide, nine percent of all households indicated no vehicle ownership, while 33.5 percent reported owning one vehicle. Based on Texas DMV data, there are approximately 22 million registered vehicles in the state. In 2019, Texas was home to approximately 15 million persons age 18 and older. This translates to an average of 1.5 vehicles per capita.

Cameron County has the highest percentage of zero-vehicle households (15.9 percent). Hidalgo County has the lowest percentage of single-vehicle households (33.1 percent). Willacy County has the highest percentage of single-vehicle households (40.5 percent). Interestingly, it also has the lowest percentage of zero-vehicle households (5.1 percent).

Exhibit 3.2.22 Zero- and single-vehicle households by county
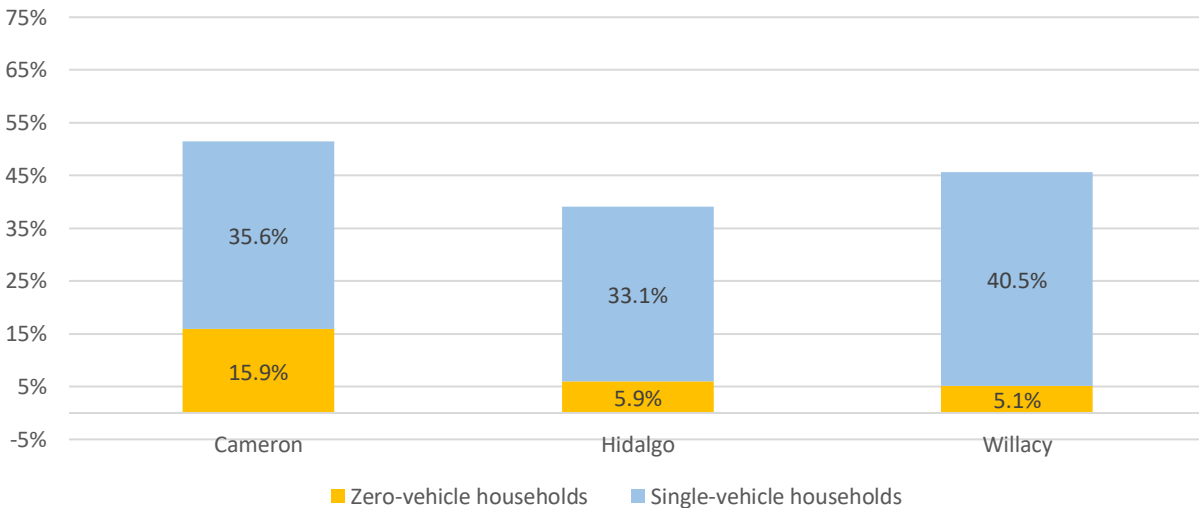
Within Cameron County, areas with the greatest concentrations of zero-vehicle households (greater than 6 percent of the population of the census block group) are quite wide-spread. They include northeastern portions of the county (including Rio Hondo, Arroyo Gardens, and La Tina Ranch); areas around and including much of east and south Harlingen and San Benito; western border areas of the county (including Bixby, Arroyo Alto, Santa Maria, Iglesia Antigua, and Bluetown); the area between Olmito and Orason (east of US Hwy 77 and south of Hwy 100); and numerous neighborhoods throughout Brownsville.

Some of the areas with the greatest concentrations of single-vehicle households (greater than 50 percent of the population of the census block group) in Cameron County overlap with those cited above with respect to zero-vehicle households. These include northeastern portions of the county (including Rio Hondo, Arroyo Gardens, and La Tina Ranch); the area north of Arroyo Colorado Estates east of Harlingen; the southern portion of Harlingen; the area east of Los Fresnos and west of Port Isabel; Reid Hope King east of Brownsville; the neighborhood just west of downtown Brownsville bounded by Palm Boulevard,

Madison Street, Sixth Street, and D Street;   the neighborhood surrounding Russell Elementary School in Brownsville; and the area east of Veterans Park and west of Resaca de la Palma National Battlefield in Brownsville.

Within Hidalgo County, the highest concentrations of zero-vehicle households (greater than five percent of the population of the census block group) are located in the neighborhood between Interstate 2 and Bell Avenue in Pharr; downtown McAllen (including the McAllen Historic Business District, La Paloma, and De Palmas Historic District); the area south of Interstate 2 between South Alamo and Scissors (including the western portion of Donna); and the area west of Mercedes to south Weslaco south of Business 83 (including Llano Grande).

All of the areas with the greatest concentrations of single-vehicle households (greater than 50 percent of the population of the census block group) in Hidalgo County overlap with those cited above: downtown McAllen (including the McAllen Historic Business District, La Paloma, and De Palmas Historic District); the area south of Interstate 2 between South Alamo and Scissors (including the western portion of Donna); and the area west of Mercedes to south Weslaco south of Business 83 (including Llano Grande).

Within Willacy County, the greatest concentration of zero-vehicle households (greater than 23 percent of the population of the census block group) lies in the large census block group comprising the western "panhandle" of the county (including Lasara), the portion north of Raymondville (including Yturria), and the eastern area (including San Perlita). This same census block group also has the highest concentration of single-vehicle households (greater than 40 percent of the population of the census block group).

Exhibit 3.2.23 Cameron County zero-vehicle households

Legend

% of Households with
Zero Vehicles Available

< 1.5%
1.5% - 2.5%
2.5% - 4.0%
4.0% - 6.0%
> 6%
Transit Lines
City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
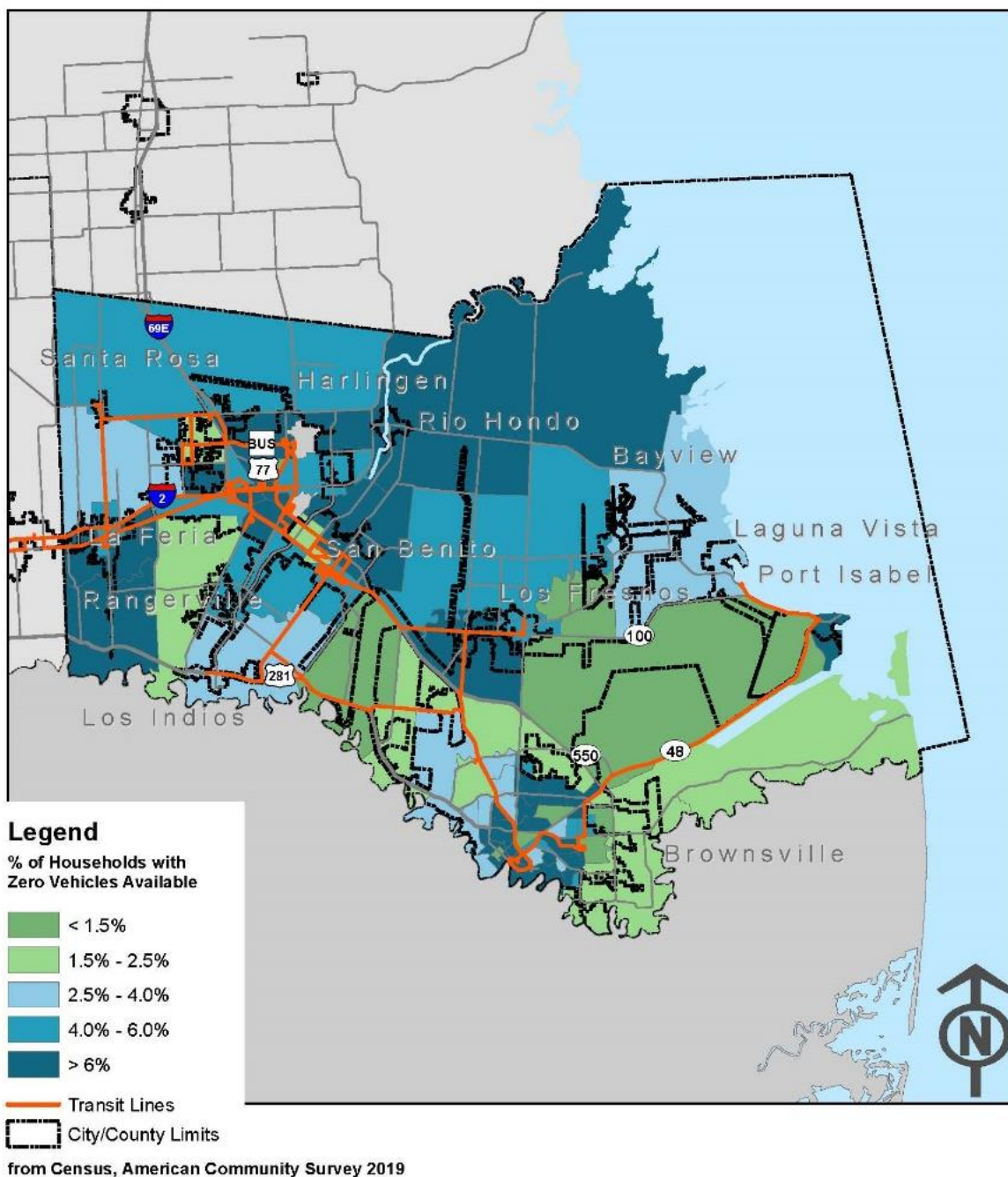
Exhibit 3.2.24 Cameron County single-vehicle households

Legend

% of Households with
One Vehicle Available

- < 20%
- 20% - 30%
- 30% - 40%
- 40% - 50%
- > 50%
- Transit Lines
- City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
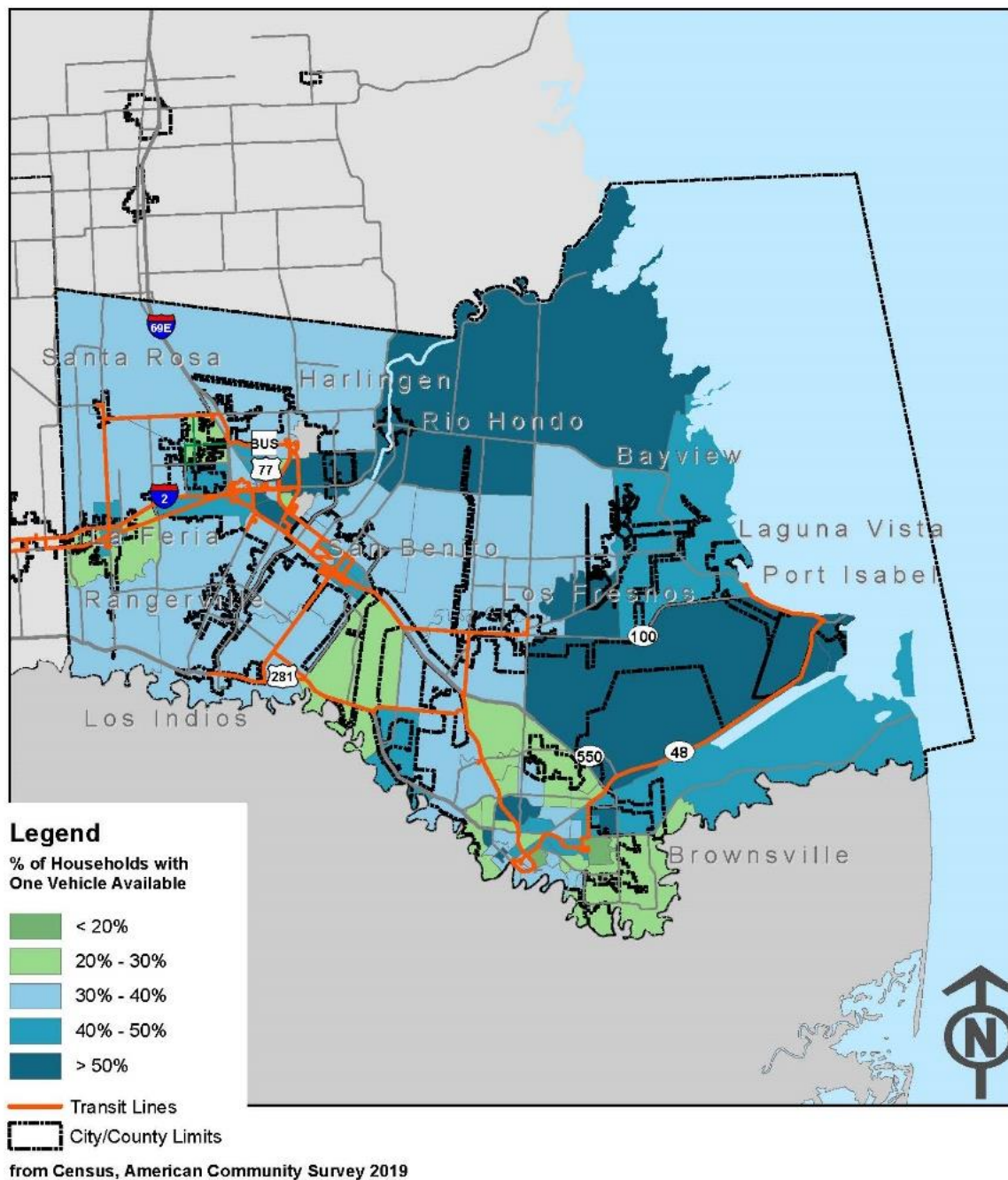
Exhibit 3.2.25 Hidalgo County zero-vehicle households

Legend
% of Households with
Zero Vehicle Available

- < 2%
- 2% - 3%
- 3% - 4%
- 4% - 5%
- > 5%
- Transit Lines
- City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019

moore
& associates
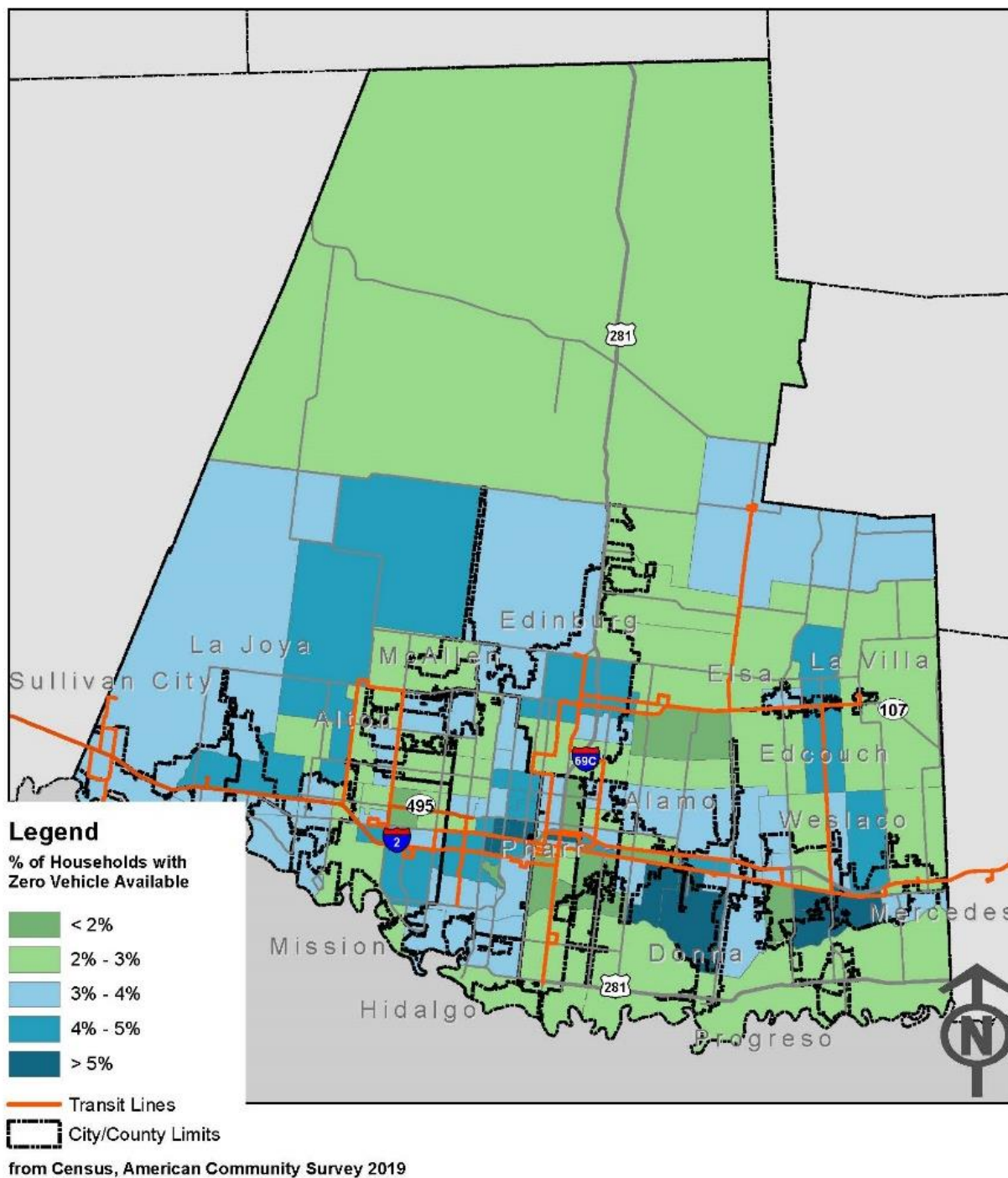
Exhibit 3.2.26 Hidalgo County single-vehicle households

Legend

% of Households with One Vehicle Available

- < 20%
- 20% - 30%
- 30% - 40%
- 40% - 50%
- > 50%

— Transit Lines

City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
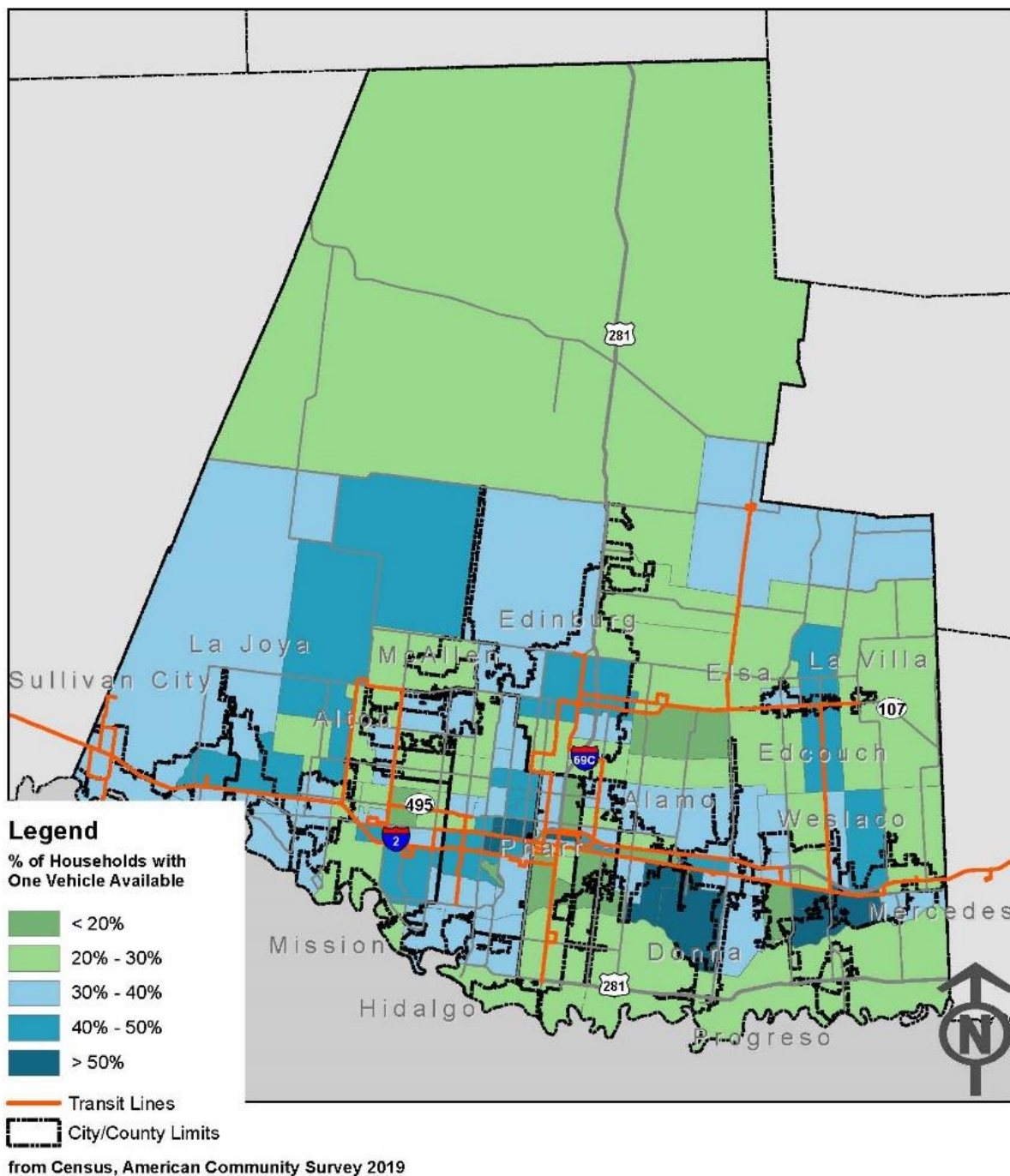
Exhibit 3.2.27 Willacy County zero-vehicle households

Legend

% of Households with Zero Vehicles Available

- < 1%
- 1% - 3%
- 3% - 5%
- 5% - 7%
- > 7%

City/County Limits
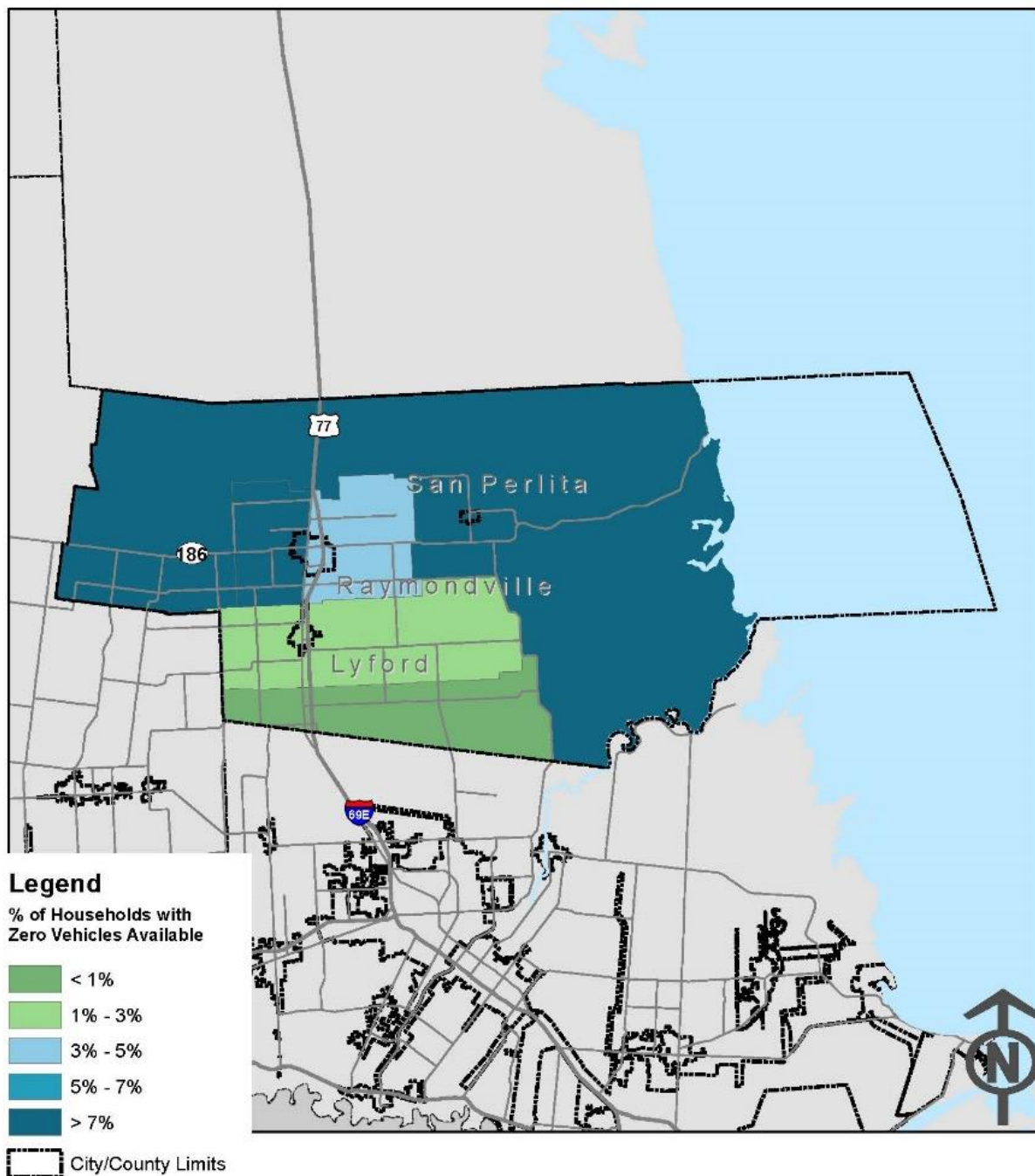
Exhibit 3.2.28 Willacy County single-vehicle households

Legend
% of Households with
One Vehicle Available

< 20%
20% - 30%
30% - 38%
38% - 40%
> 40%

City/County Limits

from Census, American Community Survey 2019
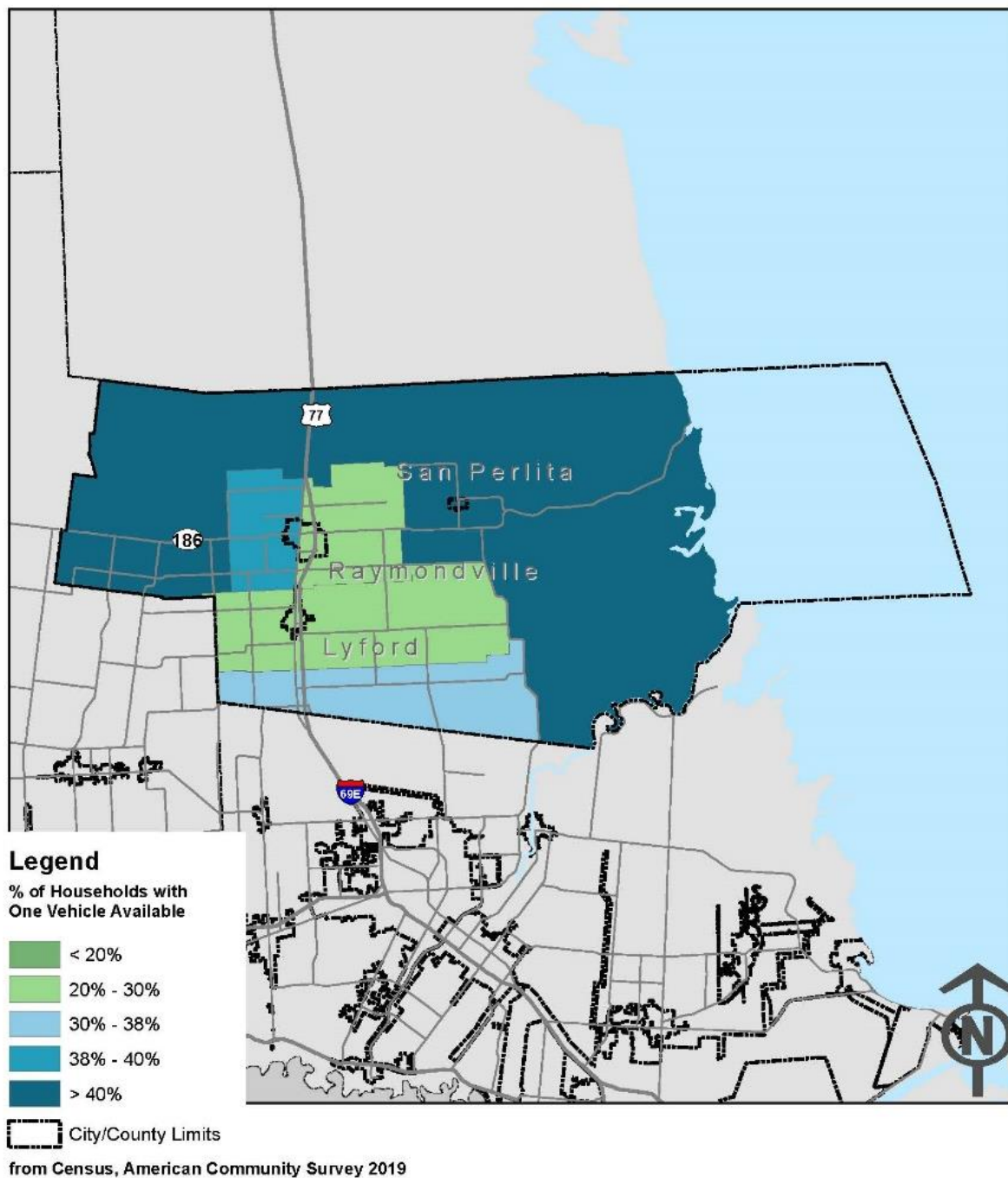
3.3 Commute Patterns

The three counties in the project area have similar concentrations of work-age adults utilizing public transit. Less than one percent of the work-age adults in each county reported use of public transit as a means of commuting to/from work.

Exhibit 3.3.1 Transit usage by workers

County	Total Workers	Percentage
Cameron	167,997	0.9%
Hidalgo	334,142	0.6%
Willacy	7,622	0.0%

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data provided by the federal census provides additional information about commute patterns within each county. [5] Two types of analysis are provided for each county. The first, inflow-outflow analysis, compares the number of workers who both live and work within the county with those who only live or work within the county (and therefore commute to or from another county). The second, work destination analysis, looks at home locations for workers within the designated county. It shows where each county draws its workers from. The data used in the exhibits below is from 2018, the most current available for analysis.

Cameron County
As shown in Exhibit 1.2.30, the majority (77.1 percent) of the 134,062 (2018) workers in Cameron County both live and work within the county. The remaining workers (22.9 percent) commute into Cameron County from elsewhere. Of the 150,253 (2018) working residents of Cameron County, 68.8 percent both live and work within the county, while 31.2 percent travel outside the county for work.

As stated above, 77.1 percent of Cameron County's workers live within the county. As shown in Exhibit 1.2.31, the next greatest concentration resides in Hidalgo County (12 percent), followed by Willacy County (1.3 percent). Other home counties for Cameron County workers include Harris, Starr, Nueces, Bexar, Webb, Tarrant, and Kleberg counties.

Hidalgo County
As shown in Exhibit 1.2.32, the majority (81.2 percent) of the 261,107 (2018) workers in Hidalgo County both live and work within the county. The remaining workers (18.8 percent) commute into Hidalgo County from elsewhere. Of the 281,695 (2018) working residents of Hidalgo County, 75.3 percent both live and work within the county, while 24.7 percent travel outside the county for work.

As stated above, 81.2 percent of Hidalgo County's workers live within the county. As shown in Exhibit 1.2.33, the next greatest concentration resides in Cameron County (7.5 percent), followed by Starr County (2.5 percent). Other home counties for Hidalgo County workers include Bexar, Nueces, Harris, Willacy, Webb, Kleberg, and Tarrant counties.

---

[5] U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2018).

Willacy County

As shown in Exhibit 1.2.34, fewer than half (47.5 percent) of the 2,746 (2018) workers in Willacy County both live and work within the county. The remaining workers (52.5 percent) commute into Willacy County from elsewhere. Of the 6,781 (2018) working residents of Willacy County, 19.2 percent both live and work within the county, while 80.8 percent travel outside the county for work.

As stated above, 47.5 percent of Willacy County's workers live within the county. As shown in Exhibit 1.2.35, the next greatest concentration resides in Cameron County (22.3 percent), followed by Hidalgo County (17.4 percent). Other home counties for Willacy County workers include Starr, Nueces, Kleberg, Bexar, Harris, San Patricio, and Comal counties.

Exhibit 3.3.2 Cameron County inflow-outflow analysis

Cameron County Inflow-Outflow Analysis, 2018, On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/. Accessed 10/25/2021.

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)

	2018	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	134,062	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	30,669	22.9%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	103,393	77.1%
Living in the Selection Area	150,253	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	46,860	31.2%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	103,393	68.8%

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2018

30,669 - Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
46,860 - Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside
103,393 - Employed and Live in Selection Area

Exhibit 3.3.3 Cameron County work destination analysis
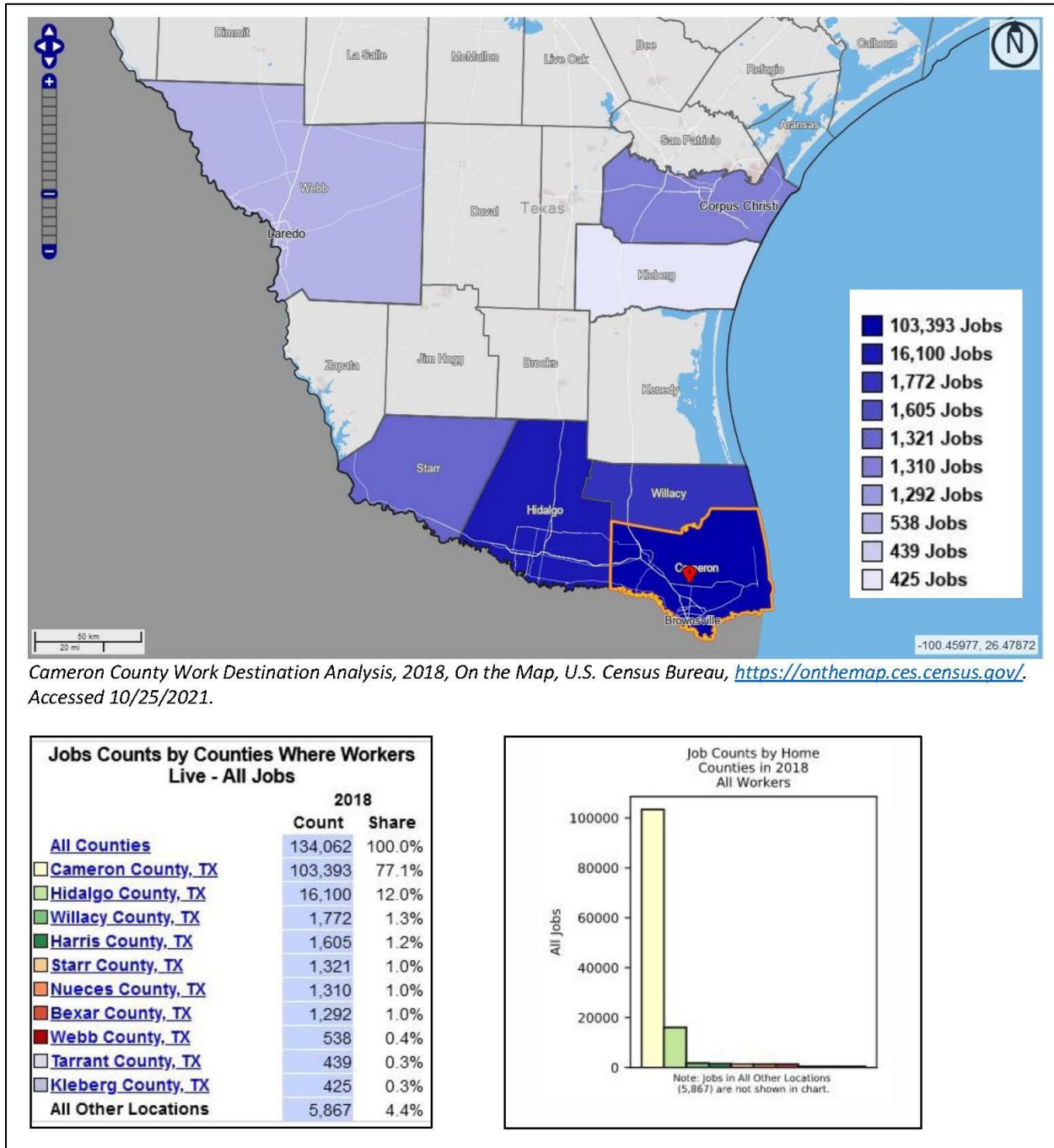
Cameron County Work Destination Analysis, 2018, On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/. Accessed 10/25/2021.

