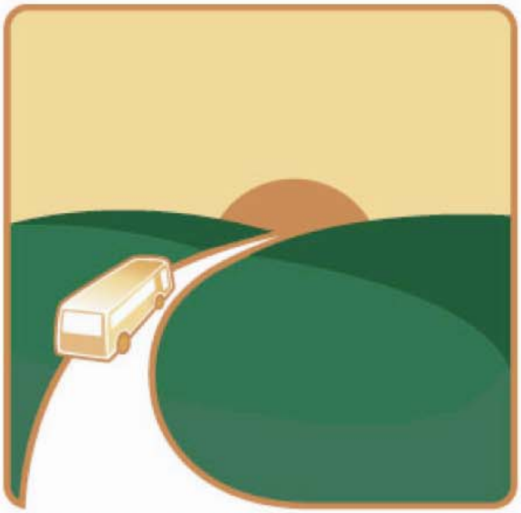
# Regional Transportation Coordination Study

GOLDEN CRESCENT



REGIONAL TRANSIT

Prepared for

**Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission**

Prepared by

**The Goodman Corporation**

In association with

**A & R Consulting**

**Texas Southern University**
**Center for Transportation Training & Research**

December 2006

Regional Transportation Coordination Study

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This project was funded in part through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The contents of this report reflect the analysis of The Goodman Corporation which is responsible for the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of FTA or TxDOT.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Golden Crescent Region is a mostly rural area along the Texas Gulf Coast that is home to approximately 186,000 residents. Many of these people depend on public transportation to meet their transportation needs to employment, shopping and medical destinations. The region's public transportation needs are served by one entity, the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC), which operates both urban and rural service through Victoria Transit (urban) and RTransit (rural). The GCRPC is already an excellent example of coordinated regional service, but funding limitations limit the amount of service they can provide the public. Also, in some instances transportation service are provided by social service agencies for clients that meet financial and/or medical eligibility criteria. In other cases, churches and private companies offer limited services.

Even with the various transportation options throughout the region, there are still unmet transit needs and inefficiencies. The leadership of the State of Texas realized that there were inadequacies in the area of public transportation and took action to rectify the issue. House Bill 3588, passed during the 78th Texas Legislature, is a statewide mandate to coordinate public transportation services and funding. Although this is a statewide mandate, planning and coordination has taken place at the regional and local level. The GCRPC was designated the Lead Agency for coordination efforts in the seven-county Golden Crescent Region which includes the following counties: Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca and Victoria. The intent of H.B. 3588 is to facilitate the following:

- Eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation services;
- Generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service; and
- Further the state's efforts to reduce air pollution.

The GCRPC, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), regional transit providers, local governments, major employers, health and human service organizations, citizens of the Golden Crescent Region and The Goodman Corporation (TGC) transportation project team formed an advisory committee to oversee the process and have worked together to develop a comprehensive regional public transportation coordination plan. This group has donated a great deal of time and effort into making this coordination process a success for all involved, and most importantly to better serve those who depend on public transit across the region. It is a major step towards coordination in itself to bring all of these various entities to the table to discuss transportation issues affecting their region. While assessing the current service level in the region, relatively no overlaps in service area were identified except for inefficiencies in rural vehicles sitting idle waiting for passengers. Gaps in service identified included employee access to work and a lack of rural/urban evening and weekend service. Along with assessing the current service level in the region, four pilot projects emerged in the process that will address specific gaps and inefficiencies and utilize coordination to better serve the region.

- **Employee Transit Service** to meet the unmet needs of those who have no vehicle and need to access remote employment sites.

- **Educational Partnerships/College Transit Service** to provide specific service for college students who need transportation from rural areas to the college campuses in Victoria.
- **Enhanced Rural Transit Service through Technology** to enhance coordination between RTransit and their various subcontractors throughout the region, as well as address challenges with the GCRPC's current software system.
- **Health Facility Partnerships/Region-Wide Volunteer Driver Program** that will assist current rural providers with unscheduled and long-distance trips.

To assist in funding the four pilot projects above, Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Funds will be pursued in the next TxDOT call for projects.

The goals adopted by this group are aligned with the legislative intent of H.B. 3588 and are as follows:

- Improve delivery of transportation services;
- Generate efficiencies in operation;
- Enhance customer service satisfaction; and
- Encourage cooperation and coordination.

# Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Texas Legislature recently amended the State's Transportation Code to add Chapter 461 – Statewide Coordination of Public Transportation. The intent of Chapter 461 is to ensure that the benefits of the State's public transportation resources are maximized through coordination of services. The goals of coordination are to eliminate waste, generate increased efficiencies, and further Texas' clean air goals.

The Texas Transportation Commission assigned development of regional transit coordination plans in compliance with Chapter 461 to the Regional Planning and Public Transportation Study Group created under the leadership of Texas Transportation Commissioner Hope Andrade. The Study Group concluded that each region in the state, as defined by council of government boundaries, should develop a regional coordination plan for presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission in October 2006. The Golden Crescent Region is #17 in the State of Texas *(see Figure 1.1)*.

The Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission was selected as the lead agency for the seven-county Golden Crescent Region to provide leadership, management, and administrative support for the overall process and ensure that a coordinated transportation plan is created for the seven-county region. An Advisory Committee was created comprising representatives from various organizations including transit providers, medical and educational groups, social service agencies, and elected officials from around the region. This group was selected to bring together a variety of viewpoints from all across the region and to provide GCRPC with their personal knowledge of the region's needs for transportation and potential solutions to better coordinate services.

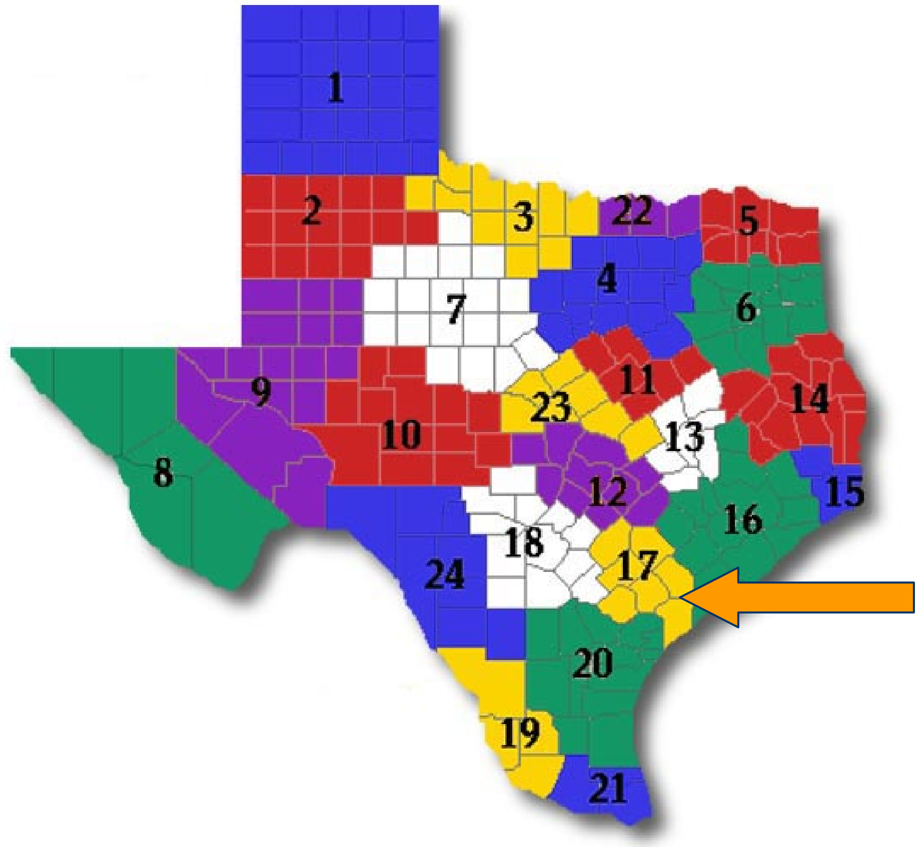


*Figure 1.1 – Location of 7-County Golden Crescent Region*

This seven-county region, as defined by the council of government boundaries, is located on the lower Texas Gulf Coast and is home to approximately 200,000 residents. The Golden Crescent Region includes the following seven counties *(see Figure 1.2)*:

Calhoun
Goliad
Jackson
Victoria
DeWitt
Gonzales
Lavaca

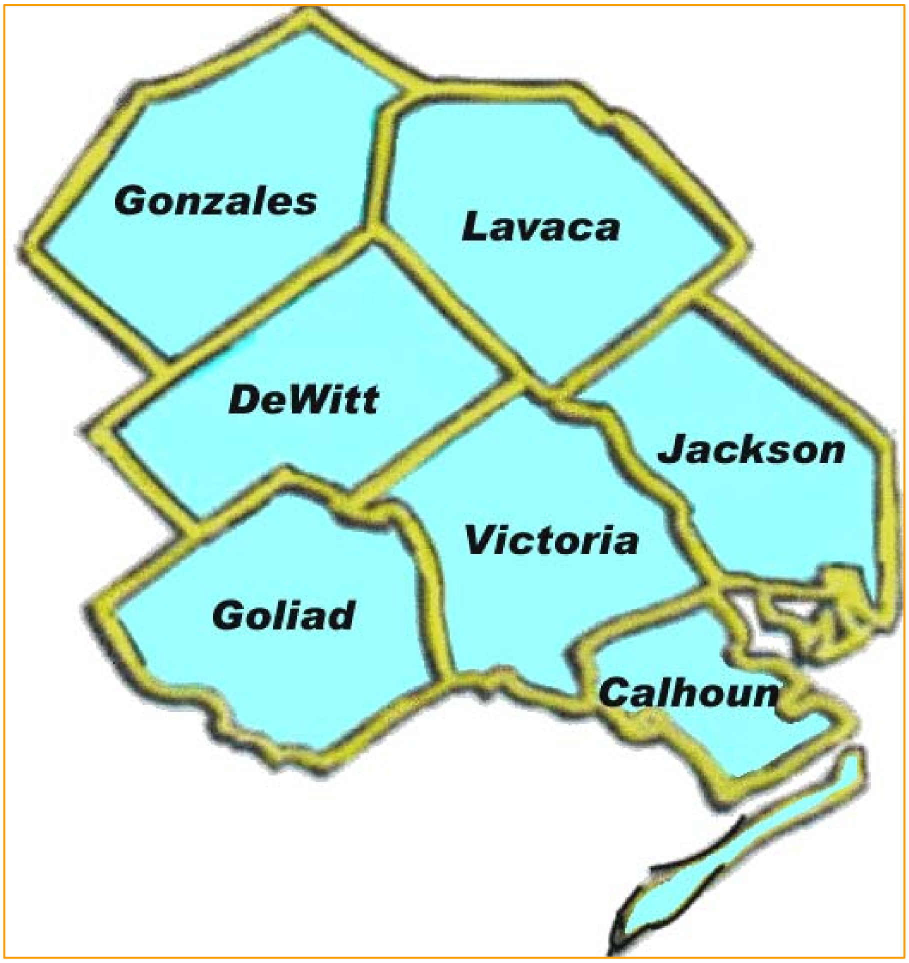


*Figure 1.2 – 7-County Golden Crescent Region*

## *Enhancing Transportation Through Coordination*

The counties and communities within the GCRPC region have openly accepted the task of identifying gaps in service and coordinating existing services to more efficiently and cost-effectively meet transportation needs in the region. This will be an opportunity to not only create "a plan for coordination", but also to create a framework for improving real world service delivery to citizens of the region by addressing gaps in service, and the general lack of connectivity within the region. In order to fully assess coordination opportunities and identify unmet transportation needs of our population, a comprehensive analysis of the region's transit and social service providers operating characteristics and perceived needs, as well as demographic profile and transit needs index of each county will be completed. However, there are real world "barriers" to coordination that impact the ability for services to be coordinated and these will be researched and identified through communication with the stakeholders identified in this planning process. The final goal will be to identify barriers and opportunities that exist for coordination of services within the region.

## *Study Goals and Objectives*

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) outlined four primary goals for this statewide coordination effort. The various pilot projects discussed in Chapter 5 of this report came out of this process and outline the initial steps reach these goals for better coordinated service in the Golden Crescent region. The goals and how the Golden Crescent Region plans to meet them are stated below.

- **Improve Delivery of Transportation Services**

  Solution: There will be improved transportation options in the region through employee transit service to selected remote industrial work sites in the region. Also, through the educational partnerships between GCRPC and the two colleges in Victoria, the beginning steps have been taken for starting student transit service to the college campuses. The creation of a region-wide volunteer driver program to meet unmet health-related trips will also address the goal of improved delivery of service to residents and rural service providers who could benefit from volunteers.