Jobs Counts by Counties Where Workers Live - All Jobs

	2018 Count	Share
All Counties	134,062	100.0%
Cameron County, TX	103,393	77.1%
Hidalgo County, TX	16,100	12.0%
Willacy County, TX	1,772	1.3%
Harris County, TX	1,605	1.2%
Starr County, TX	1,321	1.0%
Nueces County, TX	1,310	1.0%
Bexar County, TX	1,292	1.0%
Webb County, TX	538	0.4%
Tarrant County, TX	439	0.3%
Kleberg County, TX	425	0.3%
All Other Locations	5,867	4.4%

Exhibit 3.3.4 Hidalgo County inflow-outflow analysis

Hidalgo County Inflow-Outflow Analysis, 2018, On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/.
Accessed 10/25/2021.

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)	2018	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	261,107	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	48,975	18.8%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	212,132	81.2%
Living in the Selection Area	281,695	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	69,563	24.7%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	212,132	75.3%

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2018

- 48,975 - Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
- 69,563 - Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside
- 212,132 - Employed and Live in Selection Area

Exhibit 3.3.5 Hidalgo County work destination analysis

Hidalgo County Work Destination Analysis, 2018, On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/.
Accessed 10/25/2021.

Jobs Counts by Counties Where Workers Live - All Jobs

	2018 Count	Share
All Counties	261,107	100.0%
Hidalgo County, TX	212,132	81.2%
Cameron County, TX	19,618	7.5%
Starr County, TX	6,560	2.5%
Bexar County, TX	2,480	0.9%
Nueces County, TX	2,325	0.9%
Harris County, TX	1,863	0.7%
Willacy County, TX	1,734	0.7%
Webb County, TX	1,530	0.6%
Kleberg County, TX	984	0.4%
Tarrant County, TX	776	0.3%
All Other Locations	11,105	4.3%

Exhibit 3.3.6 Willacy County inflow-outflow analysis

Willacy County Inflow-Outflow Analysis, 2018, On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/.
Accessed 10/25/2021.

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)		
	2018	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	2,746	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	1,443	52.5%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	1,303	47.5%
Living in the Selection Area	6,781	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	5,478	80.8%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	1,303	19.2%

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2018

1,443 - Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
5,478 - Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside
1,303 - Employed and Live in Selection Area

Exhibit 3.3.7 Willacy County work destination analysis

Willacy County Work Destination Analysis, 2018, On the Map, U.S. Census Bureau, https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/.
Accessed 10/25/2021.

Jobs Counts by Counties Where Workers Live - All Jobs

	2018	
	Count	Share
All Counties	2,746	100.0%
Willacy County, TX	1,303	47.5%
Cameron County, TX	611	22.3%
Hidalgo County, TX	477	17.4%
Starr County, TX	63	2.3%
Nueces County, TX	50	1.8%
Kleberg County, TX	22	0.8%
Bexar County, TX	18	0.7%
Harris County, TX	14	0.5%
San Patricio County, TX	13	0.5%
Comal County, TX	10	0.4%
All Other Locations	165	6.0%
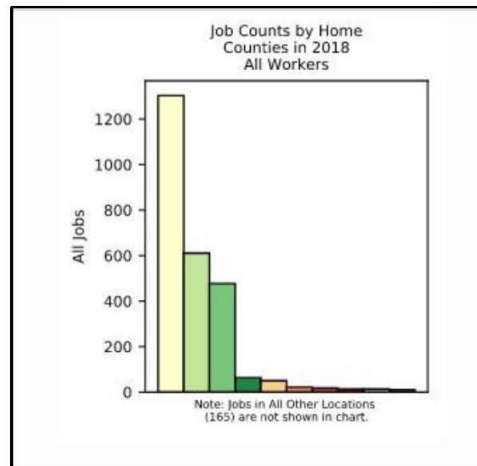
3.4 Land-Use Profile

Among the many factors affecting the design and delivery of public transportation service is a community's land-use. This can include the associated street and road network, location of potential trip generators, populations/residential densities, and historic home-to-work travel patterns.

Presented herein are details specific to the larger employers in each of the three counties within the project area, key medical/healthcare facilities, veterans affairs centers, key educational facilities, and a wide variety of social services (healthcare, employment/training, counseling, etc.) organizations and facilities.

Many of the potential trip generators included herein are within close proximity of a public transit route while other can be accessed via public dial-a-ride service and/or transportation services provided by various community stakeholder organizations.

Regional trip generators

A trip generator can be any business, service, or organization that draws people to its physical location. Many trip generators are local, such as elementary schools, medical offices, grocery stores, etc. Regional trip generators tend to draw customers, clients, students, and employees from a much broader area. These may include large employers, major healthcare or educational facilities, social and human service organizations, and entities offering services to a defined group (such as veterans). Given the regional nature of these trip generators, it may be more difficult to access them if transportation is not readily available.

Major employers

The largest employers within the three-county area are primarily comprised of three industries: government, education, and healthcare. Outside of these industries, other major employers include Walmart and H-E-B Grocery. Most large employers are located in Cameron and Hidalgo counties, many in proximity to Brownsville, Harlingen, and McAllen.

Exhibit 3.4.1 Top Employers: Cameron County

Employer	Workforce
Brownsville ISD	7,670
Cameron County	1,950
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	1,734
Keppel AmFELS	1,650
Walmart	1,413
Abundant Life Home Health	1,300
City of Brownsville	1,227
Caring for You Home Health	1,200
H-E-B Grocery	975
Maximus	950

Exhibit 3.4.2 Top Employers: Hidalgo County

Employer	Workforce
IDEA Public Schools	5,667
Doctors Hospital at Renaissance	5,282
Edinburg CISD	4,778
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	4,748
H-E-B Grocery	4,650
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	3,529
McAllen ISD	3,324
Mission ISD	3,265
Hidalgo County	3,239
Walmart	3,141
US Customs & Border Patrol	3,000
South Texas Health Systems Edinburg	2,750
South Texas College	2,321

Exhibit 3.4.3 Top Employers: Willacy County

Employer	Workforce
Raymondville ISD	362
Lyford CISD	269
Valley Telephone Co-Op	125
Corrections Corp of America	166
Willacy County	133
H-E-B Grocery	105
BCFS (Health & Human Services)	76
City of Raymondville	74

March 2016 data

Higher education facilities

Institutions of higher education tend to offer services in a single primarily location, which allows them to offer a broader range of courses of study. However, a number of colleges and universities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley have decentralized to some degree, with satellite campuses offering classes in communities throughout the region.

Exhibit 3.4.4 Lower Rio Grande Valley higher education facilities

Facility name	Campus location(s)
South Texas College	McAllen, La Joya, Pharr, Rio Grande City, Weslaco
Texas A&M University Higher Education Center	McAllen
Texas Southmost College	Brownsville
Texas State Technical College	Harlingen
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	Boca Chica, Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen, La Feria, McAllen, Port Isabel, Rio Grande City, South Padre Island

Major healthcare facilities

Major healthcare facilities, including local and regional hospitals and medical centers, are common destinations for those relying on public transportation, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities. The majority of the hospitals and medical centers in the project area are located within areas served by public transit. Transportation to these locations from outlying communities, however, may be more problematic, though many rural communities are served by Valley Metro flex-routes or demand-response service.

While not necessarily considered to be major healthcare facilities, dialysis centers are also included within this list given the significant role they play in the health of the individuals who need their services to maintain their health and survival. Dialysis patients typically attend treatments multiple times each week and often require assistance traveling to and/or from their appointments.

Exhibit 3.4.5 Lower Rio Grande Valley major healthcare facilities

Facility name	Location(s)
Cornerstone Regional Hospital	Edinburg
Da Vita Dialysis	Brownsville, Donna, Edinburg, Harlingen, McAllen, Mercedes, Mission, Raymondville, Weslaco
Doctors Hospital at Renaissance	Edinburg
Edinburg Children's Hospital	Edinburg
Edinburg Regional Medical Center	Edinburg
Fresenius Kidney Care	Alamo, Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen, McAllen, Mission, Pharr, Weslaco
Harlingen Medical Center	Harlingen
Knapp Medical Center	Weslaco
McAllen Heart Hospital	McAllen
McAllen Medical Center	McAllen
Mission Regional Medical Center	Mission
RGV Kidney Care	McAllen
Rio Grande Regional Hospital	McAllen
U.S. Renal Care	Elsa, Harlingen, McAllen, Mission, San Benito, Weslaco
UT Health Rio Grande Valley	Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen, Laguna Vista, Mercedes, Mission, Weslaco
Valley Baptist Medical Center	Brownsville, Harlingen
The Women's Hospital at Renaissance	Edinburg

Veterans facilities

Like major healthcare facilities, organizations serving veterans tend to be regional in nature. While most locations are within areas served by public transit, the same challenges in securing transportation from rural areas may apply here as well.

Exhibit 3.4.6 Lower Rio Grande Valley veterans facilities

Facility name	Location
Cameron County Veterans Service Office	Brownsville
Cameron County Veterans Service Office	San Benito
Harlingen VA Clinic – Treasure Hills	Harlingen
Hidalgo County Veterans Service Office	McAllen
McAllen VA Clinic – Hackberry Ave.	McAllen
McAllen Vet Center	McAllen
North Tenth Street VA Clinic	McAllen
VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System – Veterans Drive	Harlingen
Willacy County Veterans Service Office	Raymondville

Human/social services locations

Human/social service organizations provide supportive services for individuals who are low-income or unemployed; seniors; persons with disabilities; persons with mental health challenges; and others who need such services. These services may include job placement or training or food assistance. Some regional human/social service entities include workforce programs, county behavioral health programs, food pantries, adult day care programs, and other offerings.

Exhibit 3.4.7 Lower Rio Grande Valley social services

Organization/program name	Type of service	Location(s)
Abundant Life Church Food Pantry	Food pantry and food assistance	Harlingen
Al Anon/Alateen	Local support for those affected by alcohol abuse by a loved one	McAllen
BCFS Health and Human Services	Helps at-risk young adults and foster youth transition into independent adulthood and self-sufficiency and provides a safe place for youth to access community resources	McAllen
Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas	Outpatient substance abuse program	Pharr
Bishop Enrique San Pedro Ozanam Center	Emergency shelter and assistance for the homeless	Brownsville
Buckner Children and Family Services, Inc. – Rio Grande Valley	Youth crisis intervention and counseling, youth shelter, life skills, and parenting classes	McAllen

Organization/program name	Type of service	Location(s)
Cameron County Public Health	Preserves, protects, and promotes the health and well-being of Cameron County residents through the provision of quality care that is accessible and affordable and focuses on disease prevention, community services, and emergency preparedness.	Brownsville, San Benito
Casa de Proyecto Libertad	Provides low-cost legal services, education, and advocacy to immigrants	Harlingen
CASA of Cameron and Willacy counties	Advocates for children in state custody	Brownsville
CASA of Hidalgo County	Advocates for children in state custody	Edinburg
Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley	Provide temporary shelter and emergency assistance	San Juan
Children's Advocacy Center of Hidalgo County	Coordinates and facilitates investigations including counseling and on-site forensic interviews	Edinburg
Dentists Who Care	Dental services to uninsured low-income students enrolled in Rio Grande Valley school districts	Weslaco
Easterseals Rio Grande Valley	Services for individuals with disabilities and special needs and their families	McAllen
Family Crisis Center of the Rio Grande Valley	24/7 crisis hotline for emergency services and shelter for victims of violence	Harlingen
Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley	Food pantry	Pharr
Friendship of Women, Inc.	Provides assistance for victims of domestic violence	Brownsville
Good Neighbor Settlement House	Provides basic necessities and educational programs	Brownsville
Goodwill Industries of South Texas	Provides job training and support services	Edinburg
Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department	Preserves, protects, and promotes the health and well-being of Hidalgo County residents through the provision of quality care, community services, and emergency preparedness.	Edinburg
Hidalgo County Housing Authority	Section 8 eligibility and information	Weslaco
Infant and Family Nutrition Agency	Prenatal care and nutrition programs for expecting mothers, young children, and families	Brownsville
La Posada Providencia	Emergency shelter for immigrants and asylum seekers	San Benito

Organization/program name	Type of service	Location(s)
Loaves and Fishes of the Rio Grande Valley	Provides food, shelter, job services, and support for those experiencing a life-altering event	Harlingen
MHP Salud (Migrant Health Program)	Implements and runs Community Health Worker programs	Weslaco
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church Food Pantry	Food distribution center	Mission
Palmer Drug Abuse Programs	12-step program for youth and families suffering from substance abuse	Brownsville
Proyecto Azteca	Financial counseling and education classes	San Juan
Rio Grande State Center	In- and outpatient medical, mental health, and long-term care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities	Harlingen
Salvation Army	Emergency shelter and meals	McAllen
Social Security Administration	Provides retirement, disability, and survivor benefits	Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen, Mission
South Texas Fair Housing Project	Complaint investigation, advocacy, education, and outreach regarding housing	McAllen
South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project	Provides *pro bono* legal services to asylum seekers detained in South Texas	Harlingen
Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc.	Provides legal assistance to low-income individuals	Weslaco
Tropical Texas Behavioral Health	Outpatient mental health services for children/youth and adults	Harlingen, Edinburg
United Way of Northern Cameron County	Network of local non-profit affiliates	Harlingen
United Way of South Texas	Network of local non-profit affiliates	McAllen
United Way of Southern Cameron County	Network of local non-profit affiliates	Brownsville
Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL)	Provide support services to help persons with disabilities live independently	McAllen
Women Together Foundation, Inc.	24/7 crisis hotline for emergency services and shelter for victims of family violence or sexual assault	McAllen

As the prior Coordination Plan noted, there are a large number of adult day care facilities located within the Lower Rio Grande Valley. As such, they are noted separately in Exhibit 3.4.8.

Exhibit 3.4.8 Lower Rio Grande Valley adult day care facilities

Day care name	Location(s)
Abrazos Adult Centers, LLC	McAllen
Alegria Adult Day Care	Weslaco
Alegros Adult Day Care Center	Weslaco
Alpha One Adult Day Care Center	Pharr
Alpine Adult Day Care	Brownsville
Amigos y Familia Adult Day Care, Inc.	Mission
Amistad Adult Day Care	Mercedes
Angeles Adult Day Care	Mission
A-Touch Adult Day Care, Ltd.	Edinburg
Bello Amanecer Adult Day Care Center	Brownsville
Brownsville Adult Day Care Center	Brownsville
Carino Adult Day Care (2)	Brownsville
Casa Del Sol	Brownsville, Harlingen, Mercedes
Centro D Amistad	Pharr
Centro de Buena Vida Adult Day Care, LLC	Mission
Cielito Lindo Adult Day Care	McAllen, Mission
Circle of Friends	Elsa, San Benito
Con Carino Adult Day Care	Weslaco
Corazon con Corazon Adult Day Care, LLC	Mission
Corazones de Oro Adult Day Care	San Juan
Dias de Alegria Adult Day Care	Hidalgo
Dias Felices	Alamo
Donna Adult Day Care, Inc.	Donna
Dulce Caricias Adult Day Care	Edinburg
Dulce Hogar Adult Day Care Center	Brownsville
Edinburg Adult Day Care	Edinburg
El Castillo Adult Day Care	McAllen
El Club Adult Day Care	Weslaco
El Milagro Adult Daycare Center	Brownsville
El Mundo Feliz Adult Day Care	Brownsville
El Oro Del Pueblo Adult Day Care	Edinburg
El Patio Adult Day Care, Inc.	Edinburg
El Pavo Real Adult Day Care, Inc.	Alamo
El Recreo Adult Day Care	Donna, San Juan
El Rinconsito Adult Day Care	Mission
El Vaquero Adult Day Care	Harlingen
Emmanuel Adult Day Care	Mission

Day care name	Location(s)
Estrellitas Adult Day Care, Inc.	McAllen
Expert Adult Day Care Center, Inc.	Mission
Festiva, Inc.	McAllen
Fiesta Adult Day Care	Brownsville
First Recreation Center for Adults	Olmito
Friends Forever Adult Day Care Center	Weslaco
Fuente de Juventud Adult Day Care	Pharr
Garden of Friends Adult Day Care Center	Pharr
Genesis Adult Day Care	Mission
Grace Center for Adult Recreational Activities	Weslaco
Happy Hearts Adult Day Care	Brownsville
Happy Valley Adult Day Care	Mission
Happy Years, Inc.	Mission
Harlingen Adult Day Care, Inc.	Harlingen
Heavenly Days Adult Day Care Center, Inc.	Mission
Helping Hands Adult Day Care	Pharr
Historia De Colores	Edinburg
Joy and Pride Adult Day Care, Inc.	Edinburg
La Amistad Adult Day Care	Brownsville
La Cadenita Adult Day Care	Brownsville
La Casa de Susy Adult Day Care	Edinburg
La Esperanza Adult Day Health Care Center, Inc.	Pharr
La Familia Adult Day Care	Harlingen
La Fuente Adult Day Care Center	Sullivan City
La Hermosa Sonrisa Adult Day Care	Pharr
La Inspiracion Adult Day Care	McAllen
La Plaza Adult Day Care	Brownsville
La Posada Adult Day Care Center	Mission, Weslaco
La Resaca Adult Day Care, Inc.	Brownsville
La Rosita Adult Day Care Center	Weslaco
La Sierra Linda Adult Day Care Center	Harlingen
La Victoria Adult Day Care Center	Harlingen, McAllen
Lahs, Inc.	Pharr
Las Fronteras Adult Day Care	Harlingen
Las Milpas Adult Day Care, Inc.	Pharr
Los Angeles Adult Day Care	Brownsville
Los Angelitos Adult Day Care	Pharr
Los Dos Angeles Adult Day Care	Brownsville
Los Encinos Adult Day Care, Inc.	Edinburg
Los Laureles Adult Day Care	Edinburg
Loving Touch Adult Day Care	Edinburg
Lupita Adult Day Care, Inc.	Brownsville
Mercedes Adult Day Care, LLC	Mercedes

Day care name	Location(s)
Mi Casa Adult Day Care	Donna, Edinburg, McAllen, Mercedes, Misson
Mi Cielito Lindo	Brownsville
Mi Destino Adult Day Care, Inc.	La Feria
Mi Esperanza Adult Day Care	Brownsville
Mi Generacio Adult Day Care, Inc.	Sullivan City
Mi Gente Adult Day Care	Pharr
Mi Hacienda Adult Day Care Center	Edinburg
Mi Jardin Adult Day Care Center	Brownsville, Mission
Mi Mansion Adult Day Care	Donna
Mi Pueblito Adult Day Care	Edinburg
Mi Pueblito de Belen	Weslaco
Mi Ranchito Adult Day Care	La Joya, Weslaco
Mi Reposo Adult Day Care, Inc.	Edinburg
Ministry Adult Day Care	Brownsville
Mirasoles Adult Day Care	Harlingen, Raymondville
Mis Abuelintos Adult Day Care Center	Edinburg
Mis Amigos Adult Day Care Center	Edinburg
Mis Anos Felices Adult Day Care, LLC	Edinburg
Mis Recuerdos Adult Day Care	Edinburg
Mizpah Adult Day Care	Edinburg
Morning Dove Daycare Center	Pharr
My Golden Years Day Activity and Health Center	McAllen
My Options Adult Day Care	McAllen
New Age Adult Day Care Center	Edinburg
New Life Adult Day Care	Mission
Nuestra Familia Adult Day Care	Weslaco
Nuestra Familia Feliz Adult Day Care, Inc.	Pharr, San Juan
Nuevo Amanecer Adult Day Care	Pharr
Oasis Adult Day Care, Inc.	Mission
Oro del Pueblo Adult Day Care	McAllen
Paloma Blanca Adult Day Care	Mission
Palomita Blanca Adult Day Care	Mission
Paparey Adult Day Care, LLC	Edinburg
Paradise Adult Day Care Center	Donna, Harlingen
Paseo De Angelitos Adult Day Care Center	Edinburg
Pueblo Alegre Adult Day Care	McAllen
Purple Heart Adult Day Care, LLC	Weslaco
Rio Grande Adult Day Care Center, Inc.	Pharr
San Benito Adult Day Care Center	San Benito
Santa Cruz Day Care Center	Mercedes
Santa Cruz Day Care for Adults, LLC	Mercedes
Santa Fe Adult Day Care	Brownsville

Day care name	Location(s)
Saving Grace Adult Day Care	Raymondville
Siempre Unidos Adult Day Care	Weslaco
Soluna Adult Day Care Center	La Feria
South Texas Elderly Services, Inc.	Hidalgo
St. Charbel Adult Day Care, LLC	McAllen
Strawberry Patch Adult Day Care	McAllen
Su Casa Adult Day Care	Pharr, Weslaco
Sun Valley Adult Day Care, Inc.	Mission
Sun Valley Adult Health Center	Harlingen
Sunglo Adult Day Care	Brownsville, Harlingen, Mission, San Benito
Un Dia a la Vez Adult Day Care	Edinburg, San Juan
Un Nuevo Dia Adult Day Care	Mission
Valle Feliz Adult Day Care, Inc.	Mission
Valley View Adult Day Care Center	Harlingen
Vida Adult Day Care	Mission
Vida Health Care	Edinburg
Villa Dorada Adult Day Care	Brownsville

3.5 Community Engagement Activities

To be effective, a Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan must include direct input from those demographic or population cohorts with the greatest propensity to utilize the public transportation network. Such groups have historically included seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and youth.

The 2021 project process included numerous and varied public input opportunities including a bilingual project webpage, bilingual community survey, community stakeholder survey, bilingual community pop-up (info-sharing) events, and periodic presentations to the Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (whose meetings are publicly noticed).

Presented herein are the survey results as well as key take-aways from the various outreach activities.

Community Engagement – Survey

One of the more important public engagement activities undertaken in support of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan was the community survey.

The survey had several objectives including 1) assess awareness as well as recent use of public transit, 2) identify potential motivators as well as barriers (perceived as well as actual) regarding current and future use of public transit, 3) collect basic demographic data specific to survey participants, 4) codify recent travel behavior, and 5) identify opportunities for potential public transit service enhancements.

Survey fielding occurred from mid-September through mid-October 2021. Data collection was done online as well as at the twelve community pop-up events. The survey, which was available in Spanish as well as English, included a response or participation incentive (i.e., random drawing for a series of VISA gift cards).

The online survey was promoted via social media messaging, a direct mailer (four-color postcard) to 15,000 randomly-selected households, and via the project webpage. At the conclusion of the agreed upon survey fielding period more than 125 valid responses had been received. Given the 2017 Coordinated Plan project did not include a community (or public) survey, Moore & Associates, Inc. is unable to provide a data comparison or trend analysis.

Based on the survey data, the consultant team created the following "profile" of the survey participant:
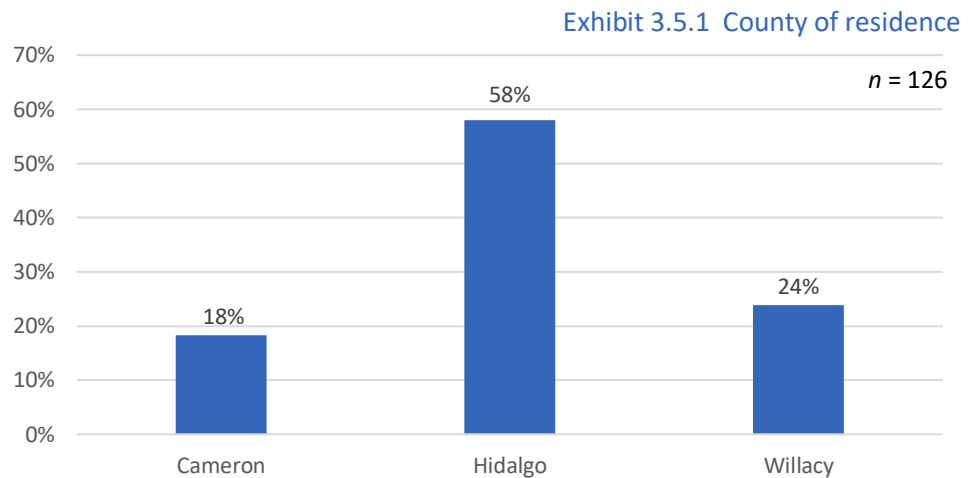
- "Typical" mode of travel: *drive alone* (71 percent).
- Access to personal vehicle: *all the time* (77 percent).
- Greatest motivator to potential future use of public transit: *more frequent service* (23 percent), followed by *more inter-city service* (21 percent).
- Preferred method of receiving information about public transportation: *transit provider website* (25 percent).
- Has not used/ridden public transit within the prior 12 months (79 percent).
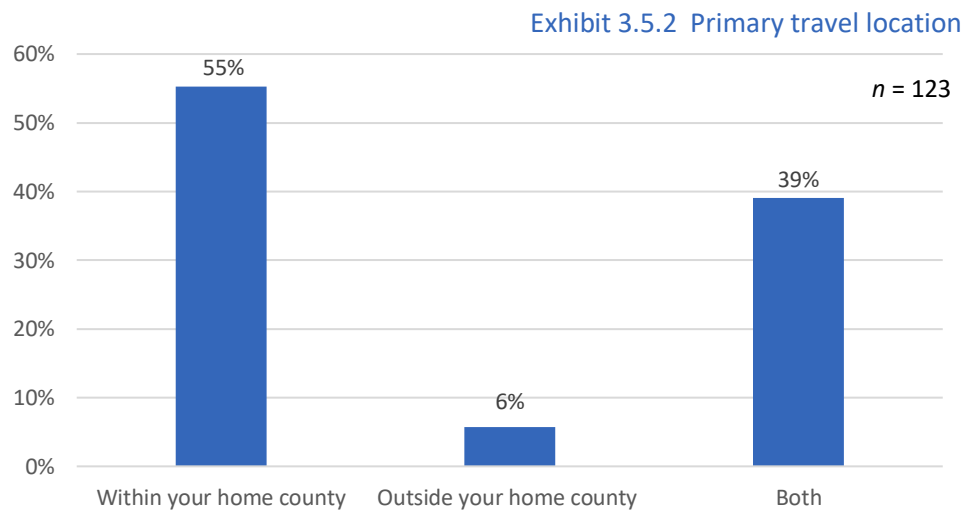- Is employed full-time (41 percent).

- Speaks Spanish at home (45 percent).
- Absence of public transportation as a barrier: *access to healthcare* (9 percent).

What follows is a summary of the more critical survey data along with consultant observations.

Q1. In which county do you currently live?

Exhibit 3.5.1 County of residence

n = 126

Cameron 18% Hidalgo 58% Willacy 24%

Q2. Do you mostly (primarily) travel….

Exhibit 3.5.2 Primary travel location

n = 123

Within your home county 55% Outside your home county 6% Both 39%

Q3.   Please select the method of transportation you typically use for the stipulated purpose or destination.

One of the core objectives of the community survey was to identify and codify current travel behavior of the survey population. Given 77 percent of respondents indicated having access to a personal vehicle *all the time*, the findings are not surprising:

- Work: Nearly 80 percent *drive alone* while an additional 14 percent *drive or ride with others*. Collectively this accounts for 94 percent of the surveyed work trips. Less than three percent indicated *ride the bus* as a means of travelling to/from work.

Exhibit 3.5.3 Primary mode of travel - work

n = 113
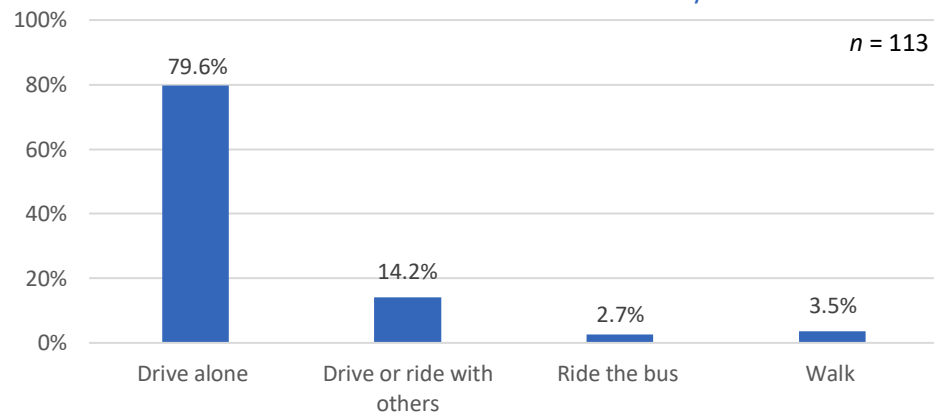
- Medical/healthcare: When queried as to their typical means of travel to healthcare-related services, 76 percent cited *drive alone*, while an additional 16 percent stated *drive or ride with others*. Somewhat surprising was the 2.7 percent which indicated *ride the bus* as well as the 3.5 percent which stated *walk*.

Exhibit 3.5.4 Primary mode of travel – medical/healthcare

n = 116
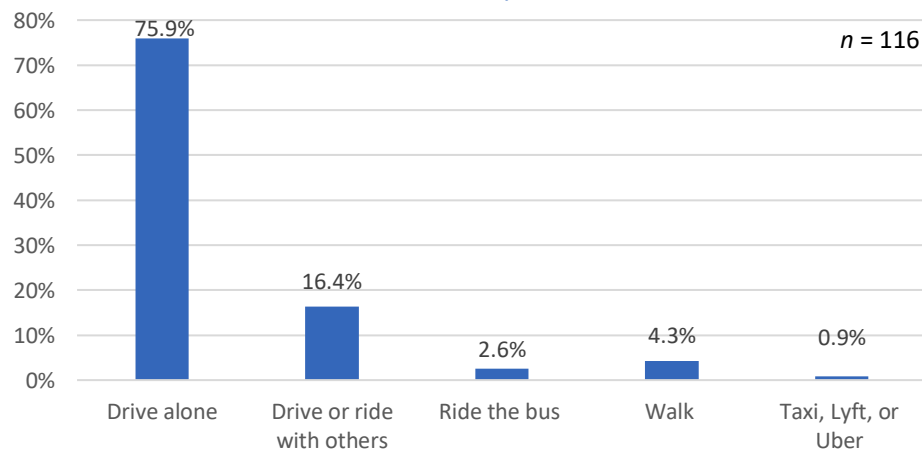
- School/training: This trip purpose garnered the highest percent of trips made by *bus* (nearly seven percent), which we suspect includes an element of school pupil transportation. Here again the lion's share of the surveyed trips were completed via *drive alone* (67 percent) or *drive/ride with others* (22 percent). Interestingly fewer respondents indicated *walking* than to access medical care (4.3 percent).

Exhibit 3.5.6 Primary mode of travel – school/training

n = 88

Mode	Percent
Drive alone	67.0%
Drive or ride with others	21.6%
Ride the bus	6.8%
Walk	3.4%
Taxi, Lyft, or Uber	1.1%
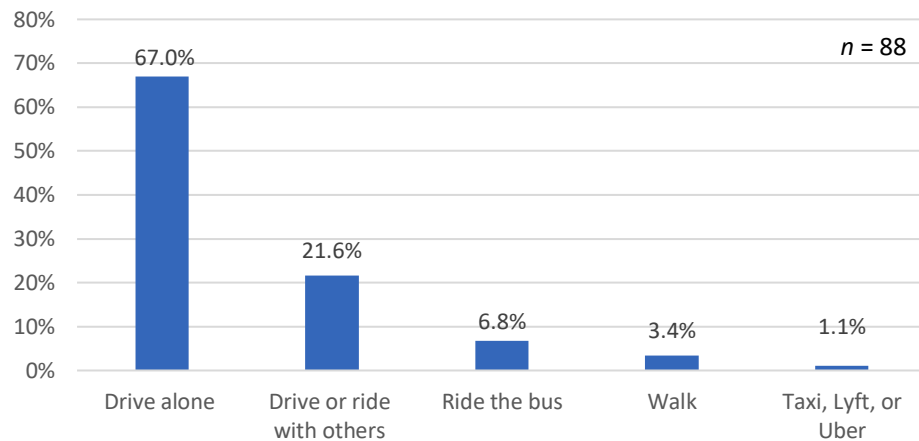
- Shopping/personal: More respondents indicated *drive/ride with others* (39 percent) for shopping-related trips than any of the other trip purposes. This trip purpose also has the fewest number of *drive alone* responses (54 percent). *Bus* accounted for four percent of the surveyed trips, making it second only to work-related travel.

Exhibit 3.5.7 Primary mode of travel – shopping/personal

n = 120

Mode	Percent
Drive alone	54.2%
Drive or ride with others	39.2%
Ride the bus	4.2%
Walk	2.5%
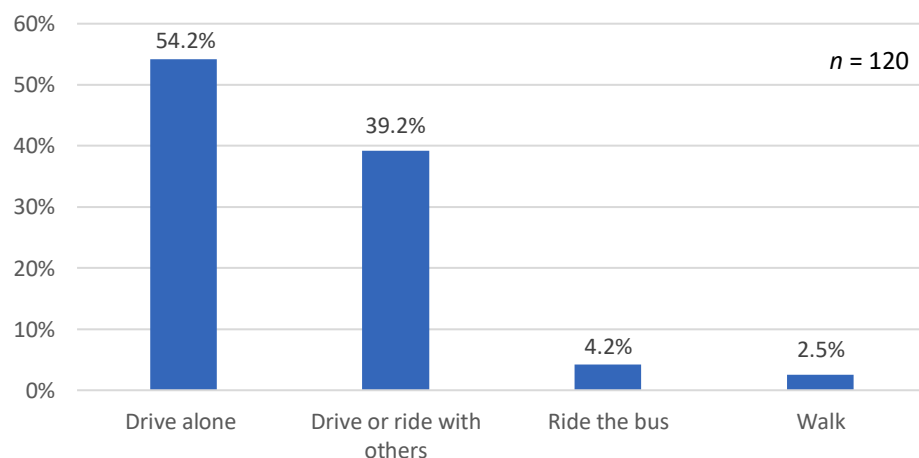
Q4. Please tell us about the ease or difficulty you face in making each of the four primary trip types.
The survey also sought to assess the perceived difficulty which respondents encounter in completing the specific trip purpose. "Difficulty" was defined as either *lack of transportation* or *takes too long*.

- Work: Nearly 12 percent reported difficulty while 74 percent selected *always able to get there*. Moore & Associates, Inc. believes this presents an opportunity for transit operators to conduct employer-targeted marketing (along with the promotion of bus-bike link).

Exhibit 3.5.8 Difficulty in accessing transportation – work
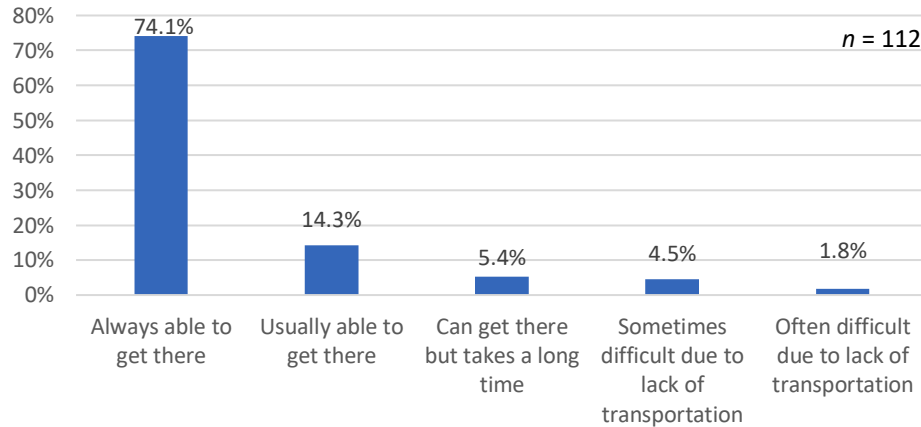
- Medical/healthcare: Here again, 12 percent reported difficulty while 73 percent selected *always able to get there*. Moore & Associates, Inc. believes this presents an opportunity for Valley Metro to promote paratransit as well as Non-Emergency Medical Transportation services offered by the various community stakeholder organizations.

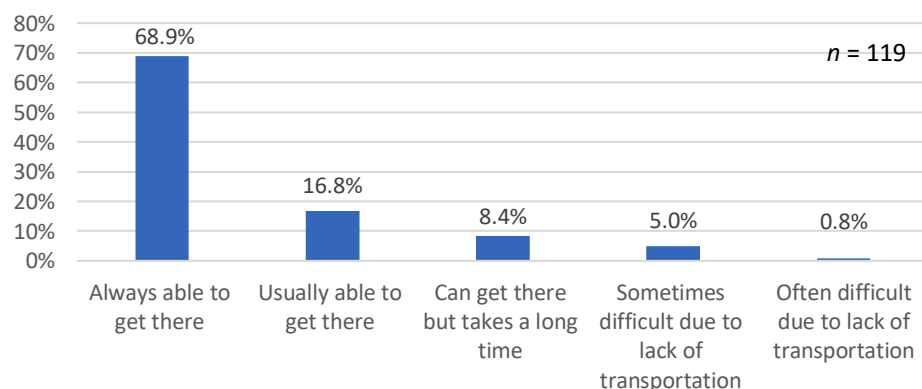Exhibit 3.5.9 Difficulty in accessing transportation – medical/healthcare
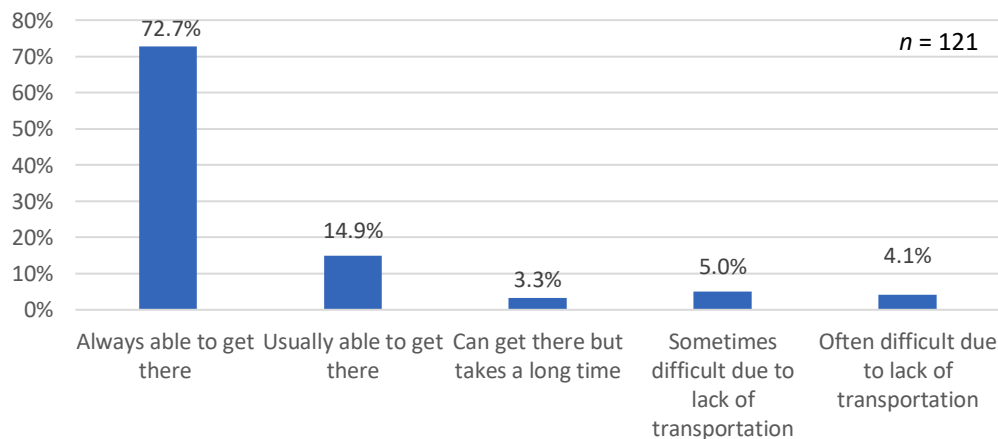
- School/training: Mirroring the earlier findings, 13 percent reported difficulty while 71 percent selected *always able to get there*. Perhaps one of the opportunities revealed herein is addressing the absence of connections between the various college campuses within the project area (e.g., South Texas College).

Exhibit 3.5.10 Difficulty in accessing transportation – school/training
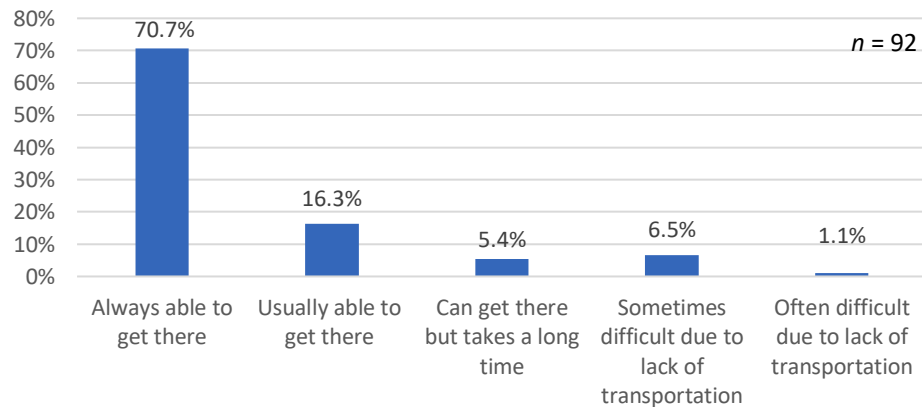
- Shopping/personal: Fourteen percent of respondents reported some level of difficulty completing the surveyed trip, while nearly 70 percent selected *always able to get there*. Providing convenient bus access for shopping can often be problematic for public transit providers due to the wide diversity of destinations as well as practical limitations on the amount of goods a typical individual is capable of carrying. Among the mitigating actions which Moore & Associates. Inc. has recommended in other client communities are paratransit (dial-a-ride) "subscription" trips linking senior and/or multi-family housing with key retail locations (i.e., popular grocery stores), and efforts to bring transit service as close as possible to the entrances (i.e., front door) of key retail centers.

Exhibit 3.5.11 Difficulty in accessing transportation – shopping/personal

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
FIVE-YEAR REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN
December 2021

Q5. How familiar are you with public transportation in the county or community in which you live?
The first step in successful marketing of public transit is establishing awareness. Potential riders not only need to be aware that a service or program exists, they also need to possess a certain level of overall familiarity (e.g., where a given route travels, how often the bus operates, etc.).

During their time "on the ground," our project associates were struck by the perceived general absence of public transit service information throughout the project communities. This lack of ready access to tangible transit service information was echoed in the community stakeholder survey and during the community pop-up events.

Successful public transit organizations (defined as those with continued growth in ridership as well as fare revenue), typically allocate three percent of total annual operating budget to "marketing." Here "marketing" reflects an "umbrella" term, inclusive of advertising, promotion, public communications, graphic design, etc.

Nearly one half of the survey respondents indicated no familiarity specific to the region's public transit services. Only 20 percent cited *very familiar*.

While some value (ROI) would potentially be realized from a "broad brush" public awareness campaign, Moore & Associates, Inc.' clients have experienced greatest success throughout the design and implementation of targeted marketing activities. Within the Lower Rio Grande Valley this could include Spanish-language specific advertising as well as service materials, and direct mailers targeting residents of multi-family housing, single-vehicle households, and persons residing within a half-mile of established transit alignments.

Again, successful marketing (defined as quantifiable ROI) begins with clearly defined goals, a strategic campaign, and post-campaign (impact) assessment.

Exhibit 3.5.12 Awareness of public transit

n = 125
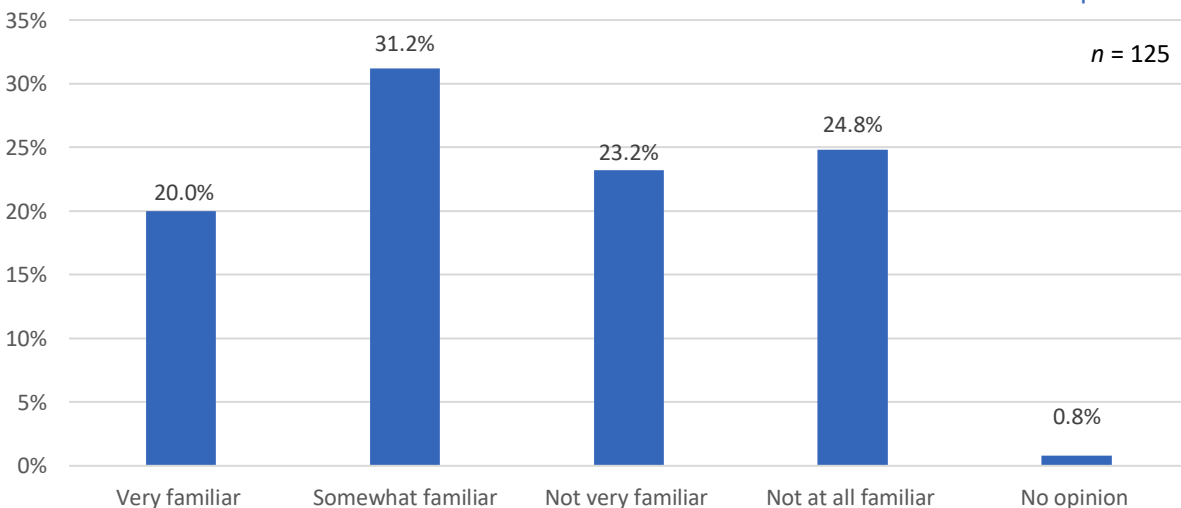
Q6. Have you used public transportation within the last 12 months?

Exhibit 3.5.13 Public transit usage

Yes, 21.0%

No, 79.0%

n = 124
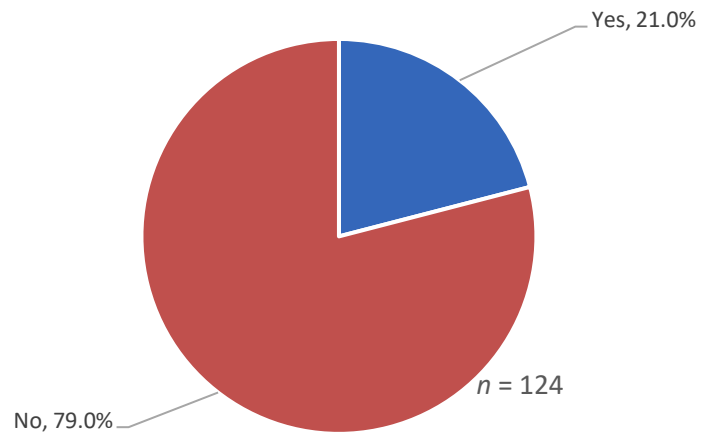
Q7. If you have ridden public transportation in the last 12 months, which service(s) did you use? (check all that apply)

Exhibit 3.5.14 Public transit usage – service used

n = 26

Service	Percentage
Brownsville Metro	26.9%
Island Metro	7.7%
JagExpress	3.8%
McAllen Metro	30.8%
Metro Connect	15.4%
Greyhound	11.5%
Valley Metro	46.2%
Valley Transit	7.7%
Don't know/can't remember	7.7%
Other (please specify)	11.5%
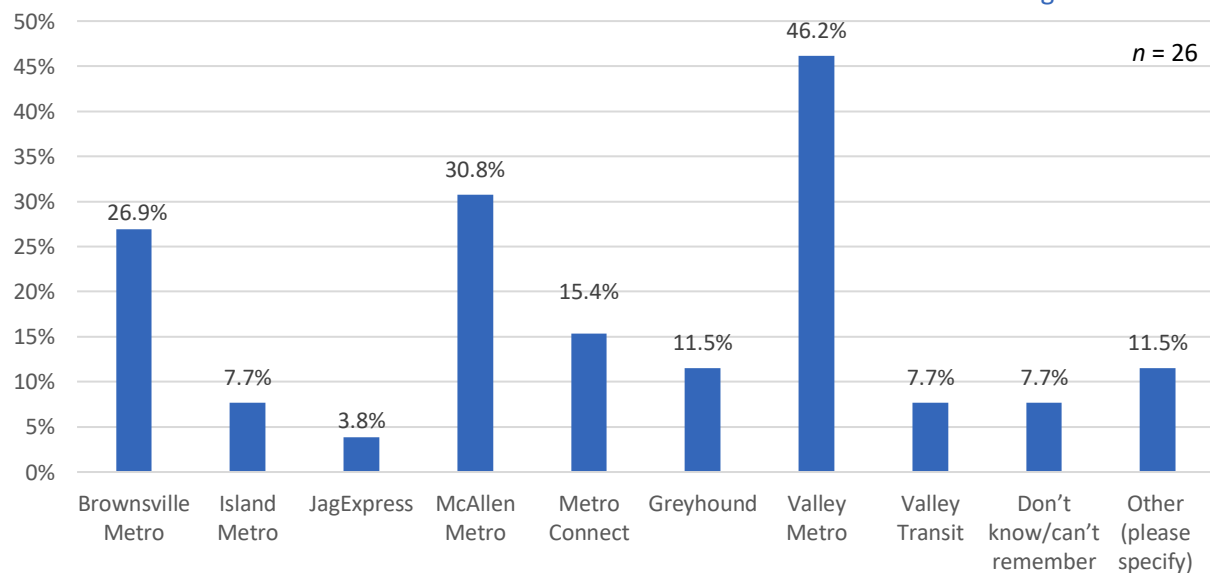
Q8. How do you usually obtain information about public transportation?

A listing of possible information sources was provided, and respondents were permitted to select "all that apply." As such the response totals exceed 100 percent. The focus here is on those survey participants who indicated some use of public transportation/transit within the prior 12 months.

Many transit providers have attempted to transition their service information distribution to electronic channels such as websites, often as a cost-reduction tactic. And while Moore & Associates, Inc. appreciates the importance of creating and maintaining a strong internet/online presence, we believe these new virtual channels should be employed in addition to, not instead of, more traditional marketing tactics. This supposition was reflected in survey results.

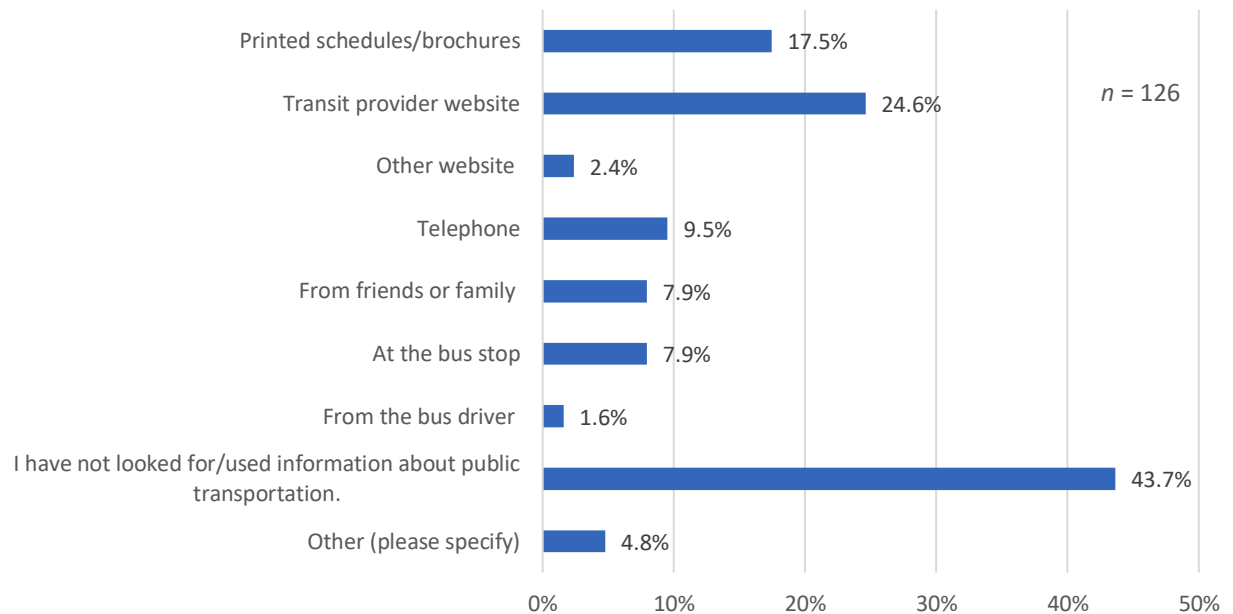When asked to identify how they typically obtain information about public transportation, nearly 25 percent of respondents cited *transit provider website*. The next highest response was *printed schedules/brochures* (nearly 18 percent). No other response option had more than single-digit tallies.

While electronic devices such as smart phones, tablets, etc. continue to expand both in terms of overall availability as well device/service affordability, day-to-day usage still skews both "younger" and "affluent." As such, this threatens to marginalize two important (historic) transit rider demographic populations: seniors and low-income individuals who often express a preference for traditional information sources/channels such as *printed schedules/brochures*. Further, transit market research suggests many potential transit riders prefer to utilize "printed materials" as part of their (early) decision-making process. Printed materials (often carried along during early transit usage) convey a level of "security" or "comfort" for many new/starting transit riders.

Lastly, while *information at bus stop* garnered less than ten percent, Moore & Associates, Inc. continues to be strong advocates for providing easy-to-understand service information at bus stops. At a minimum this should include a route identifier, basic schedule information (i.e., a bus serves this stop every X minutes, at Y minutes past the hour), and a phone number and/or URL which the customer can use to gain additional service information.

Exhibit 3.5.15 Public transit information sources

Printed schedules/brochures — 17.5%
Transit provider website — 24.6%
Other website — 2.4%
Telephone — 9.5%
From friends or family — 7.9%
At the bus stop — 7.9%
From the bus driver — 1.6%
I have not looked for/used information about public transportation. — 43.7%
Other (please specify) — 4.8%

n = 126

Q9. *What type of public transportation improvements would you prefer be made/introduced?*
Survey participants were permitted to select up to three options. Therefore, the response totals exceed 100 percent.

First off, 27 percent said there was *nothing* that transit operators within the Lower Rio Grande Valley could do to attract their patronage. That's not a particularly surprising given the very high percentage (77 percent) of survey participants indicating "all the time" access to a personal vehicle.

The public's desire for *more bus service* is certainly not news to Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council policy-makers and staff. This desire has been documented in prior Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plans; and now again via all of the public engagement activities undertaken in support of the 2021 Coordinated Plan (i.e., community stakeholder survey, community survey, and community pop-up events). To provide some specificity to this desire/need, the various data suggests (first and foremost) increased service frequency followed by more overall intercity service (which we define to be more point-to-point service), and finally improved scheduled coordination (which the consultant defines as "better connections").

While this may appear to be a daunting task, we recommend transit operators, especially Valley Metro, approach the desired service improvements on an incremental basis; either focusing on one route at a time (logically, the highest ridership routes) and/or one community or county at a time. In any event, in order to continue to retain the historic ridership base as well as overall community support (in other words, inclusive of tax-paying non-riders), evidence of tangible progress is needed.

As to the survey data, the top four responses were *more frequent service* (23 percent), *more inter-city service* (21 percent), *better schedule coordination* (20 percent), and *improved access to service information* (18 percent). These were followed by *later evening service*, *shorter travel time*, and *online ticket sale*s.

Exhibit 3.5.16 Preferred transit improvements

n = 126
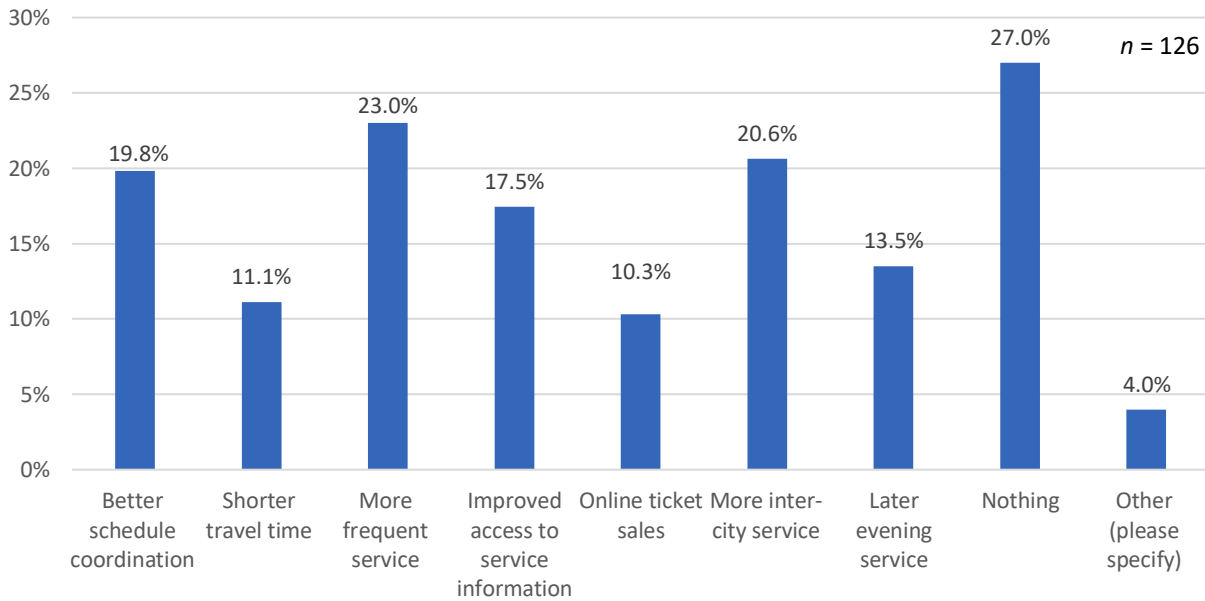
Q10. Do you typically use a wheelchair or other mobility device (such as a motorized scooter, walker, etc.)?

Exhibit 3.5.17 Mobility device usage

Yes , 5.9%

No, 94.1%

n = 118
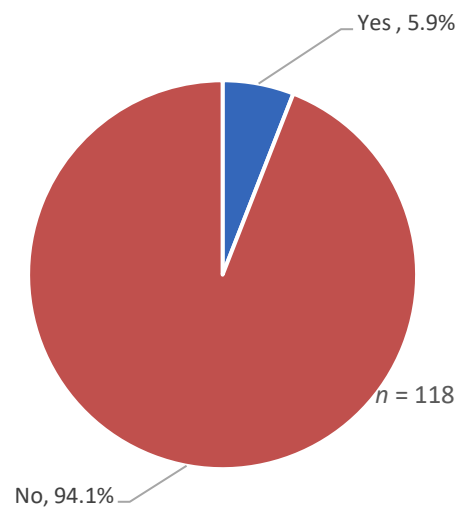
Q11. How do you typically travel?

Exhibit 3.5.18 Typical travel mode

n = 120
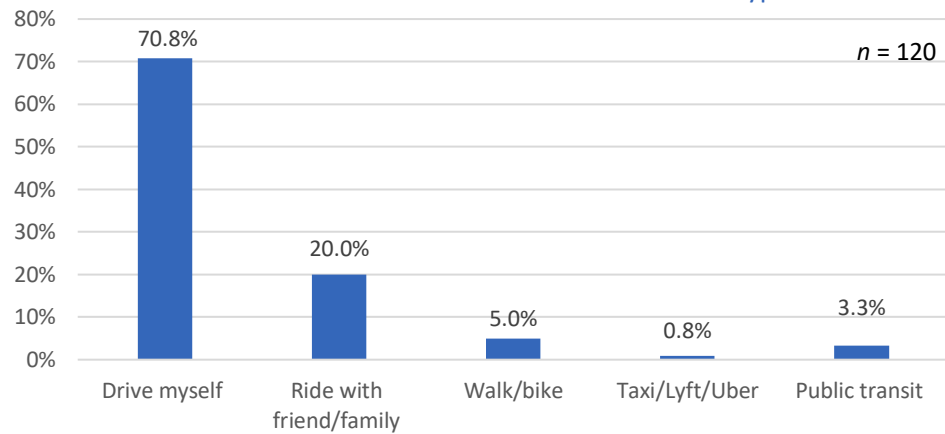
Q12. Do you or any members of your household use transportation provided by a social service organization, healthcare provider, school, or other private or non-profit organization? If yes, which one?

Exhibit 3.5.19 Social service transportation usage

Yes, 12.5%

No, 87.5%

n = 120
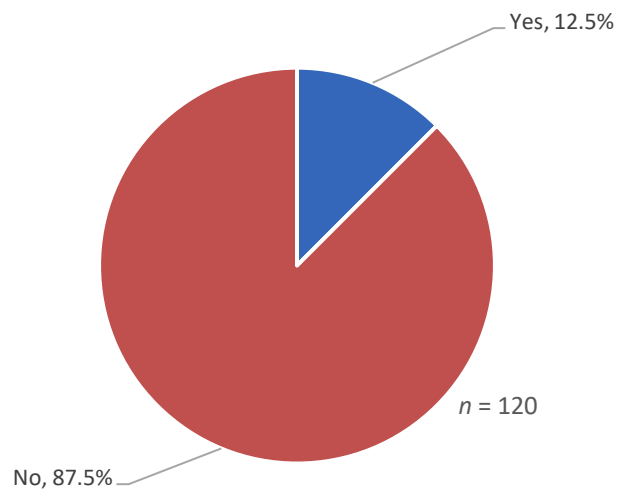
Exhibit 3.5.20 Social service transportation usage - providers

n = 7
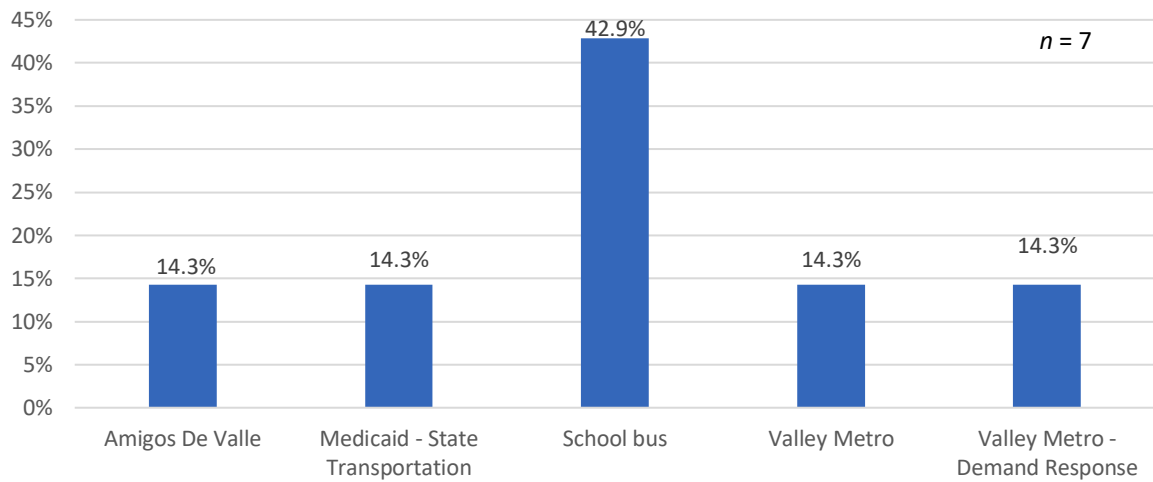
Q13. **What is your gender?**

Exhibit 3.5.21 Respondent gender

n = 126
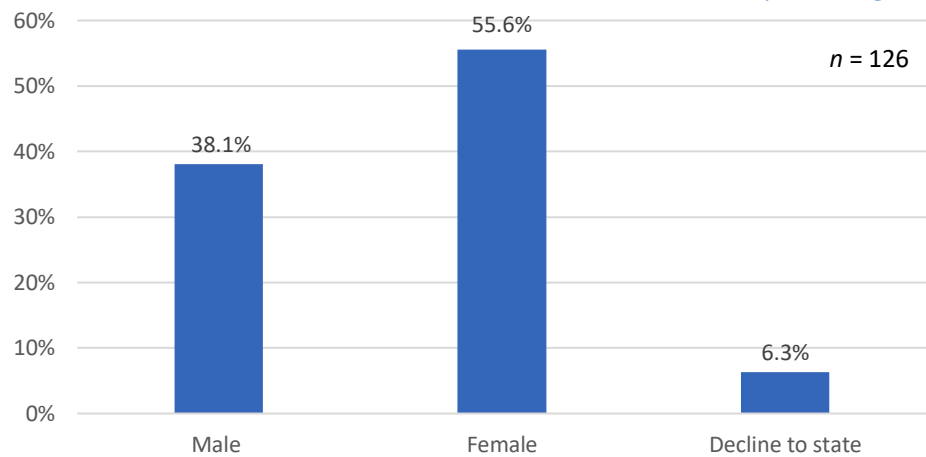
Q14. What category includes your age?

Exhibit 3.5.22 Respondent age

n = 126

Age category	Percentage
18-24 years	10.3%
25-44 years	42.1%
45-64 years	24.6%
65 years or older	15.1%
Decline to state	7.9%
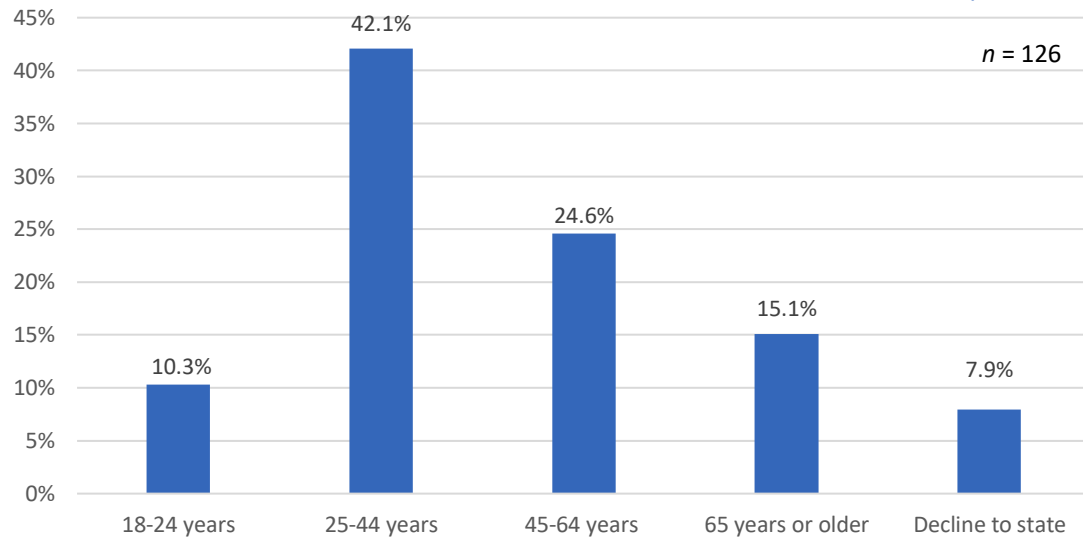
Q15. Please describe your current employment status.

Exhibit 3.5.23 Respondent employment status

n = 126

Employment status	Percentage
Employed part-time (seasonally) (not a student)	8.7%
Employed part-time (year-round) (not a student)	7.9%
Employed full-time (not a student)	40.5%
Higher education student (employed)	4.8%
Not employed and not a student	12.7%
Retired	11.9%
Decline to state	13.5%
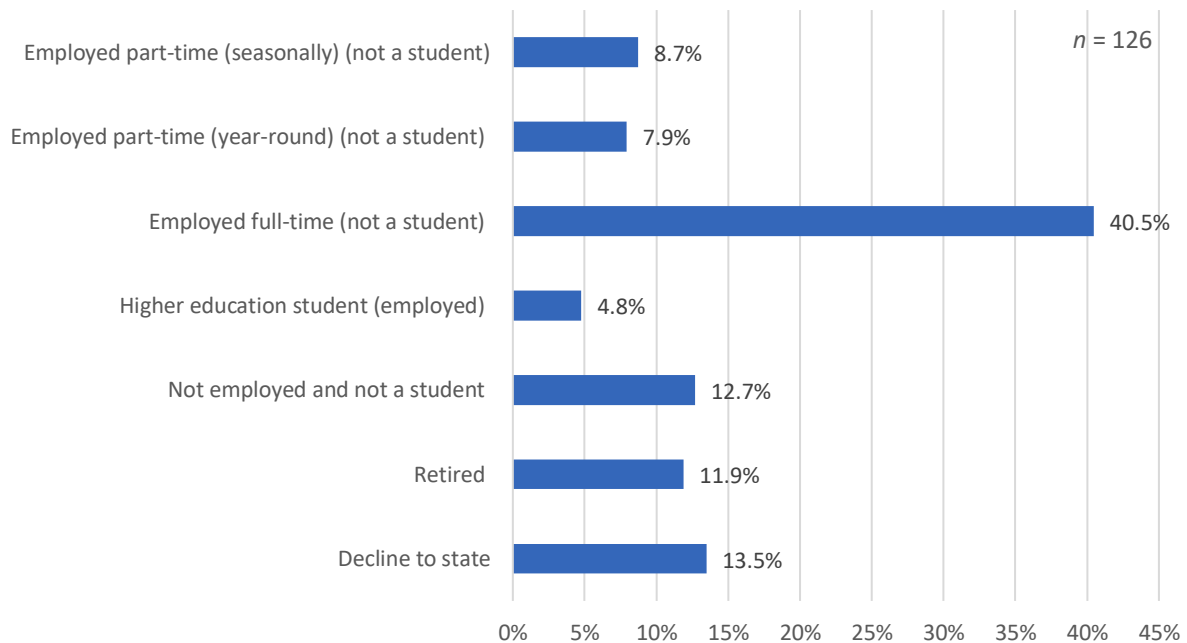
Q16. What language(s) do you speak at home? (Select all that apply.)

Exhibit 3.5.24 Respondent home language

n = 118

- English: 44.1%
- Spanish: 46.6%
- Other: 3.4%

Q17. How comfortable are you speaking English?

Exhibit 3.5.25 Respondent English proficiency

n = 126

- Very comfortable/native speaker: 83.3%
- Somewhat comfortable: 7.9%
- Not at all: 0.8%
- Decline to state: 7.9%
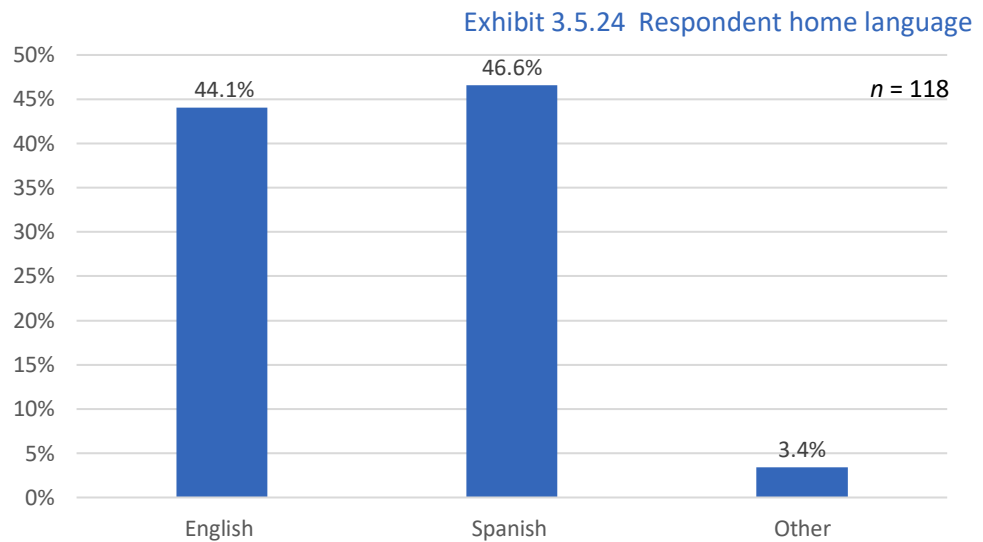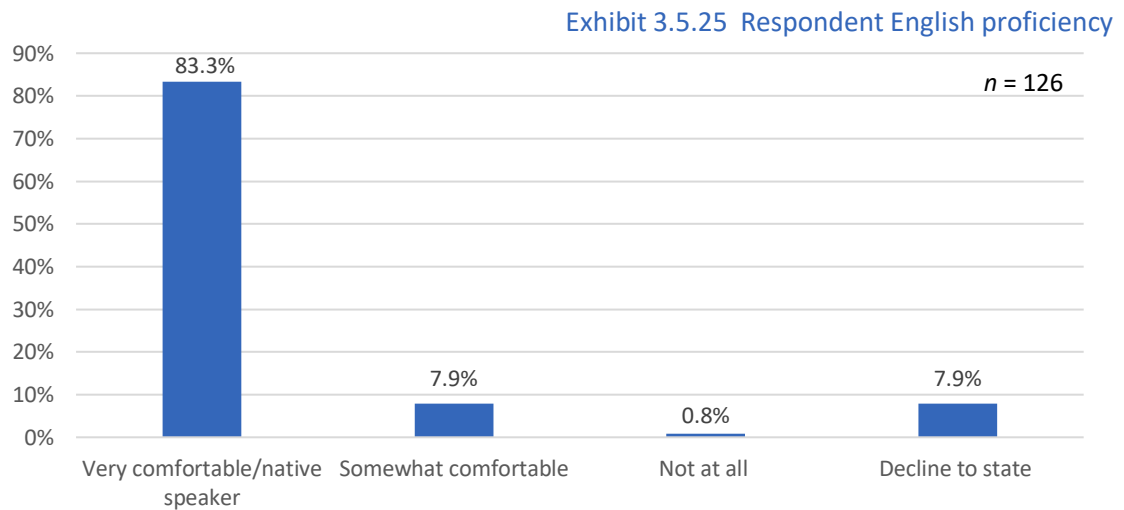
Q18. What your annual household income?