- **Generate Efficiencies in Operation**

  Solution: Overall, the goal of all the proposed pilot projects is to increase efficiency in services, but the third pilot project proposed directly addresses efficiencies. The current service software used by the GCRPC has problems that make it less efficient and need to be addressed. Their subcontractors for rural service manually enter data and could increase efficiencies administratively and on the service front by being included and consolidated within the GCRPC software program.

- **Enhance Customer Service Satisfaction**

  Solution: All of the proposed pilot projects will meet unmet demand for regional transit services or enhance opportunities for existing users. The marketing approach outlined in Chapter 7 of this report focuses on a more regional marketing strategy to increase accessibility of transit information for all services in the area.

- **Encourage Cooperation and Coordination**

  Solution: This coordination effort has brought together a varied group of individuals concerned with regional transportation services in the form of an Advisory Committee. This committee provided these individuals a forum to voice their concerns, hear what issues other groups are experiencing, brainstorm potential solutions to problems and lend their available resources to better coordinate within the region. For any of the proposed pilot projects or future coordination efforts to be a success, this initial step of brining together a diverse group such as this was crucial and very successful for the Golden Crescent Region.

The following are objectives identified by the GCRPC and the Advisory Committee for this study.

- Develop a coordination public transportation plan
- Identify resources required to develop the plan
- Provide policy guidance to lead the planning and coordination effort

- Implementation plans (short and long term) for coordinated service
- Create a usable database of stakeholders and assets to support future planning efforts

## *Funding Objectives*

The GCRPC currently receives Federal Formula Funds annually through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Small Urbanized Area Program, Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Program, and Section 5311 Non-urbanized (Rural) Program to support Victoria Transit and RTransit operations. These funds are critical to the success of these transit providers and to meet the daily needs of Golden Crescent citizens. Without these continual funds to support the region's sole transit provider of rural and urban (City of Victoria) service, future coordination efforts and the proposed pilot projects will not be feasible. There is an obvious need for basic public transportation in the region and it is the ongoing goal of the GCRPC to successfully obtain financial grants through these programs. The financial and operational health of the GCRPC transit providers is important because, without a healthy core, other initiatives such as coordination planning are greatly disadvantaged.

The funding sources identified above are distributed through Federal and State Formulas established by Congress and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot) Commission. They are authorized through the FY 2009 operating period pursuant to the existing Congressional authorization contained within the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The GCRPC has identified the need to pursue additional resources to support extension of basic transit services, capital replacement of equipment, and development of an Intermodal Transit Terminal to accommodate the interface between urban, rural, intercity bus, local taxi services and other modes of transportation. To accomplish the capital and operating needs of the GCRPC, beyond anticipated Federal and State Formula Funding, the GCRPC will pursue the following additional resources:

- Intercity Bus Funding – Made available as part of the FTA Section 5311 funding received by the State of Texas. This resource will be relied upon for further development of the Intermodal Transportation Terminal.

- FTA Section 5309 (Bus) Discretionary Support – To assist in meeting the GCRPC's capital replacement needs. This resource will be particularly important due to the State of Texas's inability to secure Congressional support for statewide replacement of small urban and rural transit equipment.

- Additional Local Financial Support – The City of Victoria and the Victoria Economic Development Corporation may be potential sources of support for future transit initiatives.

For the four pilot projects that have been proposed in this study, Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Funds will be pursued.

## *Study Consultant Team*

In December 2005, the Golden Crescent Regional Transportation Coordination Advisory Committee was selected representing the seven counties in the region to oversee the coordination planning process. This committee represents a variety of agencies and organizations that are responsible for providing public transportation services, providing health and human services, or interested in coordination of public and client transportation in the region. A project team was selected by the committee and the GCRPC through a public procurement process to conduct a comprehensive public transportation coordination study of the region. The project team selected includes: The Goodman Corporation (TGC)**,** A & R Consulting, and Texas Southern University's (TSU) Center for Transportation Training & Research (CTTR).

## *Advisory Committee*

The Advisory Committee, a group of key stakeholders with concern and input into transit needs and services in the region, was formed by the GCRPC to provide guidance during this study process. This group was created to provide their personal knowledge of the region's problems in transportation and serve as potential pilot project candidates. Before putting the consultant team together, the Advisory Committee and GCRPC met 6 times and successfully identified goals for the project and compiled a thorough listing of stakeholders and providers in the region from all areas of social services. This stakeholder and provider list can be found in *Appendix A* of the report. The following is a list of the Advisory Committee membership specifically organized to guide the coordination study process.