Exhibit 3.5.26 Respondent household income

Income category	Percent
Less than $25,000	30.2%
$25,000-$49,999	19.8%
$50,000-$74,999	7.1%
$75,000-$99,999	7.9%
$100,000-$149,999	7.1%
$150,000 or more	1.6%
Prefer not to answer	26.2%

n = 126
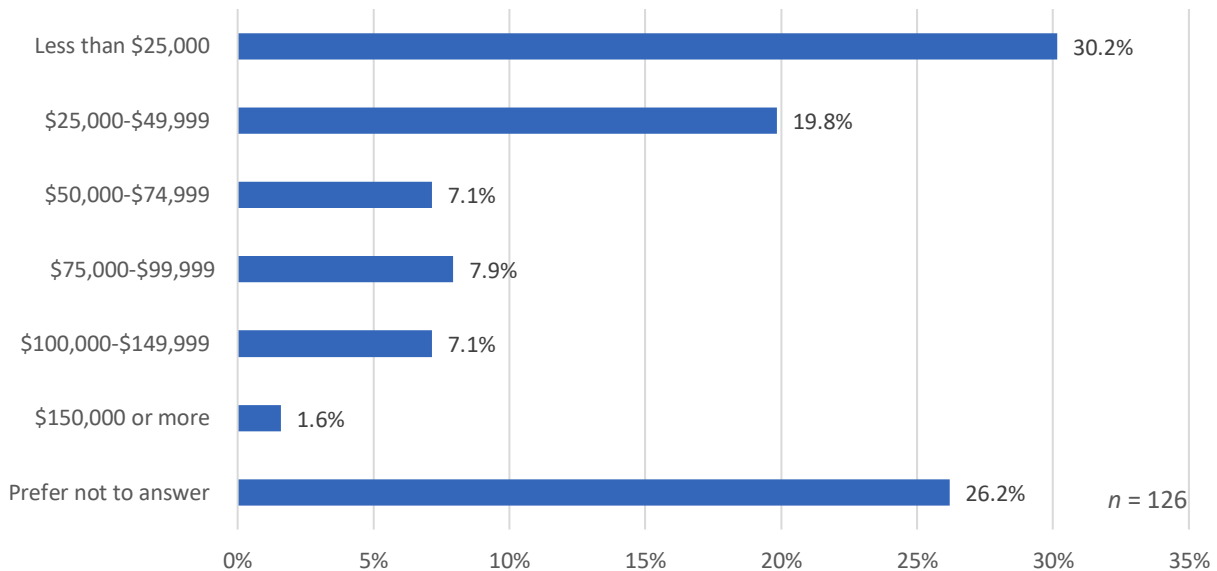
Q19. Of the following categories, how many people live in your household (including yourself)?

Exhibit 3.5.27 Children (age 10 and under) in the household

n = 32

1	2	3	5
56.3%	37.5%	3.1%	3.1%
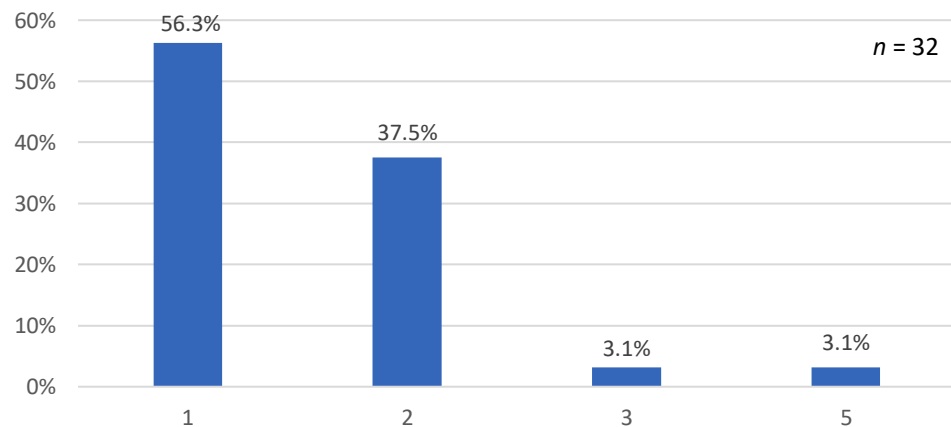
Exhibit 3.5.28 Youth (age 10-18) in the household

n = 26
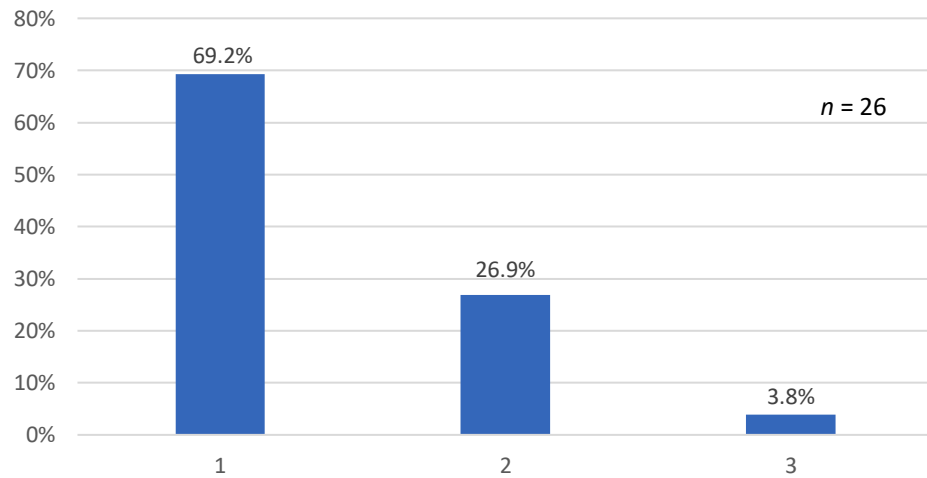
Exhibit 3.5.29 Adults (age 19-64) in the household

n = 92
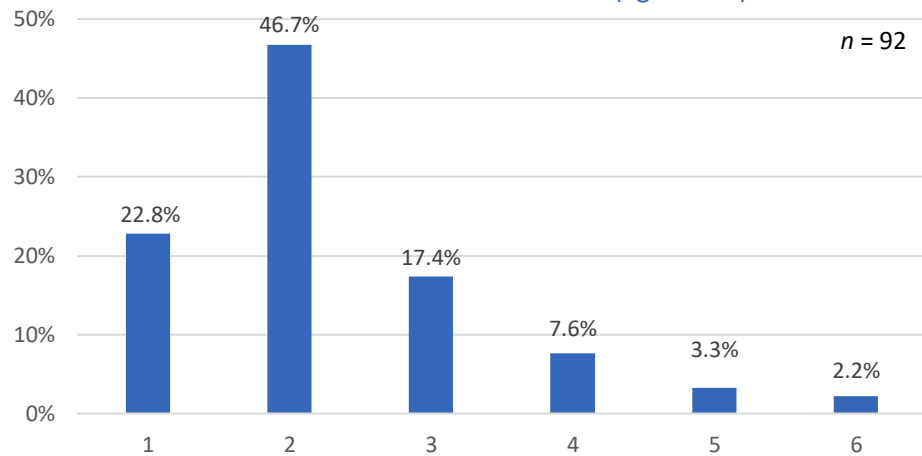
Exhibit 3.5.30 Seniors (age 65 and older) in the household
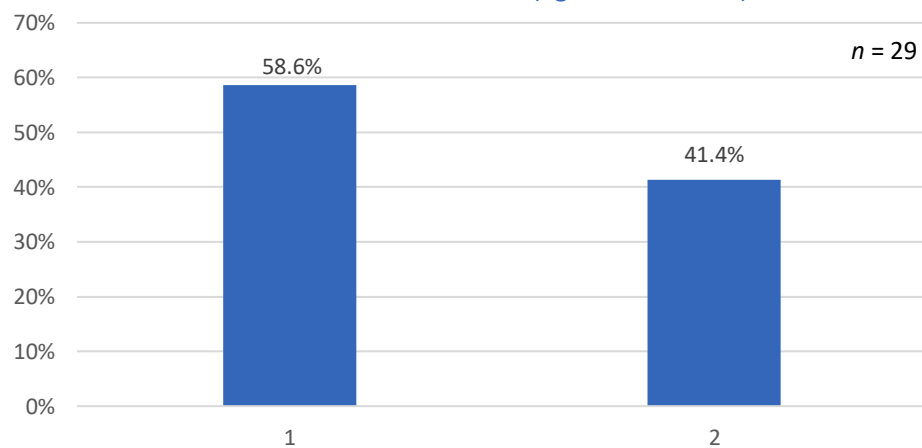
n = 29

Q20. Do you have a disability that impacts your personal mobility?

Exhibit 3.5.31 Presence of a disability

n = 29

Q21. Do you have access to a personal vehicle?

Exhibit 3.5.32 Access to a personal vehicle

n = 118
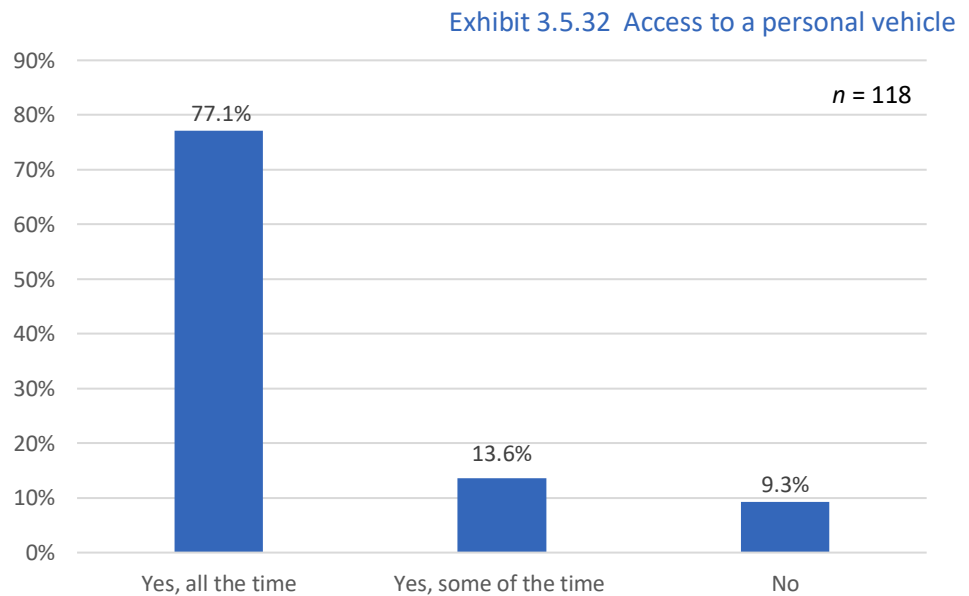
Q22. Additional comments.

Survey participants were provided an opportunity to share additional comments or opinions. The consultant believes four stand out:

1. "I would like to get around town on the bus. The ability to transfer from one line to another at will would make this possible."

2. Regarding bus stops outside the city: "Of the ones that would be considered 'walking distance,' the walk would require going down streets with no sidewalks and/or no shoulder. Streets definitely not conducive to walking."

3. "If there were consistent connecting buses from 10th to University of Texas RGV, I would take the bus instead of driving. The UTRGV campus in McAllen should be a transportation hub."
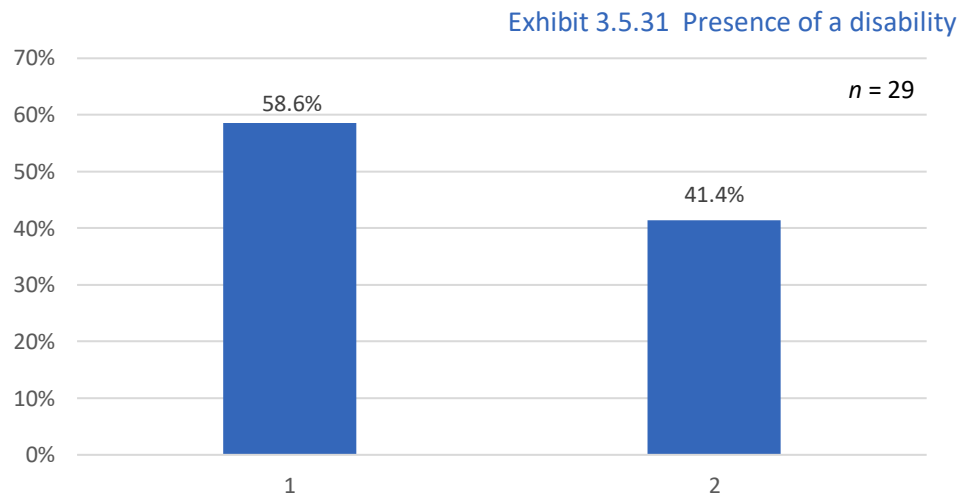
4. "Need Valley Metro."

Community Engagement – Pop-up Events

Moore & Associates, Inc. hosted twelve community pop-up events across October 4 and 5, 2021 in support of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's 2021 Regional Coordination Transportation Planning project. The pop-up events were held at publicly accessible locations in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties. Below is a summary of key take-aways from each of the twelve events.

1. A&V Lopez Supermarket – San Benito

Approximately 15 residents. Engaged at least seven. Comments received:

- Would like more accessible information for Dial-A-Ride.
- A man said his sister takes Valley Metro for school at UTRGV.
- Folks said they never see buses in their area, so they were unaware public transit existed in the area.

Island Metro Transit Coordinator, Jackie Santamaria, stopped by.

2. McAllen Veterans Service Office

Minimal number of attendees to this event. The Veterans Service Office is only open for appointments. Four patrons visited the Veteran's Services Office during the time of our event. Engaged all four and collected three community surveys. Feedback received:

- Would like to see a bus stop closer to the McAllen Veteran Services Office (located at 10th Street and Yale Avenue).
- More access to veteran discounted bus passes.

3. A&V Lopez Supermarket - Brownsville

Majority of the attendees spoke Spanish. Approximately 18 residents. Engaged at least nine.
Comments received:

- More notice encouraging public comment would be appreciated.
- Requests for Dial-A-Ride and/or paratransit for the San Benito area for seniors.

4. Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library

This was the most successful event defined as most amount of foot traffic. Engaged more than 50
residents at the library. Several completed the community survey on the spot. Most of the patrons are
aware of the public transit in the area, but do not ride it.

5. Brownsville Public Library

Approximately 25 residents. Engaged at least 15. Comments received:

- A woman was aware of the ADA paratransit service for B-Metro. Asked for an expansion
  to include all of Brownsville city limits. The woman lives by Veterans Memorial high
  school and the closest bus stop is a mile from her home. This makes her unqualified for
  the paratransit service that picks up ¾ mile from the nearest bus stop.
- Request for curb-to-curb demand-response.
- Streets need improvement.

6. Mayor Joe V. Sanchez Library

Approximately 20 visitors to the library during our event; engaged only a few as most of the visitors
were children.

7. Workforce Solutions – Harlingen

Approximately eight residents. Engaged six. (Note: Set up inside. Orientation did not end until after our
time ran out.)

- Expand service between Primera and Harlingen.
- The new Montessori school that opened last year in the area causes a lot of traffic. A
  woman would like to see a bus stop put nearby to decrease traffic and avoid accidents
  on the street.
- Woman would like to look into the demand-response service for her elderly parents that
  live in the country side.

8. **Veterans Service Office – Raymondville**

Minimal number of attendees to this event. The Veterans Service Office is only open for appointments. Set up table outside with hopes of catching folks going into the next-door probation and tax office. Engaged approximately 10 residents. Some feedback/comments include:

- Little to no public transit in Willacy County.
- Most residents have to pay a friend to get a ride.
- High concentration of Section 8 and seniors.
- Valley Metro does have some dial-a-ride services in the area but it is not reliable.

9. **Workforce Solutions - Cameron**

Approximately eight residents. Engaged three.

- Those we engaged discussed the poor conditions of the streets.
- One woman used to take the bus consistently but stopped because the wait-time between buses takes too long. Would like to see more schedule coordination.

10. **Reber Memorial Library**

Minimal foot traffic at this location. Engaged the two employees and two visitors.

- Few are aware of the dial-a-ride available in Willacy County
- We left supply of Valley Metro brochures at library for distribution

11. **A&V Lopez Supermarket – Los Fresnos**

Majority of the attendees spoke Spanish. Approximately nine residents. Engaged at least six. Small location, most folks were in a rush and only stopped long enough to take business card with link to survey.

12. **Gonzalez & Sons Produce**

Engaged the two patrons and three staff at the produce stand. They are unaware of the Willacy County dial-a-ride. Left supply of Valley Metro service brochures for distribution.

Overall, attendees appreciated the information. Many weren't aware that some kind of public transportation exists/is available.

In total, nearly 100 community surveys were collected across the 12 community pop up events.

Stakeholder Engagement – Survey

Community stakeholders often serve as "gatekeepers," representing a population, industry, or geographic area rather than an individual. As such, their collective input tends to be representative of the project area at-large, including historically transportation-disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals who often are unable or unwilling to participate in traditional public engagement activities such as surveys, workshops, and/or roundtables.

With respect to this project, the results of the stakeholder survey will help inform the Transportation Resources Inventory as well as the Needs Assessment/Gap Analysis.

Moore & Associates, Inc.'s approach included a thorough review of the community stakeholder database that was utilized for the 2017 Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan. We verified the accuracy of the information contained therein, and expanded the database to include several additional organizations.

Working in collaboration with LRGVDC staff, Moore & Associates, Inc. created an easy-to-follow stakeholder survey instrument. The survey was designed to accomplish three objectives: 1) effectively inventory the transportation needs of the individual organization's clientele, 2) gain primary insight into current transportation programs and services of each of the stakeholder organizations, and 3) forecast transportation needs and priorities of the respective stakeholder's clientele.

Ninety-two surveys were distributed via first class mail. Recipients had the option of completing the physical survey or an identical online version. As the response deadline neared, the project team made three contact attempts (one via email, two via phone). Based on this effort, 19 responses from 18 organizations were received. A summary of the survey results follows.

Respondent profile

Approximately half the responding organizations self-identified as *private non-profit*. The next most common category was *public/government*, and includes the transit operators, public higher education, and "quasi-government" such as veterans services. Nearly all responding organizations serve the four historically transportation-disadvantaged populations: seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and veterans. Service to homeless individuals was also a common agency mission.

With respect to services offered, survey respondents were asked to select from a list of several "core functions." *Screening/counseling* was the most common function selected, followed by *healthcare, social services, nutrition, job placement* and *job training*. Other respondents cited *general public transportation* (in other words, the public transit operators), *information/referral, independent living skills*, and *rehabilitation services*.

Transportation services

In addition to the public transit operators, several additional respondents indicated providing some form of transportation services (to their respective clientele): Hidalgo County Head Start Program, Neighbors In Need of Services (NINOS), Rio Hondo Senior Center, Mi Destino Adult Day Care, South Texas College, South Texas Emergency Care, Tropical Texas Behavioral Health, 20/200, University of Texas - Rio Grande

Valley, the Willacy County Veterans Office, and Workforce Solutions. A number of others offer ride or transit fare subsidies.

Six respondents offer non-emergency medical transportation. Two provide bus service for children traveling from home to school or the Head Start program.

Nearly all survey participants – whether or not a direct provider of transportation services – indicated offering their respective clientele trip planning assistance/information specific to public transit services.

Transportation barriers/deficiencies

Survey participants were asked to identify the most common and/or significant barriers currently impacting their clients' day-to-day mobility. Feedback was robust, and responses include:

- Limited public transportation, including the limited number of stops in Harlingen.
- Frequency and headways of routes for McAllen Metro, Brownsville Metro, and Valley Metro.
- More paratransit services.
- Eligibility for voucher assistance.
- Accessible sidewalks.
- Not enough bus stops/routes in rural areas.
- Not enough buses for routes from city to city and on a realistic time schedule.
- Lack of (transit service) knowledge and availability.
- Not located on a bus route.
- Vehicle availability.
- Since we serve families at or below the poverty rate, it is economics.
- Clientele often lack financial resources.
- Our clients have very few to no barriers accessing our free public transportation.
- The majority of clients that use our service are workers, every-day travelers, and tourists.
- Language communication. (Absence of transit service information in Spanish.)
- Availability, as [transportation] is not readily available and clients with disability can't walk to the bus stop.
- Where to call and schedule a ride.
- No link between South Texas College Mid Valley campus and McAllen campus.
- Low-income individuals; many do not have a vehicle for transportation.
- Elderly and have no one to drive them to appointments.

Stakeholders were also asked to identify their most-desired enhancements relative to transportation and mobility. Responses include:

- More staffing specifically related to service planning.
- More dedicated funding to increase service.
- Increase bus stops and routes in rural communities.
- Provide assistive technology in buses and bus stops (e.g., integrated voice announcement system).

- Increase availability of paratransit services.
- One company for a system that can be free from city to city and county to county.
- A registry of some kind. (Assume this mean a public transit info "registry".)
- No or limited public transportation in rural services.
- Improve bus frequency.
- More buses or perhaps a rail system.
- Some enhancements that can be integrated into the coordination are multiple communication centers to allow for better communication between agencies to better connect customers from Point A to B in the most efficient way possible.
- Perhaps collective training for all.
- Provide public transit.
- Get information to have a database for which adult care centers are served by which insurance. This way they can coordinate care/transportation for others.
- Accessibility.
- Low fares.
- Better way to communicate about transportation services.
- More staff; an increase in pay and/or benefits may attract more drivers. Which will make the routes more reliable and increase frequency.
- Funding for Uber drivers, etc. to provide these services.
- Transportation in a timely manner. For example, if a veteran has an appointment at 8:00 a.m. they have to wait for pickup at 3:00 p.m.

Finally, stakeholders were asked to identify other transportation issues or concerns they may have, or other information of which they believe the LRGVDC should be aware. Responses included:

- Accessible and paved walkways to get to the nearest bus stop for people who use mobility devices (such as canes, walkers, and wheelchairs).
- Accessible bus stops for wheelchairs under the canopies.
- Accessible bike share program.
- Not very many people know about Community Transportation services.
- Public transit systems are not designed to service low-density areas.
- Transport folks to the pharmacy, banks, and grocery stores.
- More funding and improve transit system.
- Add bus stops near our clinics.

Service coordination/duplication
When asked if the respondent was aware of an ongoing process for identifying duplication of service and/or service gaps in their respective community, three said *yes*, six said *no*, and nine responded *don't know*.

Possible stakeholder roundtables
When asked about possible interest in participation in a post-survey virtual roundtable, ten responded *yes*, five responded *maybe*, and two said *no*.

COVID impact on transportation services/programs

Four organizations expect their post-pandemic transportation budgets to remain unchanged/stable, while one each said *will increase* and *will decrease*.

Not surprisingly, the most common pandemic impact on transportation was significant ridership drop/loss. On a positive note, the public operators cited an increase in transportation funding while one entity cited improved vehicle cleanliness.

Possible coordinated services

In light of the project's "coordination" component, the survey asked "what types of service might your organization be interested in learning more about and/or participating in?" Six responses were received, with the most common being *joint driver training*. This was followed by *joint promotion/marketing*, *joint vehicle purchasing cooperative fleet maintenance*, and *cooperative fuel purchasing*.

Completed surveys were received from the following 18 organizations:

- 20/200
- Brownsville Community Health Center
- Community Hope Projects/Hope Family Health Center
- Family Crisis Center
- Hidalgo County Head Start Program
- Island Metro
- Mi Destino Adult Day Care, Inc.
- Neighbors in Need of Services
- Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center
- South Texas College
- South Texas Emergency Care
- Tropical Texas Behavioral Health
- United Way of South Texas
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL)
- Willacy County Veterans Office
- Workforce Solutions
- Workforce Solutions Cameron

Stakeholder survey forms were sent to 92 stakeholder organizations.:

Exhibit 3.5.33 Stakeholder survey recipients

Stakeholder organization	City
American Cancer Society	McAllen
Amigos Del Valle, Inc.	Edinburg
Amigos Para Siempre Adult Day Care	Weslaco
Area Agency on Aging - Harlingen Office	Harlingen
Area Agency on Aging - Weslaco Office	Weslaco
Brownsville Adult Day Care Center	Brownsville
Brownsville Community Health Center	Brownsville
Brownsville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center	Brownsville
Cameron County Emergency Management	Brownsville
Cameron County Veterans Services Office	Brownsville
Caring Senior Service McAllen	McAllen
Cariño Adult Day Care	Brownsville
Casa De Amigos II	McAllen
Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley	San Juan
Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley	Brownsville
City of Brownsville	Brownsville
City of Brownsville - Brownsville Metro	Brownsville
City of Harlingen	Harlingen
City of La Joya Senior Center	La Joya
City of Los Fresnos Senior Center	Los Fresnos
City of McAllen	McAllen
City of Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center	Rio Hondo
Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living	McAllen
Disabled American Veterans	McAllen
El Castillo Adult Day Care	McAllen
El Sinai Adult Day Care	Penitas
Family Crisis Center	Harlingen
Family Crisis Center	Raymondville
Family Crisis Center, Inc.	Harlingen
Friendship of Women, Inc	Brownsville
Greyhound	Brownsville
Hidalgo County Community Service Agency	Edinburg
Hidalgo County Emergency Management	Edinburg

Stakeholder organization	City
Hidalgo County Head Start Program	McAllen
Hidalgo County Health and Human Services	Edinburg
Hidalgo County Veterans Services Office	McAllen
Hope Family Health Center	McAllen
Island Metro	South Padre Island
La Joya Housing Authority	La Joya
La Joya Youth Service Center	La Joya
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)	San Juan
LeFleur Transportation	Edinburg
LifeLine RGV, LLC	McAllen
Lower Rio Grande Valley ADRC	Weslaco
McAllen Metro	McAllen
Medex EMS Transportation	McAllen
Med-Life EMS	Mission
Metro Express	Weslaco
Mi Destino Adult Day Care, Inc.	La Feria
Mi Nuevo Mundo Adult Day Care	La Joya
Migrant Health Promotion	Weslaco
Mission Housing Authority	Mission
Neighbors in Need of Services (NINOS)	Rio Hondo
Nuestra Clinica Del Valle	San Juan
Nuestra Familia Adult Day Care	Weslaco
Nuestra Familia Feliz Adult Care	Pharr
Omnibus Express	McAllen
Proyecto Azteca	San Juan
Rehabilitation Commission	Brownsville
RGVMPO	Weslaco
Rio Hondo Senior Citizens Center	Rio Hondo
Rio South Texas Economic Council	Weslaco
Santa Fe Adult Day Care Center	Brownsville
South Texas College - JagExpress	McAllen
South Texas Emergency Care Foundation	Harlingen
Southwest Key Program	Brownsville
Su Clínica Harlingen	Harlingen
Texas Department of State Health Services	Harlingen
Texas Department of Transportation	Pharr
Tornado Bus	McAllen
Trailways Transportation System	Fairfax

Stakeholder organization	City
Trinidad Adult Day Care Center	Rio Hondo
Tropical Texas Behavioral Health	Edinburg
Turimex	McAllen
United Way of South Texas	McAllen
University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley - Vaquero Express	Edinburg
VA Clinic Harlingen	Harlingen
VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System	Harlingen
Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL)	McAllen
Valley Grande Manor	Brownsville
Valley Metro	Weslaco
Valley Transit Co	Harlingen
Veterans VA Clinic	McAllen
Villas De Arnaldo Ramirez (Casa IX)	Mission
Vitalis Medical Transport Services	McAllen
Willacy County VSO	Raymondville
Women, Infant, and Children Program	Lasara
Workforce Solutions	Harlingen
Workforce Solutions - Cameron	Brownsville
Workforce Solutions - Edinburg	Edinburg
Workforce Solutions - Mission	Mission
Workforce Solutions - Starr County	Rio Grande
Workforce Solutions - Weslaco	Weslaco
Workforce Solutions - Willacy County	McAllen

Q2. Which of the following best describes your organization?

Exhibit 3.5.34 Stakeholders – organization type

n = 20

Government	Public	Private non-profit	Higher education
40.0%	5.0%	45.0%	10.0%
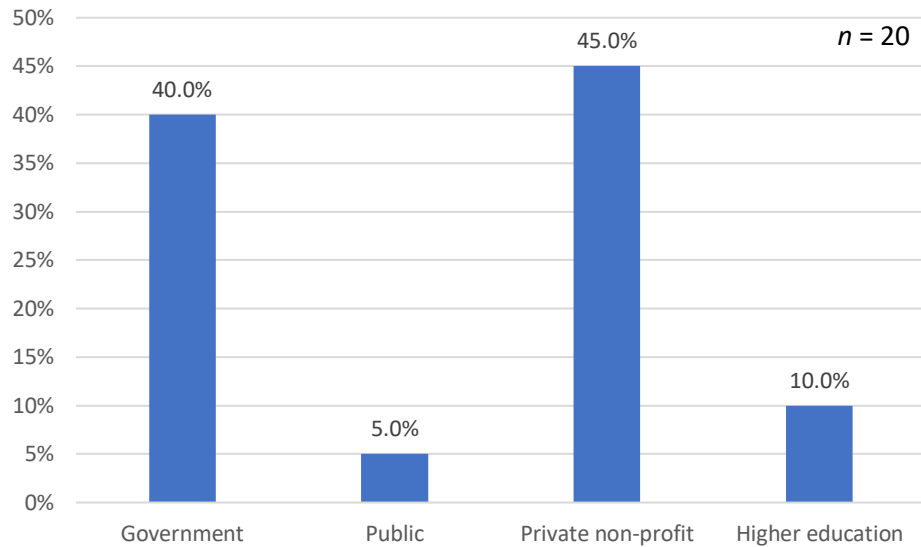
Q3. Identify the client populations your organization serves.

Exhibit 3.5.35 Stakeholders – populations served

n = 20

Seniors	Homeless persons	Veterans	Youth	Low-income individuals	General public	Persons with disabilities	LEP persons
70.0%	55.0%	65.0%	50.0%	75.0%	70.0%	70.0%	60.0%
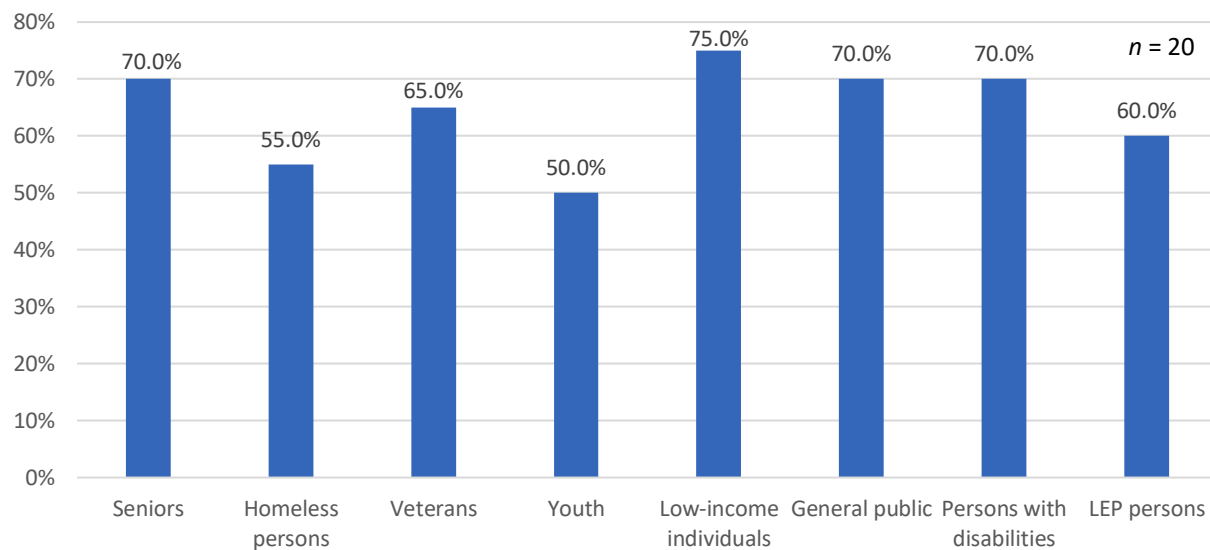
Q4. What are the core functions of your organization? (Select all that apply.)

Exhibit 3.5.36 Stakeholders – core functions

- Non-emergency medical transportation: 30.0%
- Screening/Counseling: 75.0%
- Day treatment: 20.0%
- Healthcare: 45.0%
- Youth services: 10.0%
- Job training: 25.0%
- Job placement: 30.0%
- General public transportation: 25.0%
- Social services: 45.0%
- Residential facilities: 10.0%
- Nutrition: 35.0%

$n = 20$
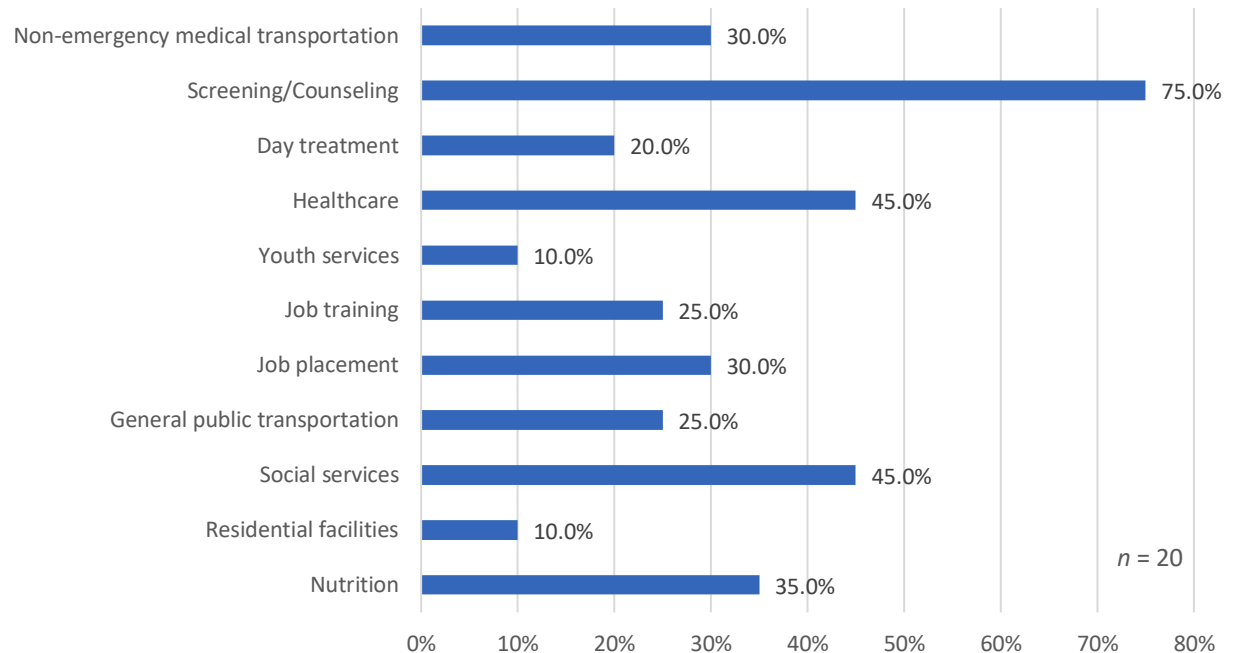
Q5. How does your organization assist its clients to obtain information about transportation? (Select all that apply.)

Exhibit 3.5.37 Stakeholders – assistance with transportation information

- Use 211 Texas to provide information to clients: 40.0%
- Make telephone calls on behalf of clients/riders: 45.0%
- Plan transportation for clients using Google Transit or an online trip planner: 15.0%
- Refer clients to transit provider guides or websites: 70.0%
- Provide clients with transportation guides/schedules: 55.0%

$n = 20$
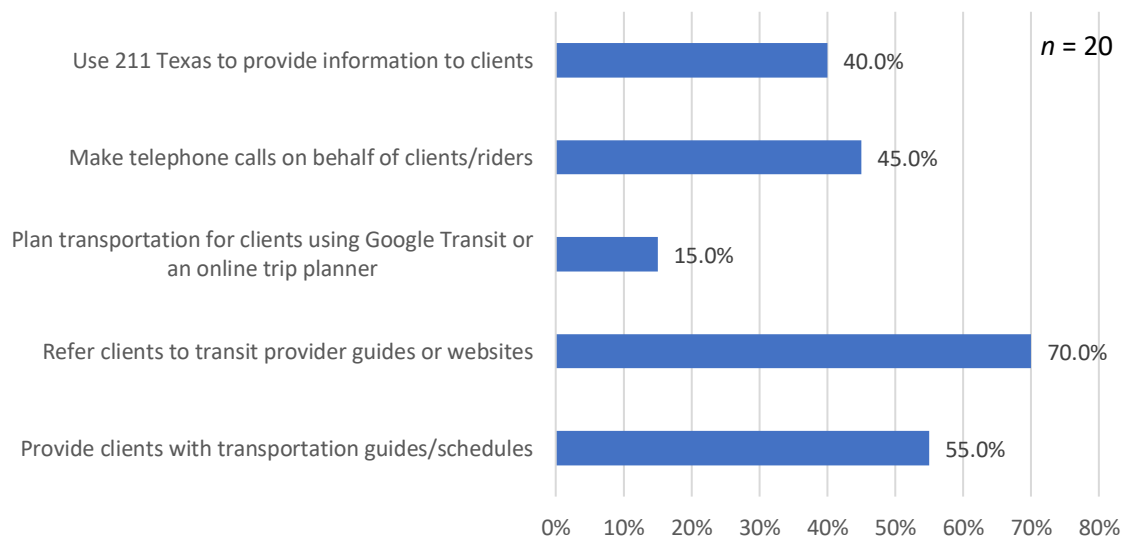
Q6. Indicate the transportation services provided by your organization. (Select all that apply.)

Exhibit 3.5.38 Stakeholders – transportation services provided
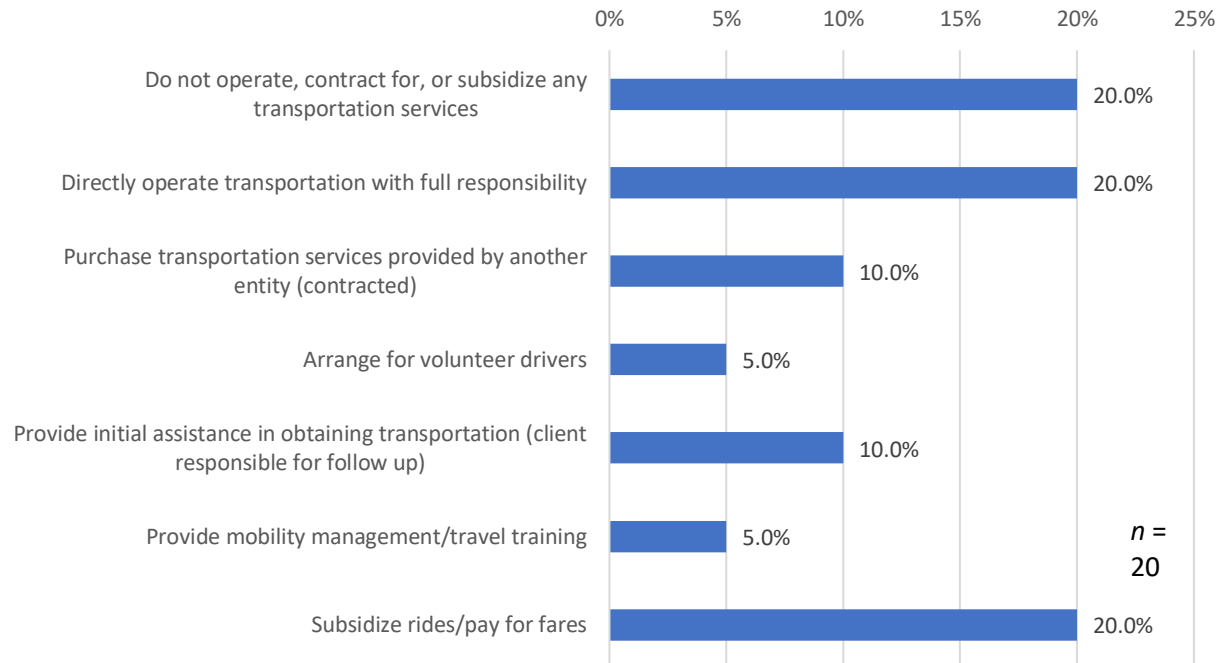
Q9. What are the most significant challenges your organization encounters with respect to providing and/or coordinating transportation services?

Exhibit 3.5.39 Stakeholders – transportation challenges

n = 20

Challenge	Percentage
Not part of our organization's core mission	5.0%
Inability to comply with restrictive grant or funding guidelines or reporting	5.0%
Unable to mix and/or coordinate grants from different agencies	10.0%
State or other regulations are too restrictive as to who is eligible for transportation services	10.0%
Lack of transportation services in your community	40.0%
Inadequate public transit service	25.0%
Policy considerations (e.g., limitation to where trips can originate or terminate)	20.0%
Insurance concerns (e.g., terms/conditions do not allow transportation of non-agency passengers, etc.)	25.0%
Insufficient organizational staffing to provide services	45.0%
Lack of funding to support coordination activities	30.0%
Lack of funding to meet current transportation/mobility needs	50.0%

Q11. In your opinion, which enhancements are most needed to improve coordination of public transit and human service transportation in your service area?

Exhibit 3.5.40 Stakeholders – preferred enhancements for coordination

- Additonal service in rural areas — 10.0%
- More effective marketing — 15.0%
- More bus stops — 5.0%
- Additional paratransit service — 10.0%
- More transportation funding — 5.0%
- Additional staffing — 10.0%

n = 20
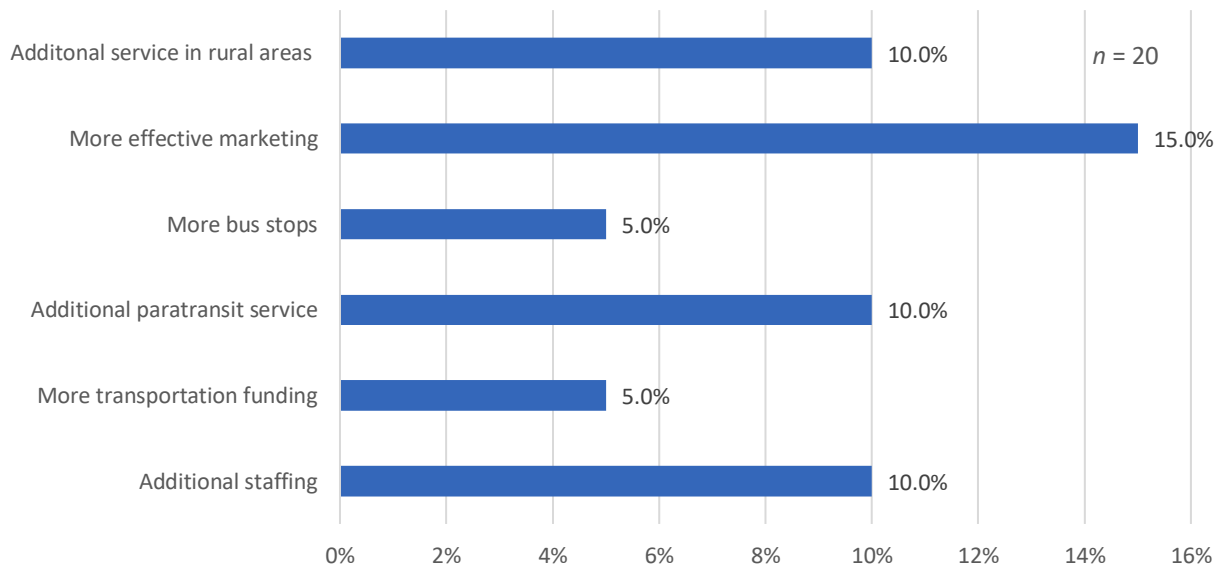
Q14. Who is eligible to use the transportation provided by your organization?

Exhibit 3.5.41 Stakeholders – eligibility for service
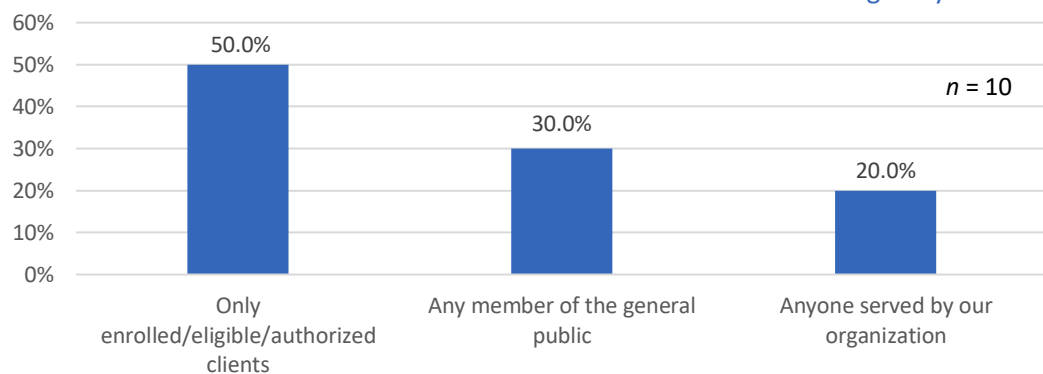
- Only enrolled/eligible/authorized clients — 50.0%
- Any member of the general public — 30.0%
- Anyone served by our organization — 20.0%

n = 10

Q16. How many total vehicles do you have available for client/customer transportation?

Exhibit 3.5.42 Stakeholders – fleet size

Q17. Tell us about the number and capacity of your vehicles.
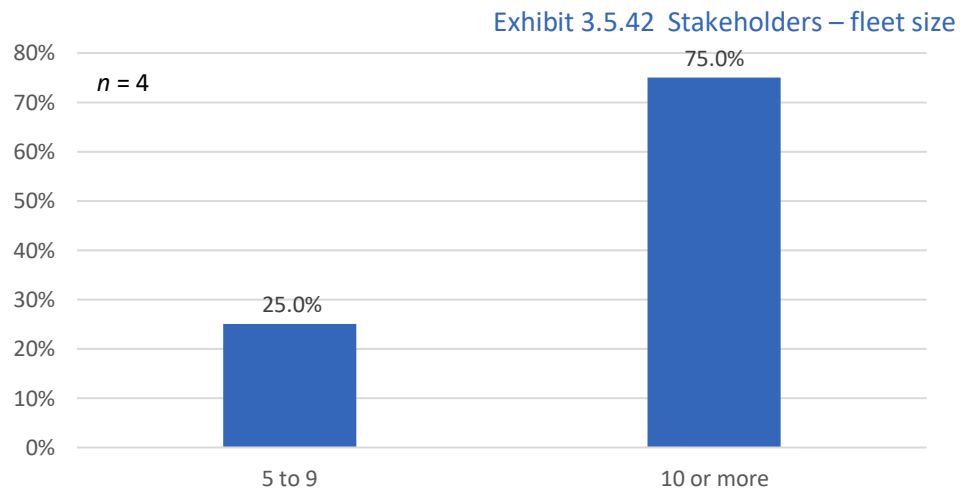
Exhibit 3.5.43 Stakeholders – fleet composition

| Vehicle capacity	Number of vehicles
1-4 passengers	0
5-10 passengers	25
11 to 16 passengers	0
More than 16 passengers	78

Q18. How many of your vehicles may need to be replaced in the next five years based on odometer mileage?

Exhibit 3.5.44 Stakeholders – anticipated fleet replacement

Seat capacity	Number of vehicles
10 or fewer seats	7
11 to 20 seats	8
More than 20 seats	14

Q20. Compared with your budget prior to COVID, do you expect your organization's transportation budget for 2022 will…?

Exhibit 3.5.45 Stakeholders – anticipated change in budget

n = 7

Increase	14.3%
Decrease	14.3%
Remain the same	71.4%
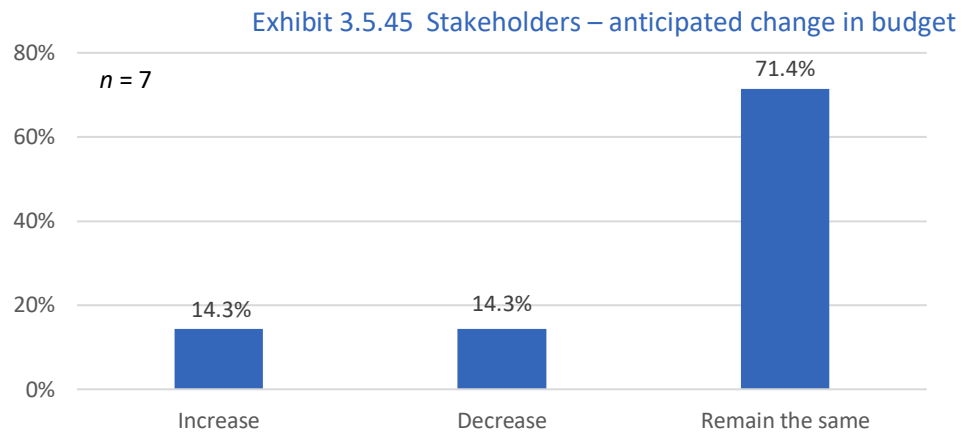
Q21. Does your organization intend to continue its client transportation programs during the next five years?

Eight organizations said they intend to continue their client transportation programs across the next five years.

3.6 Transportation Overlaps and Gaps in Service

One of the objectives of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan is to identify opportunities for better coordination, particularly amongst public transit operators. Effective coordination can maximize the use of resources by minimizing service duplication, which can in some cases allow for the reallocation of resources to new or improved services. To that end, this Plan identifies several examples of overlapping service for further examination. These areas with overlapping transit service include the following:

- In Edinburg, service to University Drive between Walmart (N. Sugar Road) and Raul Longoria Road is provided by two Valley Metro routes, with some portions of this road segment being served by four routes. While University Drive may offer the most direct route between trip generators as well as access to several of those trip generators, and while having multiple routes improves the frequency of service, moving some routes to other east-west corridors could expand access to service within Edinburg. (See Exhibit 1.5.1.)

- In Edinburg, service along Closner Boulevard between University Drive and the H-E-B is provided by four Valley Metro routes, with two of those routes extending south to the Shoppes at Rio Grande Valley. Again, while having multiple routes improves the frequency of service, moving some routes to other north-south corridors could expand access to service within Edinburg. (See Exhibit 1.5.2.)

- In Port Isabel and South Padre Island, overlapping routes are used to provide bidirectional service along key corridors. Given the available road network, doing so enhances access to transportation by improving frequency, and reducing duplication would not result in improved mobility.

Exhibit 3.6.1 Scheduled service at UTRGV

Route 10 (Mon-Fri)	Route 11 (Wed only)	Route 12 (Mon-Fri)	Route 14 (Mon-Fri)
6:35 a.m. (SB)	6:00 a.m.		
			7:30 a.m.
			8:00 a.m.
8:20 a.m. (NB)		8:15 a.m.	8:30 a.m.
8:35 a.m. (SB)			9:00 a.m.
10:20 a.m. (NB)			10:00 a.m.
10:35 a.m. (SB)	Demand-response	10:55 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
			11:00 a.m.
			11:30 a.m.
			12:00 p.m.
			12:30 p.m.
1:20 p.m. (NB)			1:00 p.m.
1:35 p.m. (SB)			1:30 p.m.
	2:00 p.m.	2:45 p.m.	2:00 p.m.
			2:30 p.m.
3:20 p.m. (NB)			3:00 p.m.
3:35 p.m. (SB)			3:30 p.m.
			4:00 p.m.
			4:30 p.m.
5:20 p.m. (NB)		5:25 p.m.	5:00 p.m.
5:35 p.m. (SB)			5:30 p.m.
			6:00 p.m.
			6:30 p.m.
7:20 p.m. (NB)			7:00 p.m.
			7:30 p.m.
			8:00 p.m.
			8:30 p.m.

moore & associates

Exhibit 3.6.2 Scheduled service at H-E-B (Edinburg)

Route 14 (Mon – Fri)	Route 15 (Mon – Sat) (approx.)	Route 17 (Mon – Fri)	Route 11 (Wed)
			6:00 a.m.
	7:18 a.m. (SB)		
7:42 a.m./7:48 a.m.	7:36 a.m. (NB)		
8:12 a.m./8:18 a.m.	8:18 a.m. (SB)		
8:42 a.m./8:48 a.m.	8:36 a.m. (NB)		
9:12 a.m./9:18 a.m.	9:18 a.m. (SB)	9:20 a.m. (SB)	
9:42 a.m./9:48 a.m.	9:36 a.m. (NB)	9:40 a.m. (NB)	
10:12 a.m./10:18 a.m.	10:18 a.m. (SB)	10:20 a.m. (SB)	Demand-response
10:42 a.m./10:48 a.m.	10:36 a.m. (NB)	10:40 a.m. (NB)	
11:12 a.m./11:18 a.m.	11:18 a.m. (SB)	11:20 a.m. (SB)	
11:42 a.m./11:48 a.m.	11:36 a.m. (NB)	11:40 a.m. (NB)	
12:12 p.m./12:18 p.m.	12:18 p.m. (SB)	12:20 p.m. (SB)	
12:42 p.m./12:48 p.m.	12:36 p.m. (NB)	12:40 p.m. (NB)	
1:12 p.m./1:18 p.m.	1:18 p.m. (SB)	1:20 p.m. (SB)	
1:42 p.m./1:48 p.m.	1:36 p.m. (NB)	1:40 p.m. (NB)	
2:12 p.m./2:18 p.m.	2:18 p.m. (SB)	2:20 p.m. (SB)	2:00 p.m.
2:42 p.m./2:48 p.m.	2:36 p.m. (NB)	2:40 p.m. (NB)	
3:12 p.m./3:18 p.m.	3:18 p.m. (SB)	3:20 p.m. (SB)	
3:42 p.m./3:48 p.m.	3:36 p.m. (NB)	3:40 p.m. (NB)	
4:12 p.m./4:18 p.m.	4:18 p.m. (SB)	4:20 p.m. (SB)	
4:42 p.m./4:48 p.m.	4:36 p.m. (NB)	4:40 p.m. (NB)	
5:12 p.m./5:18 p.m.	5:18 p.m. (SB)	5:20 p.m. (SB)	
5:42 p.m./5:48 p.m.	5:36 p.m. (NB)	5:40 p.m. (NB)	
6:12 p.m./6:18 p.m.			
6:42 p.m./6:48 p.m.			
7:12 p.m./7:18 p.m.			
7:42 p.m./7:48 p.m.			
8:12 p.m./8:18 p.m.			

3.7 Observations, Findings, and Conclusions

Despite the stereotypical attraction of Texans to their personal vehicles, there is a demonstrated need for transportation options beyond the personal vehicle. There are high concentrations of historically transportation-disadvantaged populations throughout the study area. More than 90 percent of residents self-identify as Hispanic/Latino, and 16.6 percent of households are considered to be limited-English proficient. More than 35 percent of residents live below 125 percent of the poverty level. Nearly 29 percent are under 18 years of age, while 13 percent are age 65 and older. Nearly 14 percent indicated having a disability which impacts their mobility. While none of these demographic characteristics automatically makes an individual ride-dependent, all of them represent characteristics that are more likely to be mobility-disadvantaged. In addition, nine percent of households have no access to a personal vehicle, while 36 percent have only a single vehicle.

In response to these latent demands, as well as in response to needs identified through the outreach process, we have developed two categories of demands: *General* (applicable to a broad area) and *specific* to a particular location.

General needs

- Low-income individuals often rely on public or social service transportation due to a lack of access to a vehicle.
- Spanish-language service information for all public transit providers that is readily accessible (e.g., not requiring access to the internet). While nearly 84 percent of households are considered proficient in English, there is a relatively high degree of limited-English proficiency in the project area.
- Dial-a-ride/demand-response service for seniors in the San Benito area.
- Dial-a-ride/demand-response service for seniors in the area outside Harlingen.
- Bus passes discounted for veterans.
- Improvements to streets in Brownsville.
- Improved connectivity between routes and services.
- Improved awareness of general public dial-a-ride service in Willacy County.
- Improved frequency and headways for transit throughout.
- Improvement to sidewalks and bus stops so they are accessible to everyone, including those using mobility devices.
- Automated stop annunciation systems on buses.
- A regional call center to offer coordinated information. This not only addresses the needs of those who must travel between transit service areas, but can also direct callers to appropriate social service transportation providers.
- More appropriate service delivery in low-density areas. This could mean additional flex routes/deviated fixed routes or new micro-transit service areas.
- Bus stops near clinics.
- Regular, ongoing travel training available to organizations. There is a demonstrated knowledge gap regarding transit, both in terms of where it operates and how to use it. Creation of a full-time travel trainer position by a regional entity could provide multiple

travel training sessions each week, with a specific focus on seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, and areas where transit use is low.

- Recruitment of sufficient drivers to reliably cover transit demand, especially in areas served by demand-response service. While current staffing issues are likely related to the nationwide driver shortage, maintaining a full roster of drivers will enhance reliability for customers. This has likely led to the perception by some that dial-a-ride service in Willacy County is unreliable.

Specific needs

- A bus stop closer to the Veteran Services Office in McAllen (located at 10th Street & Yale Avenue). This location is not served by McAllen Metro Routes 2 or 3 or by McAllen Metro paratransit, which only extends three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route (the office is 1.43 miles from the nearest transit route).
- B-Metro Dial-A-Ride/paratransit service that extends to the city limits, not three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route. This limitation results in some areas of the city not having access to bus service.
- Expand service between Primera and Harlingen. Currently service between Primera and Harlingen is provided via Valley Metro Route 44, which offer flex route service one-half mile from the route alignment. This includes some locations in eastern Primera, but not the central portion of the community, which is located more than two miles from Hwy 77.
- Add a bus stop at the Horizon Montessori III school, located at 2802 South 77 Sunshine Strip in Harlingen. The school is served by Valley Metro Route 42.

Recommendations reflective of the Needs Assessment are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 | Gap Analysis

4.1 Methodology

The methodology for the Gap Analysis is very similar to that of the Needs Assessment, inclusive of community and stakeholder input as well as input from Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council staff and the Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (which served as the project's steering committee) along with consultant observations.

The scope and programs of the transportation services operating within the three counties of the project area were compared and contrasted with the mobility needs, challenges, and priorities identified via the various engagement and observation activities.

4.2 Observations, Findings, and Conclusions

Observations and findings are segregated by population so as to paint a more complete picture of the barriers and challenges facing each demographic cohort. In several instances, the same barrier or challenge was reported by more than one demographic cohort, and therefore is included within each category to which it applies.

Disabled transportation

- All vehicles operated by Valley Metro as well as each of the public transit providers operating within the project area are fully ADA-compliant.
- Several of the non-profit organizations which responded to the project's stakeholder survey provide limited transportation for their respective clientele or members. While the LRGVDC does provide some transportation funding to support such services, said funding is perceived as being inadequate to address the mobility needs of persons with disabilities currently served, as well as latent demand identified by these organizations.
- The absence of pedestrian infrastructure, including complete sidewalks and/or sidewalks in good repair, often present a barrier for persons with disabilities who use mobility devices such as a wheelchair or scooter to travel within their community. Sidewalks and pedestrian facilities are often a key component of local transportation planning, and provision of such infrastructure is typically the responsibility of individual jurisdictions.
- The driver recruitment and retention challenges reported by some of the stakeholder organizations directly impacts their ability to provide and maintain transportation services in some communities within the project area. This can especially affect disabled individuals who may rely on the use of a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Inter-county transportation

- One of the more significant barriers or challenges to attractive inter-county transportation is overall travel time. While many of the prospective users have limited transportation options (i.e., little or no access to a personal vehicle), the anticipated time (origin-to-destination) required to make the desired trip is perceived as not being reasonable. It is also important to take into account the time required to travel to the starting bus stop as well as the time needed to travel from the alighting bus stop to the final destination.
- Another significant barrier is perceived poor connectivity between individual bus routes. The modest overall transit service frequency is such that any missed connection greatly increases the rider's total travel time.
- The perceived absence of an effective pedestrian infrastructure presents a challenge for many persons wishing to utilize public transit. An associated barrier is the limited availability of bus stop amenities (e.g., benches, shelters, lighting, etc.). Collectively these deficiencies erode the overall attractiveness of public transit as a viable mobility alternative.

Low-income individuals

- Cost represents a significant barrier to transportation, especially with respect to long-distance trips and medical transportation. Valley Metro as well as the other public transit providers within the project area offer discounted fares for seniors, persons with disabilities, students, and youth with respect to flex-route transit services.
- Medicaid covers some medical transportation costs for eligible individuals. This pertains specifically to Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT).
- A few of the stakeholder organizations provide transit fare subsidies or mileage reimbursement for volunteer drivers, the specifics of which vary by individual organization.
- The service denial penalties associated with Medicare transportation often discourage qualified organizations from providing NEMT services.
- Service limitations during evening/night hours as well as on weekends can present a barrier for persons who rely on public transit and whose work schedules include evening and weekend hours.

Rural transportation

- Mobility within rural communities is often impacted by a lack of public transportation services due to funding, limited driver availability, or other factors.
- Mobility within rural communities can be a challenge due to absence of adequate pedestrian and/or bicycle infrastructure. In locations where public transportation is not readily accessible, safe access to non-motorized travel becomes particularly important.
- The absence of sufficient bus service and bus stops within rural portions of the project area was raised through the stakeholder survey.

- The current policy limiting where trips can originate and terminate presents a barrier to persons needing to use the paratransit service.

Senior transportation

- Some paratransit services are not available to seniors who do not otherwise qualify as disabled.
- Some senior centers provide local transportation to congregate meals and/or other sponsored activities. The availability of transportation service is not consistent throughout the project area, nor is it well advertised.
- Greyhound offers discounted fares for persons age 62 and above.
- Omnibus Express offers a discount of 25 percent for seniors age 65 and above.
- Stakeholder organizations whose clientele includes seniors reported the absence of adequate paratransit service impacting senior access to healthcare services.

Urban transportation

- Several portions of the project area are not currently served by public transit.
- Public transit service is limited during weekday evening/night hours as well as on weekends.
- Inadequate transit service frequency was identified via the community survey, stakeholder survey, and community pop-up events.
- Limited or ineffective bus-to-bus connectivity erodes the attractiveness of public transit as a viable travel alternative.
- Many bus stops do not include customer amenities such as benches, shelters, lighting, etc.
- "Limited number of bus stops in Harlingen" was identified via the stakeholder survey.
- The absence of a public transportation link between South Texas College's Mid Valley campus and South Texas College's McAllen campus was identified via each of the public engagement activities. (Note: This may be due in part to the current suspension of the Jag Express Purple Line.)
- "Lack of knowledge" regarding public transit services represents a significant barrier. This is compounded by the absence of public transit service information as well as the need for increased transit service information in Spanish.

Veteran transportation

- The perceived absence of adequate funding limits the ability of some non-profit organizations to respond to the mobility needs of veterans.
- Some veteran transportation services may be provided through Disabled American Veterans (DAV) or the VA's Veteran Transportation Service. However, availability varies from location to location and there may be eligibility requirements to access the VA's transportation services.

- Greyhound offers a 10-percent discount on tickets for active or retired members of the military and their families. It also offers its Veterans Advantage program that provides affiliate benefits.
- Trailways offers a 15-percent discount on tickets for active or retired members of the military and their families.

Youth/student transportation

- The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley operate the Vaquero Express campus shuttle which serves the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses. The two campuses are connected via the Vaquero Express Campus Connector Shuttle. These routes are fare-free and open to the general public.
- Valley Metro and South Texas College operate the JagExpress bus service which includes three commuter routes and a park and ride shuttle. (Note: The Purple Line is suspended for the 2021-22 academic year.)
- Most school districts within the project area provide transportation for students residing more than two miles from their assigned school, or for students who live in an area less than two miles away but where pedestrian access is considered dangerous.
- Neighbors in Need of Services (NINOS) and the Hidalgo County Head Start program provide youth transportation for participants within their respective programs.
- Greyhound offers a 10-percent discount on tickets for students through the Student Advantage discount card. While the card costs $30 annually, it also provides affiliate benefits. Greyhound also offers discounted fares to children under 12.
- Omnibus Express offers a discount of 25 percent for children ages 2 to 11.

Recommendations reflective of the Gap Analysis are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 | Planning for Comprehensive Services

5.1 Recommendations for Coordination

Recommendations for coordination contained within this chapter are based on feedback received through public outreach, stakeholder consultation, input from Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council staff, and consultant observations. The recommendations identified below will be prioritized for implementation as part of Chapter 8.

Recommendations are divided into five categories:

1. Administrative and Policy,
2. Operational,
3. Marketing and Information,
4. Funding and Coordination, and
5. Capital and Infrastructure.

Administrative and policy recommendations focus on regional agreements, partnerships, and planning efforts. Operational recommendations include service expansions, realignments, and scheduling; schedule coordination; and improvements to service frequency.   Marketing and information recommendations focus on how service information is provided.   Funding and coordination look at opportunities for coordination between multiple organizations. Finally, capital and infrastructure recommendations address vehicles, pedestrian infrastructure, and bus stop improvements.

Administrative and Policy

1.   Work with social service organizations to subsidize the purchase of multi-ride fare media.

While there was some expression of need for lower-cost transportation, the operators within the Lower Rio Grande Valley already offer low (or in some cases, free) fares. In addition, the Valley Metro 20-ride pass offers 20 rides for half the cost of 20 rides purchased individually. B-Metro in Brownsville also offers a significantly discounted 20-ride pass for its reduced-fare customers. As a result, there is little support to further reduce the price of fare media.

However, individual customers may still struggle with these low fares. Therefore, it is recommended transit operators establish partnerships with social service organizations to subsidize access to multi-ride fare media. Social service organizations could purchase 20-ride passes at their face value and provide them to their clients for free or a reduced cost. This would help maintain fare revenues for the transit operators while potentially offering an affordable option for clients served by the social service organizations. Anyone using an eligibility-based reduced-fare 20-ride pass would still need to provide qualifying documentation when using the pass to pay for a transit ride.

2. **Synchronize scheduled service changes.**

Development of a regional transit guide is provided as Recommendation #14. In order to keep the information presented therein accurate for as long as possible, public and university transit operators in the Lower Rio Grande Valley should synchronize their service changes. For example, if service changes are generally implemented once a year, having all of the service changes occur in July would mean the regional transit guide could be printed and distributed just once a year. Doing so would realize cost savings.

As an implementation strategy, the consultant recommends the various operators meet quarterly to discuss operations and schedule related matters. Perhaps at the initial session each operator could provide an overview of the operational changes it plans to make during the year ahead, and potentially the catalyst and target date for each change. Doing so would allow the group to compile a master list of anticipated changes, which should also provide insight into possible impact of the proposed changes on the individual operators. Depending on the breadth of changes proposed – as well as the complexity of the individual changes – another outcome of the process could be objective prioritization of the proposed changes.

From the customer's perspective, market research reveals that few riders are "brand specific." That is, they view their travel as singular trips not connecting segments operated by different carriers. Therefore, it is important that a schedule change implemented by one operator not occur in a vacuum. But rather take into account possible impacts on connections, wait-time, and overall travel within a given corridor.

3. **Provide regional trip planning through Google Maps.**

While many transit operators offer real-time tracking of buses through a website or app, real-time capabilities are not needed to enable trip planning across the region. Therefore, it is recommended all public and university transit operators in the region submit GTFS data to Google (and other feed aggregators, if so desired) so that region-wide trip planning can be accessed via Google or other applications. Given GTFS data is static, preparing the feed requires only that the service schedule be provided in the appropriate GTFS format. Individual operators would also be responsible for ensuring GTFS feeds are updated to reflect any service changes as they occur. Once all operators have their respective schedules available via Google, riders will be able to plan inter-city and inter-county trips across multiple operators.

4. **Develop a partnership with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to address mobility needs outside regular service hours.**

In the months immediately prior to the preparation of this Plan, both Valley Metro and Metro McAllen introduced trial micro-transit service options within portions of their respective service areas. While these projects may address some of the mobility needs identified through the various community engagement activities, the consultant has not seen data evaluating the performance, impact, and respective costs of these new mobility options.

While it will be important for the LRGVDC/Valley Metro to track and report the traditional "transit" performance metrics, Moore & Associates believes it is also important to determine the composition of the ridership as well as the method of trip booking and payment. While the "Coordinated Plan" considers overall mobility opportunities, challenges, and barriers throughout the overall (three-county) project area, a particular focus is on the mobility needs and priorities of historically transportation-disadvantaged persons (including seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, etc.) these demographics cohorts often do not have access to a smartphone, debit card, or credit card. As such, access to "micro-transit" is often problematic.

Another solution could be partnering with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber or Lyft which could enhance mobility while minimizing the operating cost to the transit provider. If desired, trips can be restricted by eligibility, service days or hours, mileage, etc. A trial or pilot (which may be constrained by a dollar amount or time period) could be used to assess the cost-effectiveness of the partnership.

Operational

5. **Implement recommendations included in the 2030 Transit Development Plan and other localized planning efforts designed to improve service delivery and coordination as appropriate.**

Recent planning efforts by the RGVMPO and other organizations offered a series of recommendations designed to enhance service delivery and coordination throughout the region. While some plans were completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (and as such some recommendations may no longer be relevant), each of these plans provides potential alternatives to address service challenges. In addressing the challenges and recommendations cited within this Coordination Plan, transit operators and regional planning bodies should draw on the extensive planning work already completed in seeking specific operational solutions.

6. **Improve schedule coordination between routes and between operators/providers, thereby reducing "wait-time" between buses.**

As discussed within Recommendation 2, Moore & Associates proposes the various transit operators meet quarterly to discuss operations and schedule-related matters.

Given the number of providers operating within the study area as well as historic transit rider travel behavior (i.e., significant number of trips requiring a transfer and travel corridors with multiple operators), the importance of effective bus-to-bus connections cannot be overstated. Perhaps one topic of discussion at the proposed quarterly "operations and schedule" sessions could be consensus regarding minimum and maximum connection times.

While there are several regional routes connecting outlying areas with urbanized areas, as well as connecting urbanized areas themselves, the regional routes typically serve a limited number of locations in Brownsville and McAllen, given each city operates its own transit system. As a result, individuals arriving via a regional route must connect with a local route to complete their trip. In instances where a regional

route offers a limited number of trips each day and a local route only offers hourly service, this can result in long wait times.

Exhibit 4.1.1 shows the difficulty of planning a trip from Harlingen to Brownsville. It uses a starting point of North 11th Street and East Austin Avenue in Harlingen and an ending location of the International Technology, Education, and Commerce Center in Brownsville. It includes 40 minutes of wait-time and requires a total of two hours and 17 minutes to cover approximately 27 miles (versus a single-occupant vehicle driving time of 35 to 45 minutes). In addition, there is no way to arrive before 9:30 a.m., which would make it difficult to use transit to access many employment opportunities.