## Advisory Committee Membership

Lisa Cortinas
Director of Transportation Services
Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission

Lisa Garcia
Operations Manager
Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission

Rosa Linda Garcia
Transportation Accountant
Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission

Wanda Carter-Dyer
Public Transportation Coordinator
Texas Department of Transportation

Councilperson Debra Martinez Briseno
Cities in Calhoun County

Laura G. Sanders
Executive Director
Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board

Pauline Schleinschok
Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board

Mary Wade
Goliad County

Patty Grahmann
Lavaca County

Robert Cornett
Gonzales County SCA, Inc.

Jan McLaughlin
DARS Division for Blind Services

Ray Miller, Assistant Director
Planning Department
City of Victoria

Leticia Moreno
Calhoun County SCA, Inc.

Jackie Johnson
Social Security Administration

Stacey Weaver
Victoria College Adult Education Center

Dr. Craig T. Follins
Victoria College

Margaret H. Rice
Executive Director of Student Services & Regional Outreach
The University of Houston-Victoria

Lucinda Cornish
Golden Crescent Area Agency on Aging

Mary Garcia
Affectionate Arms Adult Day Health Center

Patsy Wagner
Health and Human Services Commission

Don Polzin
Gulf Bend Center

Yvonne Smith
Victoria County SCA, Inc.

Barbara Chambers
Amour Adult Day Health Center

Linda Clay
Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc.

Rusty Rose
Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc.

## *Public Involvement Process*

Understanding the public's transportation needs and identifying transportation coordination opportunities can only be determined by obtaining direct input from key stakeholders. This section provides a summary of the Public Outreach conducted to gather information and gain support for the regional transportation coordination planning effort.

### Public Meetings

In fall 2005, the Advisory Committee convened to discuss relevant transportation needs and opportunities for improved services in the seven-county region. To establish an identity for the project, Advisory Committee members designed a logo that was used on all outgoing materials such as flyers and press releases. A website, *www.goldencrescenttransit.com*, was developed for the project to use as a resource for the stakeholders and committee to be updated with relevant project information for the public's use. The website has the potential to be developed to a greater degree in the future into a one-stop source for regional transit information for the public.

### Scheduling Public Meetings

On May 10, 2006, the Committee met and decided to hold two public meetings: the first on June 27th at Port Lavaca's City Hall and the second on June 28th at the Gonzales County Courthouse *(see Appendix B and Appendix C)*. The Committee worked with the project team to find meeting locations based on the following:

- Target audience and best methods of reaching the audience
- Location (accessibility and familiarity)
- Facility availability (date and time)

Because the Advisory Committee partnered with city and county local governments, the facilities were used at no cost. TSU verified media contact information and publication details in the media database.

### Promoting Public Meetings

TSU sent two press releases to 28 newspapers, five television stations, and 12 radio stations. In addition, GCRPC invited elected officials, community organizations and key stakeholders to participate at the public meetings.

TSU staff prepared and distributed flyers to GCRPC and Advisory Committee members. Meeting information was also placed on the project website and Committee members were asked to post the meeting locations on their websites or distribute at their respective locations.

To increase public participation, various surveys were used in this process. These surveys are discussed in greater detail below. At their convenience, the public could also access the project website and respond to the appropriate surveys.

## *Report Organization*

This report is organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 2 – Regional Assessment and Needs

Chapter 3 – Peer Review

Chapter 4 – Barriers and Constraints

Chapter 5 – Pilot Projects

Chapter 6 – RTA and Funding Options

# Chapter 7 – Regional Marketing and Transit Traveler Information

# Chapter 2 – REGIONAL ASSESSMENT & NEEDS

## *Overview of Region*

Developing an effective regional public transportation coordination plan requires a full understanding of the existing characteristics of the region, including demographics in order to fully assess coordination opportunities and identify unmet transportation needs. A general overview of the region on a county-by county basis is necessary to establish a profile of each county in terms of its overall population size and density, as well as transit-related demographics. Analysis of demographic data, determination of basic "transit needs" based on this data, input from the public and stakeholders regarding their experiences and needs, coupled with an understanding of the existing public transportation and social services that are already in operation all play a role in assessment of coordination opportunities.

The Golden Crescent Region consists of seven mostly rural counties along the Texas Gulf Coast and is home to approximately 186,714 residents. This region has a rich history in the state as one of the original settlements of Texas. The land area of the region is 6,097 sq. ft. Currently, all seven counties and all 19 incorporated cities and towns in the region are active members in the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC). The region, as a whole, has experienced a 1.5 percent increase in population from 2000 to 2005, but three of the seven counties experienced a slight decline in population during the same period.

The largest urban city in the region is Victoria, located within Victoria County 30 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico with a population of approximately 85,648. Victoria is the region's commercial hub and the primary provider for medical, educational, retail, and entertainment services. Victoria is located within a 150-mile radius of more than seven million people in the Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi areas. The proposed future NAFTA Interstate 69 connecting Canada to Mexico will run directly through Victoria. The 35-mile Victoria Barge Canal, constructed to connect the Port of Victoria to the Intracoastal Waterway, has greatly increased the region's role as a major petrochemical producer, as almost half of the petrochemical production in the United States comes from the Texas Gulf Coast area.

*Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1* show some of the key indicators used to measure whether an area is a high transit-dependent population. The overview maps provide an snapshot of the seven-county region displaying characteristics of general population, population over 65 years of age, use of existing public transit services, population with a disability, those who carpool to work, those who drive to work alone, those below the poverty line, households without a vehicle and median household income.

The existing regional transportation conditions by county were further assessed using two indices. The first is a Transit Needs Index that analyzes both the relative level of transit need combined with assessing the level of service provided. Transit need is determined by measuring key demographic indicators of the level of transportation need. The Transit Needs Index includes the following:

- Percentage of Household without an Automobile
- Median Household Income
- Percentage Persons over 65
- Percentage Persons with a Disability
- Percentage of Households below Poverty Line

Each index is measured on a score of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating lowest need for transit and 5 indicating the most need for transit. The Transit Need Index has been used successfully in rural regions around Texas to measure the relative level of transit need. Counties are ranked based on the composite Transit Needs Index score.

The second index is the Rural Transit Availability Index, which examines the amount of rural transit service per capita available within the GCRPC counties. The index results in scores between 0 and 10 and notes the role that human service transportation may provide within the community. A score of 0 would indicate no human service transportation provided within the community and 10 would indicate that the rural service meets the minimum level of community needs of transportation are met. General rural transit scores a ten since the existence of service is vital in addressing travel needs. A score of 10 does not indicate all needs are met. Scoring less than 10 is not meant to be a criticism of any transit agency since most rural agencies in Texas lack the resources to score higher than a 7 or an 8.

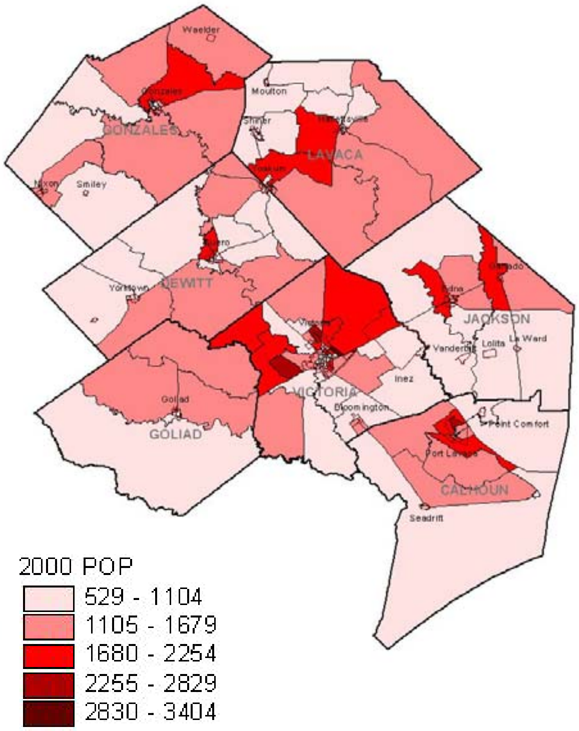
*Table 2.1* shows an overview of some of the key transit-related census factors for the seven-county area taken from U.S. Census 2000 data.