Exhibit 5.1.1 Sample trip planning example 1

Travel Segment	Operator and Route
11th St. & Austin Ave. – Harlingen Terminal	Valley Metro Route 41, pick up 7:10 am, arrive 7:25 am
Harlingen Terminal – B-Metro Terminal	Valley Metro Route 45, pick up 7:50 am, arrive 9:05 am
B-Metro Terminal – ITEC	B-Metro Route 14, pick up 9:20 am, arrive 9:27 am

Aligning transit schedules can be challenging, especially if one route uses a clock-face schedule and another does not, or if route headways and frequency are significantly different. In the example above, earlier service on Route 41 would have enabled the hypothetical rider to catch the 6:25 am Route 45 trip, which arrives in Brownsville at 7:40 am. This would allow for an immediate connection with Route 14, which departs at 7:40 am, minimizing the wait-time. Alternately, if the 7:50 am trip on Route 45 started five to ten minutes earlier, it would enable the rider to catch the 9:00 am Route 14 trip, eliminating additional wait-time. While changing times to facilitate one connection can admittedly impact other connections, adjusting those that can be aligned without negatively impacting other connections should be examined.

Another example considers a transit trip between Harlingen and McAllen. Using the same starting point in Harlingen, the ending point for this example is the Trenton Crossing Shopping Center (at North 10th Street and Wisconsin Road in McAllen).

Exhibit 5.1.2 Sample trip planning example 2

Travel Segment	Operator and Route
11th St. & Austin Ave. – Harlingen Terminal	Valley Metro Route 41, pick up 7:10 am, arrive 7:25 am
Harlingen Terminal – McAllen Central Station	Valley Metro Route 31, pick up 8:00 am, arrive 9:35 am
McAllen Central Station – Trenton Shopping Center	Metro McAllen Route 2, pick up 10:00 am, arrive 10:19 am

In the second example, the hypothetical rider encounters a total of one hour of wait-time, for a total travel time of three hours nine minutes. This is an approximately 40-mile trip that would take just under an hour by car. Shifting the departure time for Route 31 to 7:25 am would eliminate nearly all of the wait time and enable an arrival at the destination at 9:19 am. While it is important to consider how this would affect other connections with the regional route, it is also important to consider the impact of the total trip on the rider. Two one-way trips of more than three hours each adds up to more than six hours of travel in a day, not including the time spent at the appointment, errand, or workplace. While travel by transit should

not be limited to direct comparison with personal vehicle travel, the impact which long connection wait-times have on riders should be considered.

7.   Improve service frequency for inter-county transit service.

The service frequency for inter-city fixed routes ranges from 60 minutes to three hours, and is available three to seven days per week. Not counting routes operating entirely within a single community, most routes offer a service frequency of one to two hours, sometimes with a midday gap. Route 21 (Sullivan City-Mission) has the least service, offering two round trips per day Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Route 43 (San Benito-Brownsville) also only operates Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but offers four round trips per day. Route 31 (Business 83) has a one-hour frequency between some trips, but two hours for others. All other inter-city routes offer a service frequency of 90 minutes to more than two hours. (Route 11 also provides inter-city service but uses a demand-response model, providing service between Edinburg, San Carlos, La Blanca, and Hargill from 6 am to 2 pm on Wednesdays.) Improving service frequency on these routes, especially during peak travel hours, would also help address some of the considerable wait-time for connections cited in Recommendation #6.

8.   Link South Texas College campuses in McAllen and Weslaco.

Normally, the Jag Express Purple Line provides a connection between the STC Nursing and Allied Health Center campus in McAllen and the Mid-Valley campus in Weslaco. However, the Purple Line was suspended during the 2021-2022 school year, which caused that connection to be lost. Even though this is the lowest performing of the JagExpress routes, given no other inter-city routes offer this particular connection, LRGVDC should consider reinstating this route as soon as possible. An alternative to the Purple Route would be to re-route Valley Metro Route 20 to serve both the McAllen and Mid-Valley campuses.

9.   Evaluate the delivery of transit service in Willacy County.

During the public outreach process, comments regarding Valley Metro's demand-response service in Willacy County revealed concerns with service reliability. If service capacity is reduced due to driver shortages, fewer riders can be served. This creates a service gap, regardless of whether riders try to book rides and cannot travel when they want, or if potential riders do not even try to book a ride believing the service to be unreliable. Therefore, the LRGVDC should evaluate the Willacy County demand-response program to determine if these complaints are valid by assessing the incidence of trip denials and on-time performance. If warranted, the LRGVDC should address the deficiencies as soon as possible. If the service is functioning as intended and the issue is one of perception, the LRGVDC should address this through marketing, outreach, and travel training so that potential users better understand the limitations of the service and the process for securing rides.

10. Introduce service to the McAllen Veterans Services Office.

The McAllen Veterans Services Office (VSO) is currently located at 10th Street and Yale Avenue in north McAllen, near the border with Edinburg. Currently neither Metro McAllen nor Valley Metro offer service to this location. The nearest Valley Metro route is Route 10 (Edinburg-McAllen), which travels along Sugar

Road more than two miles to the east (which also places the VSO approximately 1.5 miles outside the Route 10 Flex zone). The nearest McAllen Metro stops are located at Wisconsin Road just east of 10th Street (Kohl's) on Route 2 and at Oxford Avenue & 23rd Street on Route 3 (both approximately 1.5 miles away). Access to the VSO could be served by an on-demand extension to Route 2 (where the stop is served only when requested in advance), though it would likely add at least four to five additional minutes of travel time to the route. Another option would be to serve the location using an on-demand service, such as Uber or Lyft (see Recommendation #4).

11. **Expand local service in San Benito.**

A need for expanded local transit service in San Benito was expressed during the community outreach process. One option for expanding local service in San Benito would be to introduce a general public dial-a-ride service within the community on a trial basis. Limiting service to a modest time span (e.g., six hours) on a single day of the week (not unlike Valley Metro Route 11) across a demonstration period of 90 days could serve to more accurately evaluate demand for such a service while providing lifeline service within the community.

Another alternative would be to add Flex service to the portion of Valley Metro Route 42 serving San Benito. Given the existing coverage in Harlingen, there is no need for this route to offer Flex service in Harlingen, but adding Flex service south/east of FM 509/Helen Moore would greatly expand access to transit within San Benito. Other options include limiting the Flex service in San Benito to seniors and persons with disabilities only or including this area in a TNC pilot program (as discussed in Recommendation #4). These options could be introduced as pilot or demonstration projects to further assess demand.

12. **Expand service to include neighborhoods around Harlingen.**

During the community outreach, there were requests for service to be expanded to the neighborhoods around Harlingen. Given the area currently covered by Flex routes in Harlingen (see Recommendation #15), this request would be limited to several fairly modest areas around the perimeter of the city, including either side of Interstate 2 west of the Valle Vista Mall, north/northwest of Harlingen High School (to I-69E and FM 499), east of Harlingen between 21st Street and FM 499, and southeast of Hugh Ramsey Nature Park. Due the highly dispersed nature of the service area, it would be more beneficial to include this area within any TNC partnership developed under Recommendation #4 rather than introducing a new demand-response service that would likely be utilized by only a modest number of riders.

13. **Consider realigning route paths for Valley Metro routes traveling along University Dr. and Closner Blvd. in Edinburg to minimize duplication.**

In Edinburg, service along University Drive between Walmart (North Sugar Road) and Raul Longoria Road is provided by two Valley Metro routes, with some portions of this road segment being served by four routes. While University Drive may offer the most direct route between trip generators as well as access to several of those trip generators, and while having multiple routes improves the frequency of service, moving some routes to other east-west corridors could expand access to service within Edinburg. For example, shifting some service on Route 12 to Schunior Street/Richardson Road could still provide

connectivity at the Hidalgo County Courthouse while also expanding service to the Juvenile Justice Center, WIC Clinic, and other locations before rejoining SH 107 where it curves northward.

The value of the UTRGV's transit program should not be overlooked as an important resource towards the implementation of this recommendation. The consultant believes UTRGV could assist in providing local service(s); assuming it is provided the resources to do so. UTRGV's potential contribution could be particularly valuable providing links between apartment complexes within the area and potentially important trip generators such as restaurants and retail centers. Another important link could be the UTRGV campus and Valley Metro's transit center on University Drive.

Likewise, service along Closner Boulevard between University Drive and the H-E-B is provided by four Valley Metro routes, with two of those routes extending south to the Shoppes at Rio Grande Valley. Again, while having multiple routes improves the frequency of service, moving some routes to other north-south corridors could expand access to service within Edinburg. For example, shifting some service on Route 15 or 17 to Veterans Boulevard would potentially serve three schools and several government offices.

Marketing and Information

14. Prepare and distribute a regional transit guide.

Prepare a printed bilingual (English/Spanish) regional transit guide that contains transit information for public and university transportation programs across the three-county area. A regional guide will provide a single marketing piece that can be distributed throughout the region. Ideally it would provide system maps, schedules, fare information, and transfer locations for all public transit and university routes and services operating within the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A digital version could also be provided via a link from each operator's website. Having a printed guide, however, is beneficial for those without access to the Internet or who are not comfortable finding information online.

15. Expand awareness of Valley Metro's Flex route feature.

Valley Metro offers 12 Flex routes throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley. While several of the Flex routes serve smaller communities not otherwise served by transit, several operate within Edinburg and Harlingen providing intra-community service. A Flex route combines the scheduled service of a fixed route with the flexibility inherent to a demand-response service.

One of the needs expressed during the project was for more bus stops in Harlingen. While the two Harlingen routes only show a total of 15 individual scheduled stops, both routes are Flex routes, which will divert up to one-half mile off the route alignment. In addition, both routes offer stops beyond the scheduled stops upon request. As a result, there is much greater coverage of Harlingen than indicated on the various service information materials.

The primary need, rather than adding stops to the route alignment, is better promotion of what Flex routes are, how they work, and how to request stops that are not scheduled stops. This applies to all Flex routes, not just those serving Harlingen. More effective service information and promotion of the routes will help mitigate the perception of there being too few bus stops. Recommended strategies include the

inclusion of the Flex buffer on all Flex route maps, development of explainer videos in both Spanish and English, explicit written instructions on the Valley Metro website (in English and Spanish) about how to use the Flex feature (not just what it is), and providing information about the Flex routes at any community outreach activities Valley Metro participates in. Each Flex route should also be clearly identified as such in any marketing materials that include information about Valley Metro (such as the regional transit guide identified in Recommendation #14) and incorporated into regional travel training efforts (see Recommendation #18).

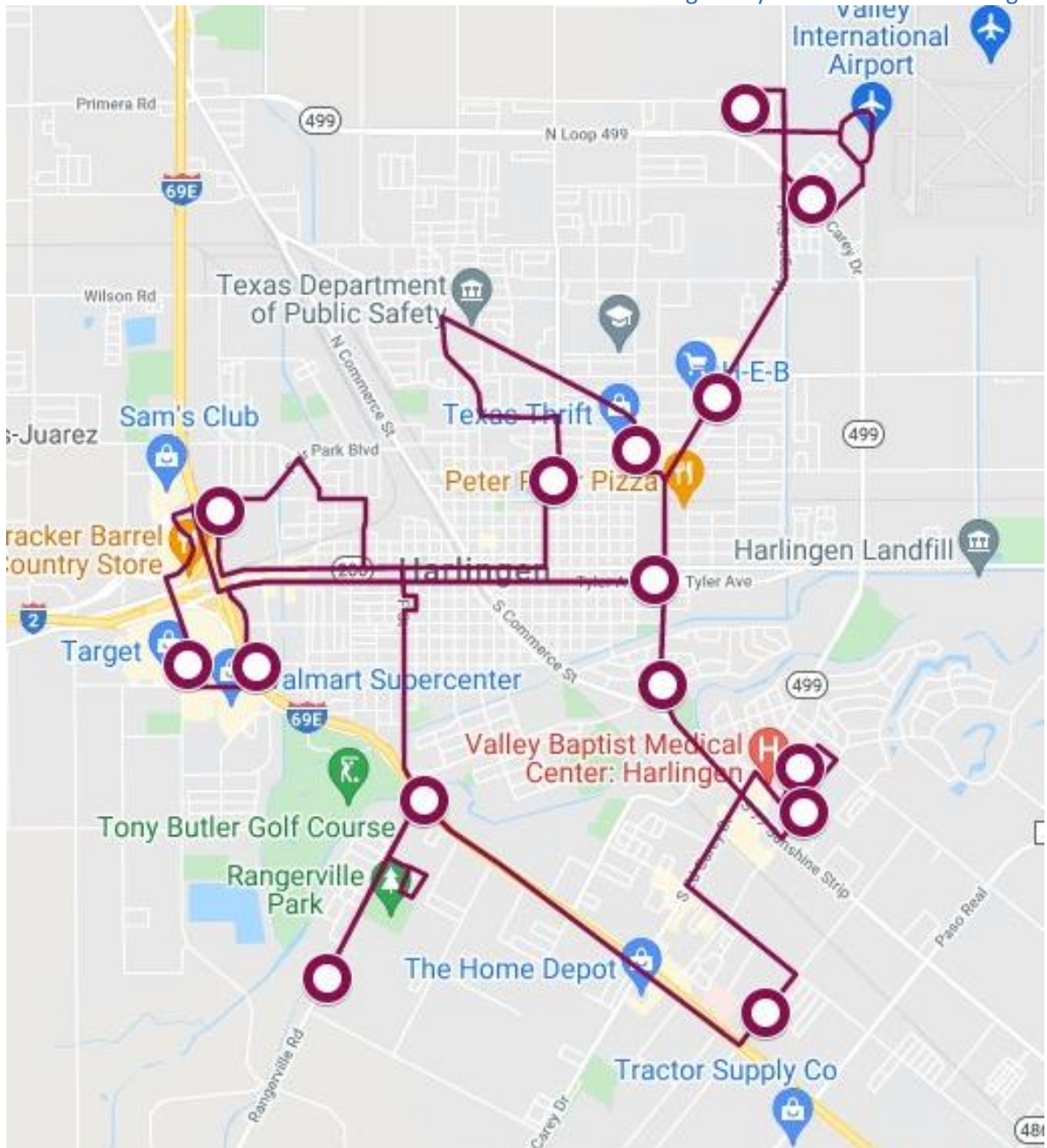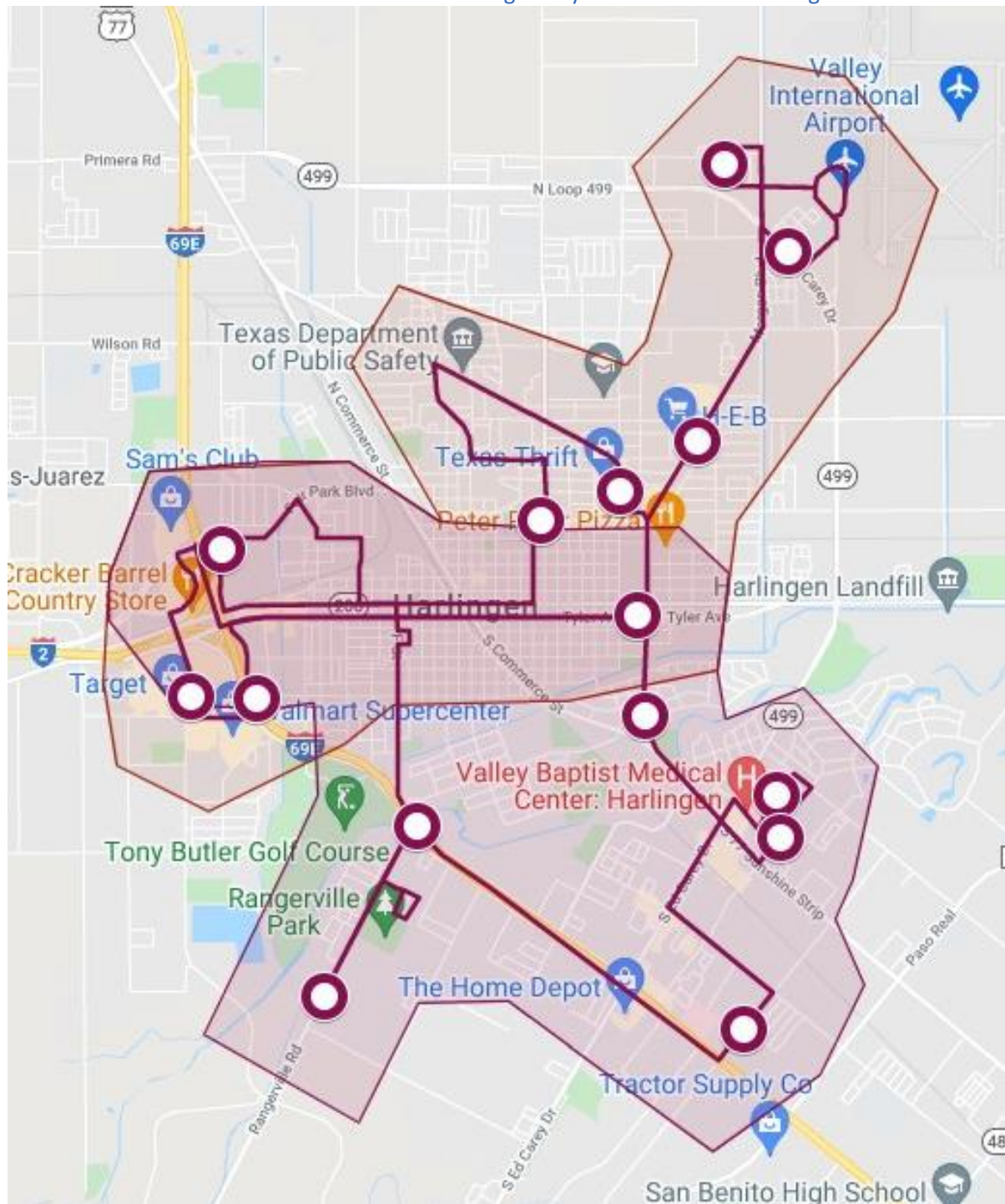Exhibit 5.1.3 Existing Valley Metro routes in Harlingen

Exhibit 5.1.4 Existing Valley Metro routes in Harlingen with Flex buffer

16. Provide more detailed service information.

There are four basic levels of service information available to transit users throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley: printed service information, online service information, Google Maps, and the Ride Systems app.

1. Printed service information (such as route or system brochures with maps and timetables) may seem old-fashioned or antiquated, yet they are still an essential source of information for many riders. A printed brochure never runs out of power or loses cell service. It should be provided in English and Spanish and updated to reflect service changes. The downside of a printed brochure or map is that it is not dynamic, and any service changes warrant the printing of new materials.

   While printed information is essential, it must also be useful. Printed materials need to provide specific enough information about where individual stops are located, ideally by showing all stops on the route map and identifying cross-streets or landmarks for time-points using descriptive text. For example, the Valley Metro UTRGV stop in Edinburg is not in the same place as the Vaquero Express stop at the Visitor Center, but this is not immediately identifiable, especially for someone who is not familiar with the university. This challenge applies to other locations as well. Valley Metro Route 15 indicates the Shoppes at RGV as a time-point, but does not provide any other location information. Even including a simple description of "at Burlington" would be useful.

   Specific to Valley Metro, the level of detail between route brochures is also inconsistent. Some route brochures include all stops and the Flex service buffer, while others do not.

   During this project, printed materials for B-Metro, Island Metro, and Metro McAllen were not available. This is likely because service changes due to COVID make printing up-to-date service information cost-prohibitive. However, once service has returned to normal, each transit provider should once again make printed materials available.

2. Online service information can and is presented in a couple of different ways. Valley Metro, for example, provides .pdf versions of the individual route brochures, which can be viewed online or printed. B-Metro provides route maps and schedules on its website, but only time-points are marked. Schedules and notices are provided in English and Spanish, though website content is in English only. Metro McAllen provides a system map that includes all stops on each route, but schedules are located as .pdf files under the Trip Planner tab (rather than the Schedules tab). In addition, the website and linked files are only provided in English. Island Metro's combined schedule and system map includes detailed schedules with all stops marked on the route maps, though only some of the text is provided in Spanish.

3. Bus stop and trip planning information for B-Metro and Metro McAllen are included in Google Maps. Others are not. One advantage to providing route and schedule information to Google is that it is not limited to a single system, enabling trip planning across multiple systems. In addition, it can be useful in identifying stop locations if they are not well identified elsewhere. Google Maps can be accessed from any internet-enabled device.

4. The Ride Systems app is a useful tool, as it shows actual vehicle locations, specific stop locations, and the anticipated next arrival at a stop. The app is used by B-Metro, Island Transit, Metro McAllen, and Valley Metro (though when searching from the landing page, they are listed as Brownsville Metro, South Padre Island, City of McAllen, Valley Metro, and Valley Metro Express). However, it requires access to a smartphone (to access the app) or an internet-enabled device (to access the web version). None of the information in the Ride Systems app appears to be provided in Spanish.

While the digital information methods provide greater route and schedule detail while also being more dynamic (able to be updated easily), each of the transit operators needs to ensure that it publishes bilingual printed materials that can be easily utilized without access to a smartphone or the internet. However, it is acceptable to wait until individual services have settled back into normal operations before resuming the distribution of printed materials. In the meantime, operators may wish to consider having simple schedules and/or maps that can be printed using a standard office printer, either by customer service staff or by individuals downloading them from a home, work, or library computer.

17. Enhance access to service information.

As discussed in Recommendation #16, broad access to transit service information is essential. Therefore, in addition to ensuring the availability of printed service information, it is also important to ensure that information is distributed effectively, especially to locations serving senior and low-income individuals who may not have access to the internet or a smartphone. Such locations may include public libraries, municipal offices, social service agencies, medical facilities, and schools. Distribution would be streamlined if a regional transit guide (such as that discussed in Recommendation #14) were developed, as only a single informational piece would need to be distributed. All service materials should be provided in English and Spanish.

18. Implement a travel training program.

Travel training programs have a dual purpose. First, they raise awareness about what transit options are available, and second, they teach the skills needed to effectively use transit. Travel training can be provided on an individual or group basis. This recommendation calls for the establishment of a regional group travel training program. This would enable social service organizations and other programs to host a travel training session for their clients. Initial activities should focus on historically ride-dependent populations, including seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Some areas of emphasis should include how to use general public demand-response programs (such as that offered in Willacy County) as well as how Valley Metro's Flex routes work.

It would be reasonable for the LRGVDC to be the lead agency for the travel training program, as it already covers the entire project area. Travel training could be provided by a LRGVDC staffer or contracted to a social service agency.

Funding and Coordination

19. Consider conducting joint recruitment and training of drivers, including non-profit operators.

Transit operators should look for opportunities to share training (and potentially recruitment) opportunities with local non-profit transportation providers. Though joint recruitment between transit operators may not be practical (given differing compensation packages), there may be some opportunity to share applications by candidates who do not already possess a commercial license with non-profits looking to hire van drivers, as well as offer training to non-profit drivers. While the same training and licensing is not necessarily required for non-profit drivers as for transit drivers, having access to a wider pool of candidates and a resource for driver training may benefit non-profits.

20. Implement a one-stop call center.

Recommendation #20 proposes a one-stop call center to provide up-to-date information about transportation and mobility throughout the region. This is especially useful for individuals who need to travel using multiple modes or providers and are not able to do the trip planning on their own, or who need information about social service transportation. The LRGVDC would be the likely agency for implementation of this function, as Valley Metro already provides service throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley. It could be added as an additional function of the existing customer call center or provided separately. A grant to implement the Regional Call Center was executed on September 12, 2019 and is currently active. However, each transit operator still handles calls individually. The LRGVDC should continue moving forward with this recommendation.

21. Improve access to information about transportation offerings provided through senior centers.

Few senior centers provide clear information to the general public about whether they provide transportation services for program participants, either just for congregate meals or for other purposes. This information should be provided by each individual center and available online. Alternately, the list of senior centers maintained on the LRGVDC's Area Agency on Aging website should exhibit a date so that users can determine if the information is up-to-date and accurate.

Capital and Infrastructure

22. Improve rural bus stops to provide a clear, ADA-accessible path of travel.

It is important to ensure bus stops, especially those in rural communities, are located in an accessible location, with a clear, ADA-accessible path of travel. As such, bus stops that do not meet ADA requirements should be remediated, whether through the installation of a concrete pad or curb cuts, finished sidewalks, etc. Given most rural bus stops are under the purview of individual jurisdictions, it is the responsibility of the individual jurisdictions to program and prioritize sidewalk and pedestrian improvements to improve accessibility.

23. Prepare Bus Stop Inventories and Bus Stop Improvement Plans for each operator.

Each operator within the project area should maintain a Bus Stop Inventory and prepare a Bus Stop Improvement Plan. The first ensures conditions, signage, and amenities at all bus stops are documented, ideally with photographs and exact latitude and longitude data. The latter uses the data provided in the Bus Stop Inventory to prioritize repairs, ADA compliance issues, and the installation of amenities such as benches, shelters, and lighting. The Bus Stop Improvement Plan can then be used to prioritize capital funding for bus stops across multiple years.

24. Increase capital (vehicle) funding for non-profit operators.

One of the challenges non-profit transportation providers often face is the capital cost of vehicle purchases. The FTA Section 5310 program can assist with such costs, but federal funding comes with reporting and compliance requirements that many non-profits find onerous. The RGVMPO and LRGVDC should seek to identify funding sources for non-profit vehicles, including assisting non-profits with becoming eligible (and maintaining eligibility) for Section 5310 capital funding.

5.2 Planning for Coordinated Services

This Plan integrates services of transportation programs beyond public transportation programs funded under FTA Section 5307 (urbanized) and Section 5311 (rural). This includes transportation programs receiving other FTA funding (including Section 5310), health and human services programs, and workforce programs.

Other federally funded programs

The LRGVDC, City of Brownsville, and Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL) are currently the only Section 5310 recipients in the project area. Any future Section 5310 Calls for Projects should seek to provide funding for projects offering solutions to address the needs and recommendations included within this Plan.

Health and human services programs

Health and human services programs were invited to take an active role in this planning process, including participating in the stakeholder survey and RTAP meetings.

Few recommendations were offered specific to individual programs provided through health and human service organizations solely for eligible clients. These programs are included within the inventory and information about them should also be provided through the one-stop call center included in Recommendation #20. Recommendation #23 also recommends the RGVMPO and LRGVDC assist non-profit organizations with the eligibility and compliance requirements associated with federal capital funding.

Workforce programs

Workforce programs were invited to take an active role in this planning process, including participating in the stakeholder survey and RTAP Steering Committee meetings.
Few recommendations were offered specific to individual programs provided through workforce programs solely for eligible clients. These programs are included within the inventory and information about them should also be provided through the one-stop call center included in Recommendation #20. The RGVMPO and LRGVDC are also encouraged to reach out to workforce agencies to identify future job access/commute needs (which formerly might have been eligible under the Job Access-Reverse Commute/JARC program) that can be funded through FTA Section 5307.

Chapter 6 | Integrated Planning Processes

6.1 Other Relevant Planning Efforts

Throughout the boundaries of TxDOT Planning Region 21, transportation planning is included within a variety of metropolitan, local, regional, and statewide transportation plans. As the lead agency for this area, the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) works with city, county, and TxDOT representatives to emphasize the value of integration of transportation planning practices. Through meetings of its Board, Technical Advisory Committees, Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel and others, MPO staff are able to identify regional needs as established in local planning documents.

The narrative below summarizes relevant content from local and state plans, with goals and improvements identified. Many of the recognized needs are consistent across the documents. This Plan will be sent to the entities cited herein with the expectation that its priorities and recommendations will be considered in future planning document updates as appropriate. Plans are presented with the most recent efforts first.

Subsequent to preparation of the 2017 Regional Coordinated Transportation Plan, three of the local planning organizations were merged into the Lower Rio Grande Valley MPO: Brownsville MPO, Hidalgo County MPO, and Harlingen-San Benito MPO.

Transit Plans – Local

RGVMPO 2030 Transit Development Plan (2020)
The methodology for the TDP reflects common industry practices: 1) operational analyses, 2) identification and quantification of demand, 3) public engagement, 4) presentation of service options or alternatives, and 5) discussion of funding opportunities. With the above in mind, Moore & Associates, Inc. believes the key take away from this latest transit study is its discussion of Potential Funding Sources. These include 1) contract revenue, 2) student transportation fees, 3) creation of a regional transit authority (with the power to impose a sales and/or use tax), and 4) bridge-crossing revenues.

The Plan focuses on Cameron and Hidalgo counties. It includes a detailed discussion and analysis of/for Valley Metro, Brownsville Metro, Metro McAllen, Island Metro, and Valley Metro's FTA-funded partnership with University of Texas-RGV and South Texas College.

As noted in several of the publicly funded transit studies completed across the past decade, the absence of local public (transportation) funding to supplement (historic) federal and state services is the key impediment to the expansion of public transit services throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Metro McAllen Short Range Transit Plan (2019)

Metro McAllen currently operates nine fixed routes which originate at the Central Station located near Business 83, between 15th and 16th Streets. Metro McAllen also provides ADA complementary paratransit service on a curb-to-curb basis for individuals unable to use the Metro McAllen fixed-route service.

The five-year Short Range Transit Plan presents three service alternatives. While the specifics of each alternative vary, each was designed to improve service frequency, enhance transit service accessibility (walkability) and, increase the number of residences and employment sites in proximity to transit service. Through a variety of public engagement activities, a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) was identified. A "phased" implementation approach is included. The report concludes with a series of route-specific profiles inclusive of recommendations for alignment, bus stops, operating schedule, and likely trip generators.

Brownsville Public Transit Plan (2017)

The Brownsville Public Transit Plan was comprised of an assessment of existing conditions in the Brownsville area, a transit market analysis, the identification of service issues and opportunities, the development of several service scenarios, and final service recommendations. The final recommendations included elements from the service scenarios including immediate, short, and long-term implementation strategies. Detailed route alignments and service schedules for all routes and ADA paratransit services were produced as a result of this plan.

Harlingen-San Benito MPO Public Transportation Comprehensive Operational Analysis and Implementation Plan (2013)

At the time of the report's preparation, Valley Metro functioned as both the local and regional transit service provider in Harlingen, San Benito, and other communities located within the former MPO's jurisdiction/area. The focus of the study was the seven fixed routes which operated therein. As part of its analysis, the consultant identified three distinct (transit) service markets: Harlingen Urban Routes, Regional Limited-Stop Routes, and Small City and Rural Routes. A cornerstone goal of the project was to determine if each of the three markets was being served by the most appropriate type or form of transit service.

With respect to the Harlingen Urban Routes, the consultant concluded: 1) service design should reflect bidirectional service on all routes, 2) adopt a "uniform frequency" service standard (i.e., all stops would be served on an hourly basis in each direction), 3) extend the service so as to operate at least until 8:00 pm, and 4) enhance bus stops so as to include appropriate signage and customer amenities.

With respect to the Regional Limited-Stop Routes, the following recommendations were presented: 1) streamline service so as to reduce the incidence of route deviations, 2) adopt a "uniform frequency" service standard (i.e., all stops would be served every 90 minutes in each direction), 3) adjust service times to more effectively reflect college and university schedules, 4) enhance bus stops/customer amenities and 5) modify the routes so as to provide/offer more one-seat travel options.

Recommendations specific to the Small City and Rural Routes market included: 1) replace traditional fixed-route service with on-demand service, 2) establish two service zones (one in Harlingen and a second in

San Benito), 3) operate 5-day a week service in each zone, and 4) partner with local taxi services to expand fleet capacity as needed.

Transit Plans – Regional and State-wide

Regional Transit Needs Analysis, Alliance Transportation Group (2020)

The Regional Transit Needs Analysis is a 34-page memo prepared in support of the Rio Grande Valley MPO's 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. It included an analysis of existing transit systems, transit needs of the community, and opportunities to guide the RGVMPO and planning partners in the prioritization of future transit investments. Of particular note is the consultant's Transit Propensity analysis which identified areas in Cameron and Hidalgo counties warranting additional/future transit service and (potentially) infrastructure.

While the consultant concluded "transit providers substantially cover key locations and/or populations representative of transit demand," it also concluded there are some areas that should be addressed in future transit investments. These include 1) Hidalgo near the US-Mexico border, 2) northwest of Edinburg, 3) near Weslaco and Mercedes east of McAllen, 4) northwest of Harlingen near Primera, 5) south of Interstate 2 west of Harlingen, and 6) Northeast Brownsville near Cameron Park.

Texas Transit Needs Assessment (2018)

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute prepared a statewide Transit Needs Assessment exploring transit needs in both urban and rural areas. In urban areas, the top three trip purposes were work, shopping/errands, and healthcare (in that order). In rural areas, the use of public transit for healthcare trips (33 percent) far outpaces shopping/errands (20 percent) and work (18 percent) trips.

A gap analysis identified most of Hidalgo and Cameron counties outside the urbanized areas of McAllen and Brownsville as having a coverage gap. It also noted Cameron and Hidalgo county only partially met the span-of-service threshold of 12-hour weekday/eight-hour Saturday or 14-hour weekday for demand-response service.

Transportation Plans (Multimodal) – Local

Rio Grande Valley MPO 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2020)

The RGVMPO was formed in 2019, merging three existing MPOs (Brownsville, Harlingen-San Benito, and Hidalgo County). The MTP focuses on creating and maintaining an efficient multimodal transportation system through the facilitation of regional coordination and prioritization of multimodal transportation projects. It includes strategies designed to coordinate projects to improve regional mobility. These strategies include:

- Expanding and enhancing the range and quality of available travel choices;
- Transportation demand management;
- Complete Streets policies to improve livability and mobility;
- Safe Routes to Schools programs;

- Social behavior change programs to educate residents about alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel; and
- Infrastructure project identification.

Brownsville MPO 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2014)

Prior to the formation of the Rio Grande Valley MPO, the Brownsville MPO was responsible for developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Brownsville Urbanized Area, which comprises a large portion of southern Cameron County. While the MTP does not conduct transit system planning, it looks at public transportation and mobility within the context of the metropolitan area's overall transportation landscape. The MTP included continued efforts for regional public transportation coordination as well as planning for bicycles and pedestrians.

Hidalgo County MPO 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2014)

Prior to the formation of the Rio Grande Valley MPO, the Hidalgo County MPO was responsible for developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the McAllen-Pharr-Edinburg area. Adopted in 2014, the Plan identified priorities for development programs and transportation projects throughout the former Hidalgo County Urbanized Planning Area. The MTP sought to balance proposed transportation expenditure against/with forecast federal, state, and local transportation funding sources.[6]

Harlingen-San Benito 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2014)

Prior to the formation of the Rio Grande Valley MPO, the Harlingen-San Benito MPO was responsible for developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Harlingen and San Benito area. Adopted in 2014, this Plan included an assessment of existing conditions within the region, a vision for the future of the transportation system, and a financial plan to fund the proposed project.

City of South Padre Island Transportation Plan (2011)

At the time of the report's preparation, the City of South Padre Island operated a general public fare-free transit service linking South Padre Island and Port Isabel via four routes. The program utilized a fleet of five shuttle buses, four of which were in revenue service on any given day.

In January 2011, South Padre Island was selected for FTA fast-track funding to support design and construction of a multi-modal transportation facility. The facility location was within TxDOT's Padre Blvd right-of-way, immediately south of the Queen Isabella Causeway.

Historically South Padre Island transportation-related studies have included two goals relevant to the ongoing public transit "conversation": 1) Expand valley transit to include airport access and 2) encourage transportation forms other than the automobile.

---

[6] Source: RGV MPO Active Transportation Plan

Transportation Plans (Multimodal) – State-wide

Texas-Mexico Border Transportation Master Plan (2021)
The Texas-Mexico Border Transportation Master Plan (BTMP) is a comprehensive, multimodal, long-range plan for the Texas-Mexico border region, which includes Cameron and Hidalgo counties. It looks at the safe and efficient transportation of people and goods between Texas and Mexico. Ten border crossings are located in the current project area.

The Plan noted the number of personal vehicle passengers moving northbound across the border decreased significantly (23 percent) between 1996 and 2019, due in part to long wait times. Many crossings are overutilized and require operational and physical improvements. The number of bike and pedestrian crossings, however, increased by 18 percent. There are significant roadway delays, increased traffic, and a need for additional parking areas in the vicinity of the border.

Texas Transportation Plan 2050 (2020)
The Texas Transportation Plan 2050 is the state-wide transportation plan covering a 30-year horizon. During that time, TxDOT anticipates a high rate of growth over the next 30 years in urban areas, though it forecasts little change in Cameron and Willacy counties, with some growth in Hidalgo County. In addition, the statewide share of population age 65 and older is expected to increase from 10 percent to 18 percent.

The Plan includes several non-highway strategies for public transportation:

- Leverage new technology that streamlines transit operations.
- Address transit service gaps identified in the 2019 Transit Needs Assessment.
- Develop a plan for vehicle and facility replacement.
- Address priorities identified by regional planning organizations.

Comprehensive Plans – Individual City/Community

City of San Juan Comprehensive Plan: Envisioning Our Future (2019)
While the City of San Juan's Comprehensive Plan focuses primarily on streets and roads, it does detail specific actions intended to improve mobility through active transportation and access to transit. These include:

- Develop a pedestrian and bicycle plan with an interdepartmental partnership to develop a plan for a network of safe sidewalks, trails, and dedicated lanes that connect parks, schools, churches, and activity centers (including retail establishments and centers).
- Encourage expansion of transit provider routes to serve more parts of the city more frequently.

One Vision, One Harlingen Comprehensive Plan (2016)

The Transportation section of the City of Harlingen's Comprehensive Plan focuses primarily on overall circulation through the community, though it does include several objectives relating to other transportation systems and active transportation. Objective 4 calls for options for pedestrians and bicyclists in key areas, incorporating bicycle facilities and sidewalks especially in areas with increased pedestrian activity and in the vicinity of primary and secondary schools. It also recommends placing a buffer between the sidewalk and the curb to improve pedestrian safety and attractiveness.

Objective 5 focuses on continuing to strengthen other transportation systems, including supporting mass transit (Valley Metro) and expanding opportunities for transportation through policies that support innovative private transportation systems.

Combes Comprehensive Plan (2015)

The Town of Combes does not include recommendations relating to transit in its Comprehensive Plan. However, community outreach and an assessment of pedestrian and bicycle needs resulted in the identification of several priorities, including a need for more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on SH 107 and US 77 Business, as well as sidewalk improvement/completion in the vicinity of the elementary school, the installation of additional crosswalks, and connectivity to Harlingen's bike network.

City of Pharr Comprehensive Plan Update (2015)

While must of the Transportation chapter of the City of Pharr's Comprehensive Plan Update pertains to streets and roads, it also includes a modest discussion of the Bicycle Pavement Marking Improvement Plan, local airports, railroads, and public transit. Of particular note is the statement that "City leaders and citizens have expressed strong interest in increasing bus transportation," as well as the suggestion of adding a second bus to Valley Metro Route 30 to increase service and reduce wait-times.

The Transportation goal included in the chapter states, "The transportation network of the City of Pharr shall provide access to neighborhoods and businesses while serving mobility needs of international, interstate, and intrastate trade." Two objectives include several action items relevant to this project.

> Objective A: Support and improve alternative transportation modes within the City, including pedestrians and bicycles.
> - Action 1: Provide sidewalks and crosswalks on all arterial and collector streets.
> - Action 2: Develop a bikeway system of safe and efficient on-street bikeways and off-street paths to meet the recreational and alternative transportation needs of residents.
> - Action 3: Strengthen coordination efforts with Valley Metro to increase the number of buses, bus stops, and frequency of services for residents and visitors to easily travel through Pharr and neighboring cities.
> - Action 4: Implement plans to mark bike lanes on designated streets.
>
> Objective B: Provide an efficient, safe, and connective transportation system that is coordinated with existing needs and with plans for future growth.
> - Action 2: Work closely with regional transportation planning groups to ensure that regional transportation issues, especially those that directly affect Pharr, are addressed with City input.

City of Hidalgo Comprehensive Plan (2014)

The City of Hidalgo's Comprehensive Plan features a Transportation section that looks at overall circulation through the community. It found the southern half of the city to be severely lacking in sidewalks, despite many of the schools being located on that side of town. It also found a lack of walking trails, though bike lanes were located along many arterials. Unlike other comprehensive plans, the City of Hidalgo proposes a public transit route that integrates with current and proposed bike and walking paths to enhance mobility, as well as links to Valley Metro service.

City of South Padre Island Comprehensive Plan (2014)

The City of South Padre Island include specific recommendations for transit and active transportation within the Mobility chapter of its Comprehensive Plan. It includes the following relevant goals and objectives.

Goal 1: The City shall provide for the safe, effective movement of people and goods.
- Objective 1.1: Develop an efficient, high-quality multimodal system that balances all transportation needs.
  - Key policies:
    - Developments should encourage a convenient walking and bicycling experience.
    - Reliable, convenient, and highly accessible public transportation system should be arranged. Complementary options include taxicabs, pedicabs, and water taxis.
- Objective 1.2: The traffic-carrying capacity of each street shall be preserved and/or enhanced for the system to operate efficiently.

Goal 2: The City shall provide a quality and professional transportation system to the public.
- Objective 2.1: Transportation infrastructure shall be planned well in advance of development to ensure orderly and timely improvements, as the mobility and access needs continue to increase.
- The appearance of the transportation system, including street rights-of-way, should contribute to the character of the City.
  - Key policy:
    - The City may consider the pedestrianization of selected streets by designating areas as pedestrian zones (auto-free zones).

Of particular note is the detailed strategies set forth in the Mobility chapter, including nine strategies specific to active transportation and nine strategies specific to the City's public transportation system.

Imagine Brownsville Comprehensive Plan (2009)

At the time of the Plan's preparation, public transit service in Brownsville was comprised of 14 fixed routes along with a demand-response service. Annual ridership stood at 1.8 million unlinked trips which translated to a transit use per capita of 13 trips.

The study "imagined" future transit in Brownsville as the creation of a network of broad-reaching bus options, translating to increased efficiency of the City's most congested corridors. High-capacity transit

lines would serve as the "back bone" of the system, allowing the balance of the (lower productivity) routes to function as a feeder system. It was believed that such an arrangement would support transition to a Bus Rapid Transit service. While not specifically stated, it is believed this approach would 1) result in increased frequency as well as capacity along key corridors while 2) ensuring the availability of transit service (coverage) throughout less-dense portions of Brownsville.

Foresight McAllen Comprehensive Plan (2007)

The McAllen Comprehensive Plan cites "a dense and comprehensive grid of bikeways, walking trails, and other non-motorized linkages" as being one of the highest priorities among residents. Goals specific to bike and pedestrian transportation focus on long-range planning, connectivity, and improved accessibility. Specific recommendations include planning, zoning, and development requirements as well as a sidewalk inventory and capital improvement plan.

The Plan also recognizes the role of public transportation in the community, though cites the challenge of sufficient funding to meet local needs. Goals focus on increasing transit services and options, including regional services; funding; public education regarding transit; and planning and development activities supporting transit. Specific recommendations include schedule coordination, funding research, additional marketing, zoning changes, transit infrastructure inventory, and increased participation in the regional transit coordination committee.

An update to the City's Comprehensive Plan was put out to bid in FY 2021. The contract was awarded in October 2020.

Recent/Current Transit Projects

Brownsville

The Jose Colunga B-Metro Maintenance Facility recently underwent a complete renovation which included replacement of the exterior shell, extensive internal remodeling, structural repairs, and installation of flooring and safety features in the maintenance bays. The maintenance facility remained in operation throughout the renovation.

Harlingen

In September 2021, the City of Harlingen awarded a contract for the design and construction of a $5.6 million public transit center located on North T Street. The first of its kind in Harlingen, the facility will serve as northern Cameron county's public transportation hub. Funded through an FTA grant, the 1.8-acre facility will feature six bus bays, ticket counters, a fast food restaurant, retail shops, and office space. The project has a four-month design phase and 18-month construction phase. The new transit center, among the top 13 projects on the City's priority list, was included in the 2016 City of Harlingen 10-Year Master Plan.

McAllen

In April 2021, the City McAllen began construction of a new Valley Metro transfer station and maintenance facility. Sited on 16 acres, the new facility will be located on 23rd Street, north of Buddy Owens Boulevard in McAllen.

South Padre Island

The City received a TxDOT $3.5 mm grant for the design and construction of the South Padre Island Multimodal Facility. The facility will function as the transportation hub of eastern Cameron County and Gateway to South Padre Island. The center will include passenger and driver amenities, a park and ride facility, car share, bike share. info kiosks, charter bus parking and Island Metro office space.

Active Transportation Plans

A series of plans developed over the past decade address specific conditions and recommendations related to bicycle and pedestrian transportation, many of which focus on an active transportation network that enhances mobility. These plans are listed below.

- RGVMPO Active Transportation Plan (2020)
- Hidalgo County MPO Bicycle Plan (2018)
- The Active Plan: Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan (2016)
- Hidalgo County MPO Pedestrian Plan (2016)
- Harlingen-San Benito MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2016)
- Harlingen Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2016)
- San Benito Downtown Revitalization Plan (2016)
- San Benito Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2015)
- Connecting Brownsville: Bicycle and Trail Master Plan (2013)
- South Padre Island Parks and Open Space Master Plan (2013)
- City of Harlingen Trails Master Plan (2010)

This page intentionally blank.

Chapter 7 | Vision, Mission, Goals, & Objectives

7.1 Mission Statement

The Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP), which served as the steering committee for the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan, was formed to improve the coordinated delivery of public transportation in Texas' Lower Rio Grande Valley. The RTAP's goals focus on generating efficiencies that encourage and increase public transportation ridership growth; improve customer satisfaction; foster cooperation and coordination between stakeholders; share resources and knowledge; and advocate for regional objectives. This supports the LRGVDC's mission of promoting cooperation among local units of government and providing forums and opportunities for them to work with economic interests and citizen groups in order to improve the region's health, safety, and general welfare and to plan for future development.

7.2 Vision Statement

It is the vision of the LRGVDC that through effective planning and service delivery, people and goods will be able to move throughout the region safely and efficiently by using a seamless multi-modal transportation network. This broad vision reflects the more specific goals of human mobility in the region.

7.3 Goals and Objectives

The RCTP goals and objectives established by the Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) prior to the 2017 planning process remain highly relevant into the current plan, and additional efforts are still required to achieve them. The five individual goals all support a single overarching goal:

> *To help provide for more trips for more people while providing cost-effective high-quality and safe transportation for our community.*

Recommendations presented in Chapter 5 directly support these five goals. Each goal is supported by one or more objectives, several of which have been expanded to be more measurable and achievable.

Goal 1: Improve the quality of the customer's transit experience.

- Objective 1: Improve service delivery by improving reliability, connectivity, and access.
- Objective 2: Improve customer service by offering expanded access to information, especially across multiple operators/providers.

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

- Objective 1: Greatly expand transit in the region.
- Objective 2: Public transit agencies will continuously integrate with multiple modes of non-traditional transportation.
- Objective 3: The MPO will develop a regional map identifying sidewalks, hike and bike trails, bike lanes, bus routes, bus stops, and bus shelters.
- Objective 4: Expand the vanpool program.
- Objective 5: Add projects from the strategies and partnerships of the 2021 Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan.

Goal 3: Coordinate transit agency functions.

- Objective 1: Consolidate information into a one-stop website, app, and telephone information center where a person can get detailed, up-to-date information on all regional travel services.
- Objective 2: Continue with regional training.
- Objective 3: Uniform standards for public transit agencies with respect to fleet standards (urban, rural, commuter, and ADA paratransit), bus stops/shelters (amenities and signage), brochures and time schedules, and system maps.
- Objective 4: RTAP recommends anytime there are changes to public transit time schedules, route alignments, or the addition/subtraction of routes that they inform each other of such changes.

Goal 4: Improve the image of transit across the region.

- Objective 1: RTAP will continuously identify opportunities for transit promotion campaigns such as holiday promotions, Dump the Pump Day, and Green Living Festival.
- Objective 2: RTAP will develop a coordinated outreach strategy to identify and educate stakeholders based on the findings of the 2021 Regional Coordination Plan in FY 2022.
- Objective 3: RTAP will organize an annual newsletter to inform and educate local, state, and federal officials and the general public on public transportation.

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

- Objective 1: Emphasis will be placed on a dedicated funding source for transit.
- Objective 2: Transit providers will present an annual availability of funds report to the RTAP and partner agencies including lapsing funds.
- Objective 3: Non-transit agencies will request their annual state/regional transportation budget report to present to the RTAP in March of each year.
- Objective 4: RTAP will strategize the use of all previously identified funding, subject to their respective requirements.
- Objective 5: Non-transit agency in-kind match will be identified as needed.

Chapter 8 | Capacity to Sustain Planning and Implement Plan

8.1 Capacity to Sustain Planning

Organizational capacity

The Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) is responsible for the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Cameron and Hidalgo counties. It was formed through consolidation of three previous MPO organizations in Brownsville, Harlingen-San Benito, and Hidalgo County. The LRGVDC serves as the fiscal and administrative agent for the RGVMPO.

The RGVMPO administers all federal funds for urban transportation improvements in the project area, as well as FTA Section 5310 and 5339 funds. The projects listed in Exhibit 8.1.1 through 8.1.4 under Sections 5307, 5310, and 5339 are included in TxDOT's 2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan.

Exhibit 8.1.1 RGVMPO federal transit funding forecast FY 2021[7]

Fiscal Year	Project	Project Sponsor	Federal Funding Source	Federal Funding	State/Other Funding	Fiscal Year Cost
2021	Capital Improvement Plan (Fleet & Bus Stops)	LRGVDC	5307	$607,452	---	$607,452
2021	San Benito Sidewalk Project	LRGVDC	5307	$300,000	$132,000	$432,000
2021	Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$280,283	$56,057	$336,340
2021	Operations – Harlingen Urbanized Area	LRGVDC	5307	$1,000,000	$1,000,000	$2,000,000
2021	Administration, Operations	McAllen	---	---	$210,057	$210,057
2021	Preventive Maintenance	McAllen	5307	$900,000	$225,000	$1,125,000
2021	Capital	LRGVDC	5310	$584,124	$146,031	$730,155
2021	Capital	LRGVDC	5339	$532,369	$133,092	$665,461
2021	Operations	LRGVDC	----	$400,000	$350,709	$750,709
2021	Other Capital Program Item (PM)	Brownsville	5307	$1,090,716	$272,679	$1,363,395
2021	Operating Assistance	Brownsville	5307	$1,569,180	$1,569,180	$3,138,360
2021	Marketing	McAllen	5307	$109,570	$55,985	$165,555
2021	Training	McAllen	5307	$50,000	$12,500	$62,500
2021	Capital – Mechanics, Assistance, and Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$385,000	$96,250	$481,250
2021	Hidalgo County Transit Capital Improvement Program	LRGVDC	5307	$420,023	$230,006	$650,029
2021	Operations	LRGVDC	5307	$2,100,000	$2,100,000	$4,200,000
2021	Improve Bus Stop Safety and Comfort	Brownsville	TIGER	$539,859	$1,075,141	$1,615,000

---

[7] 2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, Texas Department of Transportation, pages 622-628

Fiscal Year	Project	Project Sponsor	Federal Funding Source	Federal Funding	State/Other Funding	Fiscal Year Cost
2021	Improve Operations and Passenger Facility (Phase 2)	Brownsville	TIGER	$3,140,141	$1,358,997	$4,499,138
2021	Administration, Operations	McAllen	---	---	$210,057	$210,057
2021	Capital/Operations/Administration	LRGVDC	5310	$44,895	$8,979	$53,874
2021	Bus Procurement – Replacement	McAllen	5307	$2,610,929	---	$2,610,929
2021	Accessibility Improvements & Pathways	McAllen	5307	$2,000,000	$2,000,000	$4,000,000
2021	New Facility Construction	McAllen	5307	$3,650,319	---	$3,650,319
			Total Funds	**$22,314,860**	**$11,242,720**	**$33,557,580**

Exhibit 8.1.2 RGVMPO federal transit funding forecast FY 2022[8]

Fiscal Year	Project	Project Sponsor	Federal Funding Source	Federal Funding	State/Other Funding	Fiscal Year Cost
2022	Capital Improvement Plan	LRGVDC	5307	$581,665	---	$581,665
2022	Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$200,000	$40,000	$240,000
2022	Operations – Harlingen Urbanized Area	LRGVDC	5307	$1,245,787	$1,245,787	$2,491,574
2022	Administration/Operations	LRGVDC	---	---	$210,057	$210,057
2022	Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$2,217,192	$454,124	$2,671,316
2022	Operating Assistance	LRGVDC	5307	$687,831	$687,831	$1,375,662
2022	Capital	LRGVDC	5310	$584,124	$146,031	$730,155
2022	Capital	LRGVDC	5339	$532,369	$133,092	$665,461
2022	Operations	LRGVDC	---	---	$250,709	$250,709
2022	Operations	LRGVDC	5307	$2,100,000	$2,100,000	$4,200,000
2022	Capital – Mechanics, Assistants, and Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$685,000	$96,250	$781,250
2022	Hidalgo County Transit Capital Improvement Program	LRGVDC	5307	$120,023	$230,006	$350,029
2022	Capital	Brownsville	5339	$303,718	$53,597	$357,315
2022	Other Capital Program Item (PM)	Brownsville	5310	$166,311	$41,579	$207,890
2022	Planning Assistance – Short Range/Travel	Brownsville	5307	$26,596	$6,649	$33,245
2022	Other Capital Program Item (PM)	Brownsville	5307	$1,090,716	$272,679	$1,363,395
2022	Operating Assistance	Brownsville	5307	$1,569,180	$1,569,180	$3,138,360
			Total Funds	**$12,110,512**	**$7,537,571**	**$19,648,083**

---

[8] 2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, Texas Department of Transportation, pages 629-633

Exhibit 8.1.3 RGVMPO federal transit funding forecast FY 2023[9]

Fiscal Year	Project	Project Sponsor	Federal Funding Source	Federal Funding	State/Other Funding	Fiscal Year Cost
2023	Hidalgo County Transit Capital Improvement Program	LRGVDC	5307	$420,023	$230,006	$650,029
2023	Capital, Operations, Administration	LRGVDC	5310	$44,895	$8,979	$53,874
2023	Administration/Operation	McAllen	---	---	$210,057	$210,057
2023	Preventive Maintenance	McAllen	5307	$2,217,192	$554,298	$2,771,490
2023	Operating Assistance	McAllen	5307	$687,831	$687,831	$1,375,662
2023	Capital	LRGVDC	5310	$584,124	$146,031	$730,155
2023	Capital	LRGVDC	5339	$532,369	$133,092	$665,461
2023	Operations	LRGVDC	5307	$400,000	$350,709	$750,709
2023	Operations	LRGVDC	5307	$2,100,000	$2,100,000	$4,200,000
2023	Capital – Mechanics, Assistants, and Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$385,000	$96,250	$481,250
2023	San Benito Sidewalk Project	LRGVDC	5307	$300,000	$132,000	$432,000
2023	Capital Improvement Plan (Fleet & Bus Stops)	LRGVDC	5307	$607,452	---	$607,452
2023	Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$280,283	$56,057	$336,340
2023	Operations – Harlingen Urbanized Area	LRGVDC	5307	$1,000,000	$1,000,000	$2,000,000
2023	Capital	Brownsville	5339	$303,718	$53,597	$357,315
2023	Other Capital Program Items (PM)	Brownsville	5310	$166,311	$41,579	$207,890
2023	Planning Assistance – Short Range/Travel	Brownsville	5307	$26,596	$6,649	$33,245
2023	Other Capital Program Items (PM)	Brownsville	5307	$1,090,716	$272,679	$1,363,395
2023	Operating Assistance	Brownsville	5307	$1,569,180	$1,569,180	$3,138,360
			Total Funds	$12,715,690	$7,648,994	$20,364,684

Exhibit 8.1.4 RGVMPO federal transit funding forecast FY 2024[10]

Fiscal Year	Project	Project Sponsor	Federal Funding Source	Federal Funding	State/Other Funding	Fiscal Year Cost
2024	Administration/Operation	McAllen	---	---	$210,057	$210,057
2024	Preventive Maintenance	McAllen	5307	$2,217,192	$554,298	$2,771,490
2024	Operating Assistance	McAllen	5307	$687,831	$687,831	$1,375,662
2024	Capital	LRGVDC	5310	$584,124	$146,031	$730,155
2024	Capital	LRGVDC	5339	$532,369	$133,092	$665,461
2024	Operations	LRGVDC	---	---	$250,709	$250,709
2024	Operations	LRGVDC	5307	$2,100,000	$2,100,000	$4,200,000
2024	Capital – Mechanics, Assistance, & Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$685,000	$96,250	$781,250

Fiscal Year	Project	Project Sponsor	Federal Funding Source	Federal Funding	State/Other Funding	Fiscal Year Cost
2024	Hidalgo County Transit Capital Improvement Program	LRGVDC	5307	$120,023	$230,006	$350,029
2024	Capital Improvement Plan	LRGVDC	5307	$581,665	---	$581,665
2024	Preventive Maintenance	LRGVDC	5307	$200,000	$40,000	$240,000
2024	Operations – Harlingen Urbanized Area	LRGVDC	5307	$1,245,787	$1,245,787	$2,491,574
2024	Capital	Brownsville	5339	$303,718	$53,597	$357,315
2024	Other Capital Program Items (PM)	Brownsville	5310	$166,311	$41,579	$207,890
2024	Planning Assistance – Short Range/Travel	Brownsville	5307	$26,596	$6,649	$33,245
2024	Other Capital Program Items (PM)	Brownsville	5307	$1,090,716	$272,679	$1,363,395
2024	Operating Assistance	Brownsville	5307	$1,569,180	$1,569,180	$3,138,360
			Total Funds	**$12,110,512**	**$7,637,745**	**$19,748,257**

As Valley Metro, the LRGVDC is the lead agency for regional transportation in the Rio Grande Valley. It coordinates the Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP), which serves as a steering committee for regional coordination planning. It also serves as the Rural Transit District for Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy, and Zapata counties. FTA Section 5311 funds are administered through the Texas Department of Transportation.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement

The LRGVDC currently engages stakeholders in regional planning activities through the Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP). Regularly scheduled meetings are a forum for transit providers; health and human service organizations; workforce agencies; and representatives for persons with disabilities, the elderly, low-income, veterans, and children/youth. Best practices and successes as well as transportation deficiencies and possible solutions are shared and discussed. Steering committee meetings have further activities toward meeting transportation needs within the region. A list of RTAP members is included in Appendix D.

8.2 Implementation Priorities

While all of the recommendations identified herein are important, some should receive higher prioritization due to urgency in solving a particular transportation issue, ease of implementation, or the presence of available funding. The 24 recommendations presented herein are divided into three priority groups: Short-term, Mid-term, and Long-term. Inclusion of a recommendation in a longer-range tier does not indicate lesser importance. Rather, higher priority may be placed on recommendations that can be implemented relatively quickly or without additional dedicated funding. Lower-tier recommendations will generally require additional funding to be secured or the negotiation of inter-agency agreements. Progress toward each recommendation should be reviewed on an annual basis using the performance measures identified in Chapter 9.

Priority: Short-term

- Recommandation 2: Synchronize future service changes.
- Recommendation 5: Implement recommendations presented in the 2030 Transit Development Plan.
- Recommendation 6: Improve schedule coordination thereby reducing wait-time.
- Recommendation 8: Link South Texas College campuses in McAllen and Weslaco.
- Recommendation 15: Expand public awareness (promote) Valley Metro's Flex route service feature.
- Recommendation16: Provide more detailed transit service information.
- Recommendation 17: Expand public access to transit service information.
- Recommendation 18: Implement a travel training program.
- Recommendation 21: Improve access to public transit information via senior centers.

Priority: Mid-term

- Recommendation 1: Work with social service organizations to subsidize the purchase of multi-ride fare media.
- Recommendation 3: Provide regional trip planning via Google Maps.
- Recommendation 4: Develop partnership with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to address mobility needs outside regular service hours.
- Recommendation 7: Improve service frequency for inter-county transit service.
- Recommendation 11: Expand local service in San Benito.
- Recommendation 12: Expand transit service to include neighborhoods around Harlingen.
- Recommendation 13: Realign Edinburg transit routings.
- Recommendation 14: Produce a regional transit guide.
- Recommendation 19: Evaluate practicality of joint recruitment and training of drivers.
- Recommendation 22: Improve local bus stops.
- Recommendation 23: Prepare a Bus Stop Improvement Plan for each operator.
- Recommendation 24: Increase capital (vehicle) funding for non-profit operators.

Priority: Long-term
- Recommendation 9: Evaluate transit service delivery in Willacy County.
- Recommendation 10: Introduce service to McAllen Veteran's Service Office.
- Recommendation 20: Implement a one-stop (transportation information) call center.

Chapter 9 | Performance Measures to Evaluate Effectiveness

9.1 Local Performance Measures

In addition to the state-wide performance metrics (discussed in Section 9.2), each TxDOT Planning Region is responsible for identifying a series of local metrics for each gap identified in the Coordinated Plan. These metrics should objectively measure the extent to which each gap was filled or priority addressed.

As the lead agency, it is the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's responsibility to collect data and otherwise monitor the status of the recommendations set forth in Chapter 5 of this Plan. One or more performance measures are indicated for each recommendation, as well as what data should be collected in order to document progress.

Ideally, all recommendations would be implemented prior to the next Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan update. However, in reality, this is unlikely to happen. Therefore, it is essential the LRGVDC document progress toward implementation of each recommendation, even if a decision was made not to move forward with implementation. This is especially important for recommendations that call for the region to "consider" or "investigate" a program or strategy. If the recommendation was investigated or considered and the answer was determined to be "no" or "not now," that should be documented and reflected in the next Coordinated Transportation Plan update.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Proposed Actions	Assessment
1	Work with social service organizations to subsidize the purchase of multi-ride fare media.	Medium	• Number of organizations contacted quarterly. • Number of bulk fare sales agreements completed.	Number of passes purchased.
2	Synchronize scheduled service changes.	Short	• Consensus regarding number and timing of service changes annually. • Joint review of proposed service changes.	Adherence to service change schedule.
3	Provide regional trip planning through Google Maps.	Medium	• Consensus regarding timeline for updating each operator's service information. • Tracking user activity on a monthly basis.	Number of operators available on Google Maps.
4	Develop a partnership with Transportation Network Companies to address mobility needs outside regular service hours.	Medium	• Identify and qualify prospective TNC partners. • Develop pilot program scope, budget, and timeframe. • Secure funding. • Prepare and present draft agreement. • Program marketing. • Track activity (and impact) on a monthly basis.	Documentation of outreach to TNCs, number of rides provided, and cost per ride.
5	Implement recommendations included in the 2030 Transit Development Plan and other localized planning efforts designed to improve service delivery and coordination as appropriate.	Short	• Determine status of 2030 TDP recommendations. • Consensus regarding implementation priorities. • Prepare expense and funding budget.	Implementation by established date.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Proposed Actions	Assessment
6	Improve schedule coordination between routes and between operators/providers, thereby reducing "wait-time" between buses.	Short	• Identify key inter-service transfer locations (beyond simply transit centers). • Consensus regarding target wait-time standard. • Prioritize transfer locations based on highest daily activity (i.e., greatest impact on transit customer). • Joint review of proposed service changes. • Consensus regarding timing of proposed service changes.	Assess impact via periodic customer engagement.
7	Improve service frequency for inter-county transit service.	Medium	• Assess line-by-line performance (specific to inter-county bus ridership). • Identify top "route candidates" for service frequency enhancement and timing (roll-out). • Identify funding. • Undertake targeted marketing.	Track activity (and impact) on a monthly basis.
8	Link South Texas College campuses in McAllen and Weslaco.	Short	• Confirm the "need" for restart of inter-campus link. • Identify annual service cost. • Identify funding (including potential student fee). • Implement appropriate marketing.	Track ridership and cost per ride.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Proposed Actions	Assessment
9	Evaluate the delivery of transit service in Willacy County.	Long	• Evaluate historic transit use patterns in Willacy County. • Conduct effective community engagement activities to quantify demand and identify community priorities. • Compile cost-effective service alternatives. • Consensus regarding alternative with greatest ROI. • Implement locally preferred service option. • Undertake targeted marketing.	Track ridership and cost per ride.
10	Introduce service to the McAllen Veterans Services Office.	Long	• Objectively assess "want" versus "need." • Assess impact of potential service revision. • Identify opportunities for joint organization funding contributions. • If implemented, undertake targeted marketing.	Track ridership and cost per ride.
11	Expand local service in San Benito.	Medium	• Evaluate historic transit use in San Benito. • Conduct effective community engagement to quantify demand and identify community's priorities. • Identify cost-effective service alternatives. • Consensus regarding locally preferred service option. • Service implementation. • Undertake targeted marketing.	Track ridership and cost per ride.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Proposed Actions	Assessment
12	Expand service to include neighborhoods around Harlingen.	Medium	• Evaluate historic transit use in Harlingen. • Conduct effective community engagement to quantify demand and identify community's priorities. • Identify cost-effective service alternatives. • Consensus regarding locally-preferred service option. • Service implementation. • Undertake targeted marketing.	Track ridership and cost per ride.
13	Consider realigning route paths for Valley Metro routes traveling along University Dr. and Closner Blvd. in Edinburg to minimize duplication.	Medium	• Assess line-by-line performance for routes serving Edinburg. • Determine cost impact of proposed service modifications. • Identify funding. • Undertake targeted marketing.	Track ridership and cost per ride.
14	Prepare and distribute a regional transit guide.	Medium	• Consensus regarding guide content. • Determine design, production, distribution cost. • Identify potential underwriting partners.	Annual units distributed, number of distribution locations
15	Expand awareness of Valley Metro's Flex route feature.	Short	• Create marketing campaign. • Prepare, produce, distribute associated collateral.	Track ridership and cost per ride.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Proposed Actions	Assessment
16	Provide more detailed service information.	Short	• Review public input received via the various Coordinated Plan public engagement activities. • Determine scope of enhanced information campaign. • Market-test the draft/concept materials. • Select highest impact collateral. • Finalize design, produce, distribute.	Assess impact via periodic customer engagement.
17	Enhance access to service information.	Short	• Review public input received via the various Coordinated Plan public engagement activities. • Identify preferred information distribution channels for historically transit-dependent persons. • Determine scope of enhanced service distribution campaign. • Identify top information distribution channels/media. • Market-test effort. Track impact.	Assess impact via periodic customer engagement.
18	Implement a travel training program.	Short	• Consensus as to "most qualified" entity to lead effort. • Create project in-house or via consultant. • Identify monthly/quarterly activity targets (i.e., number of presentations, number of individuals trained, etc.). • Promote travel training opportunity. • Schedule initial sessions. • Track impact.	Number of individuals trained. Periodic feedback/ satisfaction survey.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Proposed Actions	Assessment
19	Consider conducting joint recruitment and training of drivers, including non-profit operators.	Medium	• Determine feasibility (legality) of joint recruitment and/or training. • Follow-up with stakeholder organizations indicating prior interest. • Calculate cost and anticipated benefit. • Create program either in-house or via consultant. • Implement.	Number of organizations engaged. Periodic feedback from trainees.
20	Implement a one-stop call center.	Long	• Determine scope of potential service offerings. • Calculate annual operating cost. • Identify funding opportunities. • Consensus as to "most qualified" provider. • Implement on phased approach.	Call activity. Impact on ridership.
21	Improve access to information about transportation offerings provided through senior centers.	Short	• Review public input received via the various Coordinated Plan public engagement activities. • Determine scope of enhanced information campaign. • Market-test the draft/concept collateral. • Select highest-impact collateral. • Finalize design, produce, distribute.	AAA list of senior centers; local senior center websites. Periodic feedback.
22	Improve rural bus stops to provide a clear, ADA-accessible path of travel.	Medium	• Consensus regarding bust stop standards in rural areas. • Identify top target locations in each community. • Calculate improvement costs (one-time and ongoing). • Identify funding sources/sponsorship opportunities. • Implement incrementally.	Number of sites improved. Periodic customer feedback.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Proposed Actions	Assessment
23	Prepare Bus Stop Inventories and Bus Stop Improvement Plans for each operator.	Medium	• Conduct 100-percent bus stop inventory including stop amenities. • Identify top improvement locations in each community. • Consensus regarding annual improvements budget. • Identify funding sources/sponsorship opportunities. • Implement incrementally.	Number of sites improved. Periodic customer feedback.
24	Increase capital (vehicle) funding for non-profit operators.	Medium	• Review input received from community stakeholders providing in-house transportation. • Determine if capital budget "short fall" exists. • Review vehicle replacement standards, qualifying criteria, scoring criteria, etc. • Identify alternative funding opportunities (beyond traditional FTA capital).	Increase in total funding availability. Number of vehicles purchased/replaced.

9.2 Statewide Performance Measures

TxDOT provides a regular assessment of each Planning Region's status with respect to six standard performance metrics. The most recent assessment was issued for FY 2020. Metrics for each standard from that assessment are provided below.

Exhibit 9.2.1 Snapshot of performance metrics

Performance metric	Status 2018	Status 2019	Status 2020
Active, formal partnerships	18	4	5
Organizations or individuals that received information about regional transportation planning activities	15	3	3
Organizations or individuals that actively participated in regional transportation planning activities	15	18	18
Strategies, goals, or objectives that moved from the planning phase to the implementation phase	5	2	2
Fully achieved strategies, goals, and objectives	0	1	4
Newly identified needs, gaps, inefficiencies	0	0	1

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, as the lead agency for regional transportation coordination in Planning Region 21, is responsible for monitoring the status of each of the state-wide performance metrics for annual reporting. Such monitoring will require the following the following data collection:

- Documentation of all active, formal transportation partnerships (contracts for service, funding agreements, etc.).
- Documentation of all individuals and organizations receiving information about regional transportation planning activities (at a minimum, Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel meetings).
- Documentation of all individuals and organizations participating in regional transportation planning activities (at a minimum, Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel meetings).
- Status of goals, objectives, and recommendations (to determine whether they have moved from a planning phase to an implementation phase, or whether they have been fully achieved).
- Documentation of any newly identified needs, gaps, or inefficiencies.

This page intentionally blank.

Appendix A | Community Survey

This page intentionally blank.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Regional Transportation Coordination Plan
Community Survey

As a resident of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, your input is important, regardless of whether you currently use public transportation (i.e., bus or dial-a-ride), non-profit transportation services (i.e., social service organizations), or private transportation services (i.e., taxis, shuttles, etc.). Please complete this survey by October 15, 2021. Online survey can be completed at:
www.LRGVtransportationsurvey.com

1. **In which county do you currently live?**
   ❑ Cameron ❑ Hidalgo ❑ Willacy ❑ Other (specify): _____

   1a. What is your home community? _____

2. **Do you mostly travel... (select only one)**
   ❑ Within your home county ❑ Outside your home county ❑ Both

3. **Please select the method of transportation you typically use for the stipulated purpose or destination. Select only one response for each purpose or destination.**

	Drive alone	Drive or ride with others	Ride the bus	Walk	Ride a bicycle	Taxi, Lyft, or Uber	Other (specify)
a. Work	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑ _____
What/where is your most frequent destination?							
b. Medical/healthcare	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑ _____
What/where is your most frequent destination?							
c. School/training	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑ _____
What/where is your most frequent destination?							
d. Shopping/personal trips	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑ _____
What/where is your most frequent destination?							

4. **Please tell us about the ease or difficulty you face in making each of the four primary trip types.**

   a. **Work**
   ❑ Always able to get there
   ❑ Usually able to get there
   ❑ Can get there but takes a long time
   ❑ Sometimes difficult due to lack of transportation
   ❑ Often difficult due to lack of transportation

   c. **School/training**
   ❑ Always able to get there
   ❑ Usually able to get there
   ❑ Can get there but takes a long time
   ❑ Sometimes difficult due to lack of transportation
   ❑ Often difficult due to lack of transportation

   b. **Medical/healthcare**
   ❑ Always able to get there
   ❑ Usually able to get there
   ❑ Can get there but takes a long time
   ❑ Sometimes difficult due to lack of transportation
   ❑ Often difficult due to lack of transportation

   d. **Shopping/personal trips**
   ❑ Always able to get there
   ❑ Usually able to get there
   ❑ Can get there but takes a long time
   ❑ Sometimes difficult due to lack of transportation
   ❑ Often difficult due to lack of transportation

5. **How familiar are you with public transportation in the county or community in which you live?**
   ❑ Very familiar ❑ Not at all familiar
   ❑ Somewhat familiar ❑ No opinion
   ❑ Not very familiar

6. **Have you used public transportation within the last 12 months?**
   ❑ Yes → **Continue** to Question 7
   ❑ No → **Skip** to Question 8

Turn over to continue →

7. **If you have ridden public transportation in the last 12 months, which service(s) did you use? (check all that apply)**

    ☐ Brownsville Metro ☐ Island Metro
    ☐ JagExpress ☐ McAllen Metro
    ☐ Metro Connect ☐ Greyhound
    ☐ Valley Metro ☐ Valley Transit
    ☐ Don't know/can't remember
    ☐ Other (specify): _____

8. **How do you usually obtain information about public transportation? (check all that apply)**

    ☐ Printed schedules/brochures
    ☐ Transit provider website
    ☐ Other website (specify): _____
    ☐ Telephone ☐ From friends or family
    ☐ At the bus stop ☐ From the bus driver
    ☐ Other (specify): _____
    ☐ I have not looked for/used information about public transportation.

9. **What type of public transportation improvements would you prefer to be made/introduced? (select up to three)**

    ☐ Better schedule coordination
    ☐ Shorter travel time
    ☐ More frequent service
    ☐ Improved access to service information
    ☐ Online ticket sales
    ☐ More inter-city service
    ☐ Later evening service
    ☐ Nothing
    ☐ Other (specify): _____

10. **Do you typically use a wheelchair or other mobility device (such as a motorized scooter, walker, etc.)?**

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. **How do you typically travel?**

    ☐ Drive myself ☐ Ride with friend/family
    ☐ Walk/bike ☐ Taxi/Lyft/Uber
    ☐ Public transit ☐ Other _____

12. **Do you or any members of your household use transportation provided by a social service organization, healthcare provider, school, or other private or non-profit organization?**

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

    12a. If yes, which one?

    _____

13. **What is your gender?**

    ☐ Male ☐ Female
    ☐ Other ☐ Decline to state

14. **What category includes your age?**

    ☐ Under 18 years ☐ 25-44 years ☐ 65 years or older
    ☐ 18-24 years ☐ 45-64 years ☐ Decline to state

15. **Please describe your current employment status.**

    ☐ Employed part-time (seasonally) (not a student)
    ☐ Employed part-time (year-round) (not a student)
    ☐ Employed full-time (not a student)
    ☐ High school or middle school student
    ☐ Higher education student (not employed)
    ☐ Higher education student (employed)
    ☐ Not employed and not a student
    ☐ Retired ☐ Decline to state

16. **Which language(s) do you speak at home? (check all that apply)**

    ☐ English ☐ Spanish
    ☐ Other (specify): _____

17. **How comfortable are you speaking English?**

    ☐ Very comfortable/native speaker ☐ Not at all
    ☐ Somewhat comfortable ☐ Decline to state

18. **What is your annual household income?**

    ☐ Less than $25,000 ☐ $100,000-$149,999
    ☐ $25,000-$49,999 ☐ $150,000 or more
    ☐ $50,000-$74,999 ☐ Prefer not to answer
    ☐ $75,000-$99,999

19. **Of the following categories, how many people live in your household (including yourself)?**

    Children (age 10 and under) _____
    Youth (age 10-18) _____
    Adults (age 19-64) _____
    Seniors (age 65 and older) _____

20. **Do you have a disability that impacts your personal mobility?**

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

21. **Do you have access to a personal vehicle?**

    ☐ Yes, all the time ☐ No
    ☐ Yes, some of the time

22. **Tell us anything else you would like us to know about your personal, household, or community transportation needs.**

    _____

    _____

    Thank you for participating. To be entered into a random drawing for one of several $25 VISA gift cards, please enter your name and contact info. All information will be kept confidential.
    First Name: _____

    Phone or email: _____

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Regional Transportation Coordination Plan
Encuesta Comunitaria

Independientemente si actualmente utiliza transporte público (autobús o dial-a-ride), servicios de transporte sin fines de lucro (organizaciones de servicios sociales), o servicios de transporte privado (taxis, servicios de traslados, etc.), como residente del Lower Rio Grande Valley, su opinión es importante. La encuesta en línea se puede completar en: **www.LRGVtransportationsurvey.com**

1. **¿En qué condado vive actualmente?**
   ☐ Cameron   ☐ Hidalgo   ☐ Willacy   ☐ Otro (especificar): _____
   1a. ¿Cual es tu comunidad de origen? _____

2. **Mayormente viaja... (seleccione sólo una opción)**
   ☐ Dentro de su condado de origen   ☐ Fuera de su condado de origen   ☐ Ambas opciones

3. **Seleccione el método de transporte que generalmente utiliza para el propósito o destino mencionado. Seleccione sólo una respuesta para cada propósito o destino.**

	Conducir solo	Conducir o viajar con otros	Viajar en autobus	Caminar	Conducir bicicleta	Taxi, Lyft, o Uber	Orto (especificar)
a. Trabajo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ _____
¿Cuál es su destino más frecuente?							
b. Atención médica/de salud	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ _____
¿Cuál es su destino más frecuente?							
c. Escuela/formacion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ _____
¿Cuál es su destino más frecuente?							
d. Compras/viajes personales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ _____
¿Cuál es su destino más frecuente?							

4. **Cuéntenos qué tan fácil o difícil es realizar cada uno de estos tipos de viajes principales.**

   a. **Trabajo**
   ☐ Siempre se puede llegar
   ☐ Por lo general se puede llegar
   ☐ Se puede llegar, pero se tarda mucho tiempo
   ☐ A veces es dificil debido a la falta de transporte
   ☐ A menudo es dificil debido a la falta de transporte

   c. **Escuela/formacion**
   ☐ Siempre se puede llegar
   ☐ Por lo general se puede llegar
   ☐ Se puede llegar, pero se tarda mucho tiempo
   ☐ A veces es dificil debido a la falta de transporte
   ☐ A menudo es dificil debido a la falta de transporte

   b. **Atención médica/de salud**
   ☐ Siempre se puede llegar
   ☐ Por lo general se puede llegar
   ☐ Se puede llegar, pero se tarda mucho tiempo
   ☐ A veces es dificil debido a la falta de transporte
   ☐ A menudo es dificil debido a la falta de transporte

   d. **Compras/viajes personales**
   ☐ Siempre se puede llegar
   ☐ Por lo general se puede llegar
   ☐ Se puede llegar, pero se tarda mucho tiempo
   ☐ A veces es dificil debido a la falta de transporte
   ☐ A menudo es dificil debido a la falta de transporte

5. **¿Qué tan familiarizado está con el transporte público en el condado en el que vive?**
   ☐ Muy familiarizado
   ☐ Un poco familiarizado
   ☐ No muy familiarizado
   ☐ Para nada familiarizado
   ☐ No opino

6. **¿Ha utilizado el transporte público en los últimos 12 meses?**
   ☐ Sí → **Continue** con la Pregunta 7
   ☐ No → **Pase** a la Pregunta 8

7. **Si ha viajado en transporte público en los últimos 12 meses, ¿Cual(es) servicio(s) utilizó? (marque todos los que correspondan)**
   ☐ Brownsville Metro   ☐ Island Metro
   ☐ JagExpress   ☐ McAllen Metro
   ☐ Metro Connect   ☐ Greyhound
   ☐ Valley Metro   ☐ Valley Transit
   ☐ *No sé/no me acuerdo*
   ☐ *Otro (especificar):* _____

   Dar la vuelta para continuar →

8. **¿Cómo obtiene generalmente información sobre el transporte público? (marque todos los que correspondan)**
   ☐ Horarios/folletos impresos
   ☐ Sitio web del proveedor de servicio
   ☐ Otro sitio web (especificar): _____
   ☐ Teléfono
   ☐ Del conductor del autobús
   ☐ De amigos o familiares
   ☐ En la parada del autobús
   ☐ Otro (especificar): _____
   ☐ No he buscado/utilizado información sobre el transporte público.

9. **¿Qué tipo de mejoramientos en el transporte público desea que se hagan/introduzcan? (seleccione hasta tres)**
   ☐ Mejor coordinación de horarios
   ☐ Tiempo de viaje de cortos
   ☐ Mayor frecuencia del servicio
   ☐ Mejorar el acceso a la información de los servicios
   ☐ Venta de boletos en línea
   ☐ Mas servicio interurbano
   ☐ Servicio nocturno
   ☐ Nada
   ☐ Otro (especificar): _____

10. **¿Generalmente utiliza una silla de ruedas u otro instrumento de movilidad (como un scooter motorizado, andador, etc.)?**
    ☐ Sí   ☐ No

11. **¿Cómo viajas normalmente?**
    ☐ Conducir yo mismo
    ☐ Viajar con amigo/familia
    ☐ Caminar/andar en Bicicleta
    ☐ Taxi/Lyft/Uber
    ☐ Tránsito público
    ☐ Otro (especificar): _____

12. **¿Usa usted o algún miembro de su hogar el transporte aportado por una organización de servicios sociales, un proveedor de atención médica, una escuela u otra organización privada o sin fines de lucro?**
    ☐ Sí   ☐ No

    12a. ¿Si sí, cual? _____

13. **¿Cuál es su género?**
    ☐ Masculino   ☐ Femenino
    ☐ Otro   ☐ No quiero responder

14. **¿Qué categoría incluye su edad?**
    ☐ Menor de 18 años ☐ 18-24 años
    ☐ 25-44 años   ☐ 45-64 años
    ☐ 65 años o mayor   ☐ No quiero responder

15. **Describa su situación laboral actual.**
    ☐ Empleado a tiempo parcial (por temporada) (no es estudiante)
    ☐ Empleado a tiempo parcial (todo el año) (no es estudiante)
    ☐ Empleado a tiempo completo (no es estudiante)
    ☐ Estudiante de preparatoria o secundaria
    ☐ Estudiante de educación superior (sin empleo)
    ☐ Estudiante de educación superior (empleado)
    ☐ Sin empleo y no es estudiante
    ☐ Jubilado
    ☐ No quiero responder

16. **¿Qué idioma(s) habla en su hogar? (marque todos los que correspondan)**
    ☐ Inglés   ☐ Español
    ☐ Otro (especificar): _____

17. **¿Qué tan cómodo se siente al hablar Inglés?**
    ☐ Muy cómodo/hablante nativo
    ☐ Un poco cómodo
    ☐ Para nada cómodo
    ☐ No quiero responder

18. **¿Cuál es su ingreso familiar anual?**
    ☐ Menos de $25,000   ☐ $100,000-$149,999
    ☐ $25,000-$49,999   ☐ $150,000 o más
    ☐ $50,000-$74,999   ☐ Prefiero no responder
    ☐ $75,000-$99,999

19. **De las siguientes categorías, ¿cuántas personas viven en su hogar (incluido/a usted)?**
    Niños (10 años o menores) _____
    Jóvenes (10-18 años) _____
    Adultos (19-64 años) _____
    Adultos mayores (65 años y mayores) _____

20. **¿Tiene una incapacidad física que afecta su movilidad personal?**
    ☐ Sí   ☐ No

21. **¿Tiene acceso a un vehículo personal?**
    ☐ Sí, todo el tiempo   ☐ No
    ☐ Sí, algunas veces

22. **Díganos cualquier otra cosa que desee que sepamos sobre sus necesidades de transporte personales, familiares o comunitarias.**

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    Gracias por participar. Para participar en un sorteo fortuito de una de varias tarjetas de regalo VISA de $25, ingrese su nombre e información. Toda información se mantendrá confidencial.

    Primer nombre: _____

    Teléfono o correo electrónico:

    _____

Appendix B | Stakeholder Survey

This page intentionally blank.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan
Stakeholder Survey

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council is preparing an update to the region's five-year Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (Plan). The goal of the Plan is three-fold. First, identify mobility/transportation needs of persons living and/or working in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties. Second, help prioritize such transportation needs from the perspective of residents, likely impact, and funding availability. Third, identify practical strategies for addressing the identified transportation/mobility needs.

As a community stakeholder your participation is important to the success of the Plan. Stakeholder organizations such as yours often serve as advocates for the needs (transportation and otherwise) of individuals who are either unable or unwilling to participate in the Plan's public engagement process. This could include seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, veterans, and persons with limited-English proficiency.

By completing this survey, you will help ensure the priorities, and recommendations included in the Plan effectively address the transportation needs throughout the communities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Alternatively, the survey may be completed online at www.LRGVStakeholderSurvey.com. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return your survey no later than **October 1, 2021.** Thank you for your participation!

Section 1: Organization background (all respondents)

1. **Tell us about your organization.**

Organization Name:			
Your Name:		Your Title:	
Email:			

2. **Which of the following best describes your organization?**
    - ☐ Government
    - ☐ Public
    - ☐ Private non-profit
    - ☐ Private for-profit
    - ☐ Other (specify) _____

3. **Identify the client populations your organization serves. (Select all that apply.)**
    - ☐ Seniors 65 and older
    - ☐ Veterans
    - ☐ Low-income individuals
    - ☐ Persons with disabilities
    - ☐ Persons with limited English proficiency
    - ☐ Homeless
    - ☐ Children and youth
    - ☐ General public
    - ☐ Other (specify): _____

4. **What are the core functions of your organization? (Select all that apply.)**
    - ☐ Home-to-school transportation
    - ☐ Client transportation
    - ☐ Non-emergency medical transportation
    - ☐ Healthcare
    - ☐ Social services
    - ☐ Nutrition
    - ☐ Counseling
    - ☐ Day treatment
    - ☐ Job training
    - ☐ General public transportation
    - ☐ Rehabilitation services
    - ☐ Job placement
    - ☐ Residential facilities
    - ☐ Recreation/social
    - ☐ Screening
    - ☐ Information/referral
    - ☐ Other (specify): _____

5. **How does your organization assist its clients obtain information about transportation? (Select all that apply.)**
   - ❏ Don't assist or aid clients with transportation information in any manner
   - ❏ Provide clients with transportation guides/schedules
   - ❏ Refer clients to transit provider guides or websites
   - ❏ Plan transportation for clients using Google Transit or an online trip planner
   - ❏ Make telephone calls on behalf of clients/riders
   - ❏ Use 211 Texas to provide information to clients
   - ❏ Other (specify): _____

6. **Indicate the transportation services provided by your organization. (Select all that apply.)**
   - ❏ Do not operate, contract for, or subsidize any transportation services
   - ❏ Directly operate transportation with full responsibility
   - ❏ Purchase transportation services provided by another entity (contracted)
   - ❏ Arrange for volunteer drivers
   - ❏ Provide initial assistance in obtaining transportation (client responsible for follow up)
   - ❏ Provide mobility management/travel training
   - ❏ Subsidize rides/pay for fares
   - ❏ Other (specify) _____

The following sections are intended to provide insight into transportation/mobility needs affecting your clients/members/etc. as well as any transportation programs your organization may provide. Because the organizations targeted within the Lower Rio Grande Valley are diverse, not every question may be directly applicable. Please answer the questions as thoroughly as possible. If a question is not applicable to your organization, leave it blank. You will have an opportunity at the end of Section 3 to provide additional comments about your organization, its needs, and its services.

Section 2: Your organization's transportation needs (all respondents)

7. **How often do your clients communicate difficulty with these transportation needs?**

Need	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Medical trips (doctor visits, dialysis, etc.)	❏	❏	❏	❏
Access to veterans' services (including medical)	❏	❏	❏	❏
Essential shopping (groceries, medicine)	❏	❏	❏	❏
Transportation to work or school	❏	❏	❏	❏
Daycare or elementary school trips	❏	❏	❏	❏
After-school trips	❏	❏	❏	❏
Weekday trips	❏	❏	❏	❏
Evening trips (before 10 pm)	❏	❏	❏	❏
Evening trips (after 10 pm)	❏	❏	❏	❏
Saturday trips	❏	❏	❏	❏
Sunday trips	❏	❏	❏	❏
Making same-day reservations	❏	❏	❏	❏
Accessibility/path of travel to bus stop	❏	❏	❏	❏
Transfers	❏	❏	❏	❏
Transportation outside their home county	❏	❏	❏	❏
Trip planning and information	❏	❏	❏	❏

8. **What are your clients'/members' primary barriers to accessing transportation? (Please discuss.)**
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Section 3: Local transportation coordination (all respondents)

9. **What are the most significant challenges your organization encounters with respect to providing and/or coordinating transportation services? (Select all that apply.)**
   - ❏ Lack of funding to meet current transportation/mobility needs
   - ❏ Lack of funding to support coordination activities
   - ❏ Insufficient organizational staffing to provide services
   - ❏ Insurance concerns (e.g., terms/conditions do not allow transportation of non-agency passengers, etc.)
   - ❏ Policy considerations (e.g., limitation to where trips can originate or terminate)
   - ❏ Inadequate public transit service
   - ❏ Lack of transportation services in your community?
   - ❏ State or other regulations are too restrictive as to who is eligible for transportation services
   - ❏ Unable to mix and/or coordinate grants from different agencies
   - ❏ Inability to comply with restrictive grant or funding guidelines or reporting
   - ❏ Not part of our organization's core mission
   - ❏ Other (specify): _____

10. **Is there an ongoing process for identifying duplication of service, under-utilized transportation assets, and service gaps in the community which your organization operates?**
    - ❏ Yes   ❏ No   ❏ Don't know

11. **In your opinion, which enhancements are most needed to improve coordination of public transit and human service transportation in your service area?**
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

12. **Are there any other issues, concerns, or information you believe to be relevant to this issue?**
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

13. **Are you interested in participating in a stakeholder roundtable to discuss mobility and transportation needs specific to your organization and the community it serves?**
    - ❏ Yes   ❏ No   ❏ Maybe

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION DIRECTLY OPERATES, CONTRACTS FOR, OR SUBSIDIZES ANY KIND OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, PLEASE COMPLETE SECTION 4. IF IT DOES NOT, END THE SURVEY HERE. THANK YOU.

Section 4. Transportation services (transportation providers only)

14. **Who is eligible to use the transportation provided by your organization?**
    - ❏ Only enrolled/eligible/authorized clients   ❏ Any member of the general public
    - ❏ Anyone served by our organization

15. **Tell us about the drivers for your transportation program:**
    _____ # of paid dedicated drivers   _____ # of volunteer drivers   _____ # of paid staff who drive

16. **How many total vehicles do you have available for client/customer transportation?** _____

17. **Tell us about the number and capacity of your vehicles:**
    _____ # of sedans seating 5 or fewer passengers   _____ # of buses seating 16+ passengers
    _____ # of vans seating 10 or fewer passengers   _____ Total # of lift-equipped vehicles
    _____ # of vehicles seating 11 to 15 passengers

18. **How many of your vehicles may need to be replaced in the next five years based on odometer mileage?**
    _____ # of vans (10 or fewer seats) exceeding 150,000 miles
    _____ # of buses (11-20 seats) exceeding 200,000 miles
    _____ # of buses (21+ seats) exceeding 250,000 miles

19. **Passenger Trips Provided**
    _____ Average # of one-way passenger trips per MONTH. _Count one trip each time a passenger boards the vehicle. Count a round-trip as two one-way passenger trips._

20. **Compared to your budget prior to COVID, do you expect your organization's transportation budget for 2022 will…?**
    ❏ Increase   ❏ Decrease   ❏ Stay the same

21. **Does your organization intend to continue its client transportation programs during the next five years?**
    ❏ Yes   ❏ No   ❏ Unsure

22. **How has COVID-19 affected your transportation program?**
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

23. **What types of coordinated services might your organization be interested in learning more about and/or participating in?**
    ❏ Sharing vehicles
    ❏ Cooperative travel training
    ❏ Joint vehicle purchasing
    ❏ Joint staff/driver training
    ❏ Insurance cooperatives
    ❏ Cooperative vehicle/fleet maintenance
    ❏ Cooperative fuel purchases
    ❏ Cooperative transportation marketing/promotion activities
    ❏ Other (specify): _____

Thank you for your participation! Please return your survey using the enclosed postage-paid envelope or by emailing the completed form to kathy@moore-associates.net.

Appendix C | Documentation of Community Engagement

This page intentionally blank.

Exhibit C.1 Community survey household mailer

Help improve public transportation in the Valley!

¡Ayude a mejorar el transporte público en el Valle!

Your participation is invited.

Solicitamos su colaboración.

Work has begun on an update of the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan. The goal is to identify practical strategies for enhancing the mobility of persons residing and/or working in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Visit **www.LRGVtransportationplan.com** to learn more about the project as well as opportunities to participate.

- Take a short online survey.
- Attend a community pop-up event.
- Share your transportation ideas and priorities.

Se ha iniciado la actualización del Plan Regional de Coordinación de Transporte Público. El objetivo es identificar estrategias prácticas para mejorar la circulación de las personas que residen y/o trabajan en el Valle del Río Grande.

Visite **www.LRGVtransportationplan.com** para obtener más información sobre el proyecto y las oportunidades para participar.

- Realice una breve encuesta en línea.
- Asiste a un evento emergente de la comunidad.
- Comparta sus ideas y prioridades de transporte.

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
301 W Railroad
Weslaco, TX 78596

Exhibit C.2 Bilingual take-one card

Exhibit C.3 Photos from pop-up events

Exhibit C.4 Presentation to RTAP Steering Committee (September 14, 2021)

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

REGIONAL TRANSIT ADVISORY PANEL

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
COORDINATION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

moore & associates

INTRODUCING MOORE & ASSOCIATES, INC.

- SOLE FOCUS: PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
- EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE PREPARING SUCCESSFUL COORDINATION PLANS
- FOCUS ON PRACTICAL, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

CORNERSTONE OBJECTIVES

- Comprehensive inventory of all transportation resources within the three-county project area
- Objectively identify and quantify public transportation needs of persons living and/or working within the project area
- Identify practical, sustainable solutions for addressing such needs.

Task 1: Analysis of Resources

- Stakeholder survey
- RTAP presentation
- Transportation Resources Inventory

Task 2: Analysis of Need

- Community survey
- Community events
- RTAP/Stakeholder roundtables
- Comprehensive needs assessment

Task 3: Gap Analysis

- Draft plan
- RTAP presentation
- Final plan

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Bilingual project webpage
- Bilingual community outreach
- Bilingual community survey
- Bilingual stakeholder survey
- Bilingual mailer to 15,000 households

NEXT STEPS

- Distribute stakeholder survey
- Conduct pop-up events
- Submit interim deliverables for staff review

QUESTIONS/ DISCUSSION

Exhibit C.5 RTAP meeting agenda (October 20, 2021)

Lower Rio Grande Valley
Regional Public Transportation Advisory Panel
AGENDA

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 20, 2021
10:00 AM
(Meeting will be held In-Person and Virtual)
Valley Metro Conference Boardroom
510 S. Pleasantview Drive
Weslaco, Texas

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Public Meeting Comment

3. Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan- Update

    - Update provided by Moore & Associates

4. Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan Budget

    [ACTION ITEM]

5. RTAP Membership Contact Information- Update

6. Valley Metro FAST RIDE Microtransit Presentation

        Presenter: Rene Garza

7. Micro McAllen Presentation

        Presenter: Mario Delgado

8. Other Items
    -Valley Metro Report
    -McAllen Metro Report
    -Brownsville B-Metro Report
    -SPI Metro Report
    -UTRGV Vaquero Express Report
    - South Texas College JagExpress Report

9. Other Business (Old/New)

10. Adjourn

Next RTAP Meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2021 at 10:00 AM at Valley Metro Conference Room, 510 S. Pleasantview Drive, Weslaco, Texas 78596

Exhibit C.6 Presentation to RTAP Steering Committee (January 14, 2021)

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

FIVE-YEAR REGIONAL PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

FINAL PRESENTATION TO RTAP

JANUARY 14, 2022

moore & associates
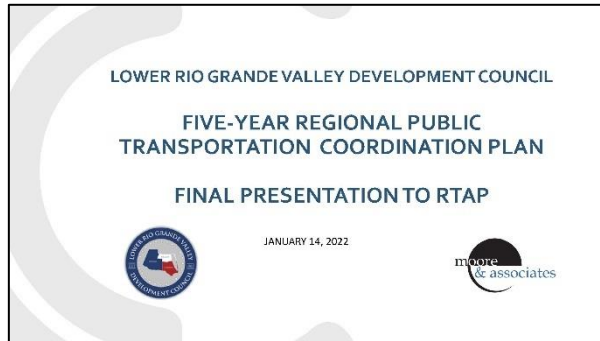
Project Objectives (Per TxDOT)

- Update the 2017 RCTP.
- Provide guidance to area transit providers and health and human services agencies.
- Direct future work plans to be implemented by the RTAP.
- Provide a framework for funding future transit projects.

Recommendations: Three Tiers

- Short-Term: Up to 18 months
- Mid-Term: 18 to 36 months
- Long-Term: 3 to 5 years

Short-Term Recommendations

- #2: Synchronize future service changes.
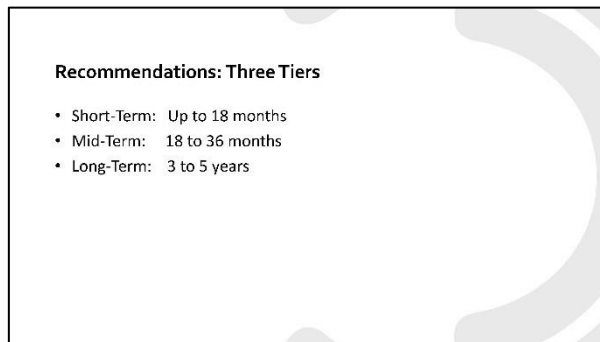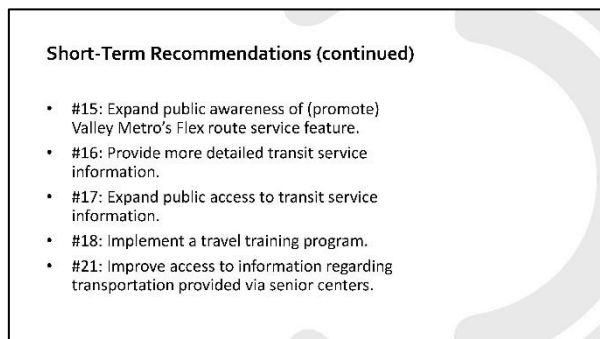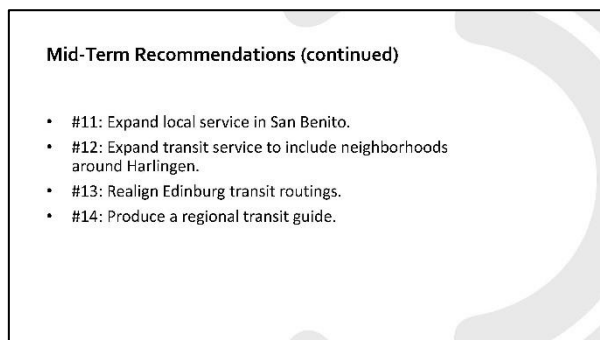- #5: Implement recommendations presented in the 2030 Transit Development Plan.
- #6: Improve schedule coordination thereby reducing customer wait-time.
- #8: Link South Texas College campuses in McAllen and Weslaco.

Short-Term Recommendations (continued)

- #15: Expand public awareness of (promote) Valley Metro's Flex route service feature.
- #16: Provide more detailed transit service information.
- #17: Expand public access to transit service information.
- #18: Implement a travel training program.
- #21: Improve access to information regarding transportation provided via senior centers.

Mid-Term Recommendations

- #1: Work with social service organizations to subsidize the purchase of multi-ride fare media.
- #3: Provide regional trip planning via Google Maps.
- #4: Develop partnerships with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to address mobility needs outside current service hours.
- #7: Improve service frequency for inter-county transit service.

Mid-Term Recommendations (continued)

- #11: Expand local service in San Benito.
- #12: Expand transit service to include neighborhoods around Harlingen.
- #13: Realign Edinburg transit routings.
- #14: Produce a regional transit guide.

Mid-Term Recommendations (continued)

- #19: Evaluate practicality of joint recruitment and training of drivers.
- #22: Improve rural bus stops.
- #23: Prepare a Bus Stop Inventory and Bus Stop Improvement Plan for each operator.
- #24: Increase capital (vehicle) funding for non-profit organizations/transportation providers.

Long-Term Recommendations

- #9: Evaluate transit service delivery in Willacy County.
- #10: Introduce service to McAllen Veterans Service Office.
- #20: Implement a one-stop (transportation information) call center.

Next Steps

- RTAP discussion
- Questions for the consultant team
- Plan adoption
- File with TxDOT

Appendix D | RTAP Roster

This page intentionally blank.

Lower Rio Grande Valley RTAP (Regional Transit Advisory Panel)
Membership List

Revised 10/18/2021

Position	Agency	Name	Title	Proxy	Address	Phone	email
Chair	AAA	Jose L. Gonzalez	Director	Richard Flores Rolando E. Florez	301 N. Railroad Weslaco, Texas 78596	956-682-3481	jgonzalez@lrgvdc.org rflores@lrgvdc.org rflorez@lrgvdc.org
Secretary	RGVMPO	Andrew Canon	Director	Luis Diaz	510 S. Pleasantview Dr. Weslaco, Texas 78596	956-969-5778	acanon@rgvmpo.org ldiaz@rgvmpo.org egarcia@rgvmpo.org
Vice Chair	Valley Association for Idependendent Living (VAIL)	Lidia Fonseca	Program Director	Mario Martinez	3012 N. McColl McAllen, Texas 78501	956-668-8245	lfonseca@vailrgv.org mmartinez@vailrgv.org
	Brownsville Metro	Joel Garza	Director	Gennie Garcia Antonio Zubieta	755 International Blvd. Brownsville, TX 78520	956-541-4881	joel.garza@brownsvilletx.gov gennie.garcia@brownsvilletx.gov antonio.zubieta@brownsvilletx.gov
	UTRGV	Rodney Gomez	Director of Parking and Transportation Services		Edinburg Texas 78539 McAllen, Texas 78501	956.665.2036	rodney.gomez@utrgv.edu
	Catholic Charities of RGV	Norma Pimentel	Executive Director		700 N Virgen de San Juan Blvd PO Box 1306 San Juan TX 78589	956-702-4088	npimentel@cdob.org
	McAllen Metro	Mario Delgado	Director		1501 W. Highway 83, Ste 100 McAllen, Texas 78501	956-681-3500 956-681-3510	mdelgado@mcallen.net
	Texas Department of State Health Services	Vacant	Vacant	Norma Cavazos	601 W. Sesame Dr. Harlingen, Texas 78550	956-421-5531	norma.cavazos@dshs.texas.gov
	City of South Padre Island-Island Metro	Jesse Arriaga	Director	Bart Perez	3401 Padre Island Blvd Suite C, South Padre Island, TX 78597	956.761.8178	jarriaga@myspi.org bperez@myspi.org
	Tropical Texas Behavioral Health	Nancy Ochoa	Client Rights Officer		1901 South 24th Avenue Edinburg, TX 78539	956-289-7052	nochoa@ttbh.org
	Valley Metro	Maribel Contreras	Director	Nancy Sanchez Jose L. Silva	510 S. Pleasantview Dr. Weslaco, Texas 78596	956-969-5761	mcontreras@lrgvdc.org jsilva@lrgvdc.org nsanchez@lrgvdc.org

Workforce Solutions-Cameron	Sally Perez	Chief Program Officer		851 Old Alice Rd. Brownsville, Texas 78520	956-548-6700 956-548-6700 ext. 4516	sally.perez@wfscameron.org
Workforce Solutions-Hidalgo, Willacy	Flor Leal	Community Engagement Specialist	John Hershey	3101 W. Highway 83 McAllen, Texas 78501	956 212.8297 956-928-5000	flor@wfsolutions.org
Hidalgo County Health and Human Services	Clarissa Guerrero	Executive Assistant-Community Relations		1304 S 25th St, Edinburg Texas 78539	956-318-2426 ext 7331	clarissa.guerrero@hchd.org
La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)	Martha Sanchez	Organizing Coordinator	Tania Chavez	1601 E. Highway Business 83, San Juan, TX 78589	956-460-2658	marthas@lupenet.org taniac@lupenet.org
Proyecto Azteca	Ann Williams Cass	Organizing Coordinator		1301 E Bus 83, San Juan, TX 78589	956-702-3307	anncass@aol.com
LRGVDC	Manuel Cruz	Executive Director		301 W. Railroad, Weslaco TX 78596	956-970-1188	mcruz@lrgvdc.org
South Texas College	Alina Cantu	Director of Transportation Services	Lizette Blake	2509 W. Pecan Blvd, McAllen TX 78501	956-872-3879	acantu_8475@southtexascollege.edu
Cameron County Emergency Management	Tom Hushen	Cameron County Emergency Management Coordinator		964 E. Harrison St., 2nd Floor Brownsville, Texas 78520	956-547-7000	tom.hushen@co.cameron.tx.us
Hidalgo County Emergency Management	Ricardo Saldana	Hidalgo County Emergency Management Coordinator		1124 N. M Road, Edinburg, TX 78542	956-318-2615	ricardo.saldana@co.hidalgo.tx.us
Ex-Officio Members						
Texas Department of Transportation	Irma Flores	Public Transportation Coordinator	Joanna Saenz	600 W Interstate 2 / Pharr, Texas 78577	956-702-6314	irma.flores@txdot.gov joanna.saenz@txdot.gov
Migrant Health Promotion	Yolanda Guzman	Program Director	N/A	3102 E. Business 83 Ste G. Weslaco, TX. 78596	Ph: 956-968-3600 956-884-1136	yguzman@mhpsalud.org
Veterans VA Clinic	Israel Valdez	Veterans Travel Program Manager	N/A	4501 W US Hwy 83, McAllen Texas 78501	956.291.9000	israel.valdez@va.gov

Appendix E | Demographic Tables

Exhibit E.1 Population by county

County	Total population
Cameron	421,666
Hidalgo	855,176
Willacy	21,588

Exhibit E.2 Hispanic/Latino population by county

County	Total Hispanic/Latino	Percentage
Cameron	378,081	89.7%
Hidalgo	788,282	92.2%
Willacy	19,039	88.2%

Exhibit E.3 LEP households by county

County	Total Households	LEP Households	Percentage
Cameron	124,605	20,168	16.19%
Hidalgo	238,345	49,320	20.69%
Willacy	5,782	833	14.41%

Exhibit E.4 Youth (under 18) and Senior (65+) population by county

County	Total Population	Youth	Percentage	Seniors	Percentage
Cameron	421,666	129,734	30.8%	66,590	15.8%
Hidalgo	855,176	281,738	32.9%	92,728	10.8%
Willacy	21,588	5,194	24.1%	2,954	13.7%

Exhibit E.5 Disabled population by county

County	Disabled Population	Percentage
Cameron	52,089	12.41%
Hidalgo	109,673	12.95%
Willacy	3,425	16.84%

Exhibit E.6 Mean household income by county

County	Mean Household Income
Cameron	$55,520
Hidalgo	$58,014
Willacy	$47,742

Exhibit E.7 Population living at 125 percent of poverty threshold by county

County	Population for whom poverty status is determined	Poverty (125%)	Percentage
Cameron	418,195	156,380	37.39%
Hidalgo	844,950	319,741	37.84%
Willacy	20,275	7,561	37.29%

Exhibit E.8 Zero- and single-vehicle households by county

County	Zero-vehicle households	Percentage	Single-vehicle households	Percentage
Cameron	8,619	6.9%	47,814	38.4%
Hidalgo	14,861	6.2%	84,431	35.4%
Willacy	295	5.1%	2,343	40.5%