### *Table 2.1 – Golden Crescent Demographic Profile*

| *DATA* | *Calhoun* | *DeWitt* | *Goliad* | *Gonzales* | *Jackson* | *Lavaca* | *Victoria* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **POPULATION** | | | | | | | |
| 1990 Population | 19,053 | 18,840 | 5,980 | 17,205 | 13,039 | 18,690 | 74,361 |
| 2000 Population | 20,647 | 20,013 | 6,928 | 18,628 | 14,391 | 19,210 | 84,088 |
| 2005 Population | 20,606 | 20,507 | 7,102 | 19,587 | 14,339 | 18,925 | 85,648 |
| 1990-2000 Change | 8.4% | 6.2% | 15.9% | 8.3% | 10.4% | 2.8% | 13.0% |
| 2000-2005 Change | -0.2% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 5.1% | -0.4% | -1.5% | 1.9% |
| % Persons over 65 | 13% | 19% | 18% | 17% | 16% | 22% | 12% |
| **DISABLED** | | | | | | | |
| % Persons with Disability Status 5+ yrs | 20% | 25% | 19% | 23% | 24% | 24% | 19% |
| **LANGUAGE** | | | | | | | |
| % Other than English Spoken at Home 5+ yrs | 33% | 23% | 29% | 34% | 19% | 14% | 27% |
| **HOUSEHOLD/INCOME** | | | | | | | |
| Households | 7,442 | 7,207 | 2,644 | 6,782 | 5,336 | 7,669 | 30,071 |
| Median Household Income (1999) | $35,849 | $28,714 | $34,201 | $28,368 | $35,254 | $29,132 | $38,732 |
| Persons Below Poverty Line (1999) | 16% | 20% | 16% | 19% | 15% | 13% | 13% |
| % Households Without an Automobile | 7% | 9% | 6% | 11% | 7% | 8% | 7% |
| **EMPLOYMENT** | | | | | | | |
| % Population in Labor Force (16+ yrs) | 58% | 53% | 57% | 59% | 58% | 59% | 65% |
| **COMMUTE TO WORK** | | | | | | | |
| % Drive Alone | 78.5% | 77.2% | 74.9% | 71.1% | 77.1% | 74.4% | 77.8% |
| % Carpooled | 15.4% | 14.4% | 14.3% | 19.4% | 15.5% | 16.6% | 17.6% |
| % Public Transit | 0.2% | 0.1% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| % Walked | 2.2% | 2.3% | 3.3% | 4.3% | 2.7% | 2.8% | 1.3% |
| % Other Means | 1.8% | 1.5% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 1.9% | 1.1% | 1.1% |
| % Work from Home | 1.9% | 4.5% | 6.1% | 3.7% | 2.8% | 4.9% | 2.1% |
| Mean Travel Time to Work (min) | 19.6 | 26.3 | 30.9 | 24 | 23.6 | 22 | 21.4 |

Source: U.S. Census 2000

**2000 POPULATION**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Ganado
JACKSON
Vanderbilt
Lolita
La Ward
Point Comfort
Port Lavaca
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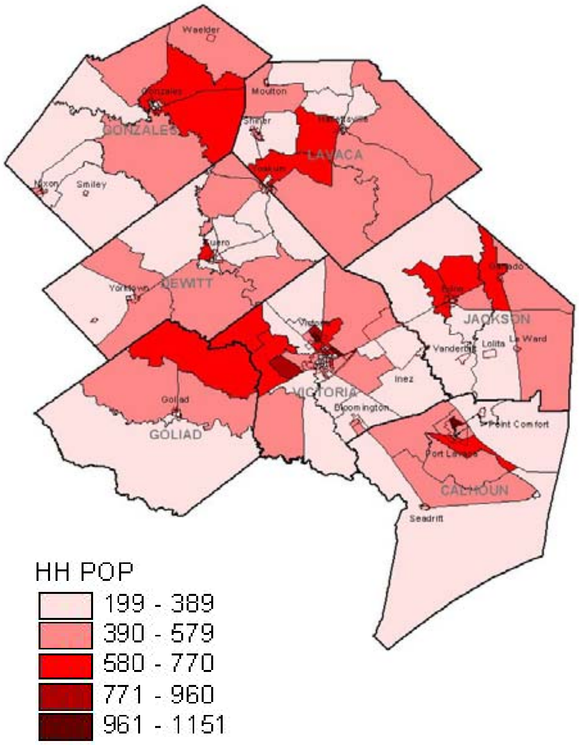
2000 POP
529 - 1104
1105 - 1679
1680 - 2254
2255 - 2829
2830 - 3404

**HOUSEHOLD POPULATION**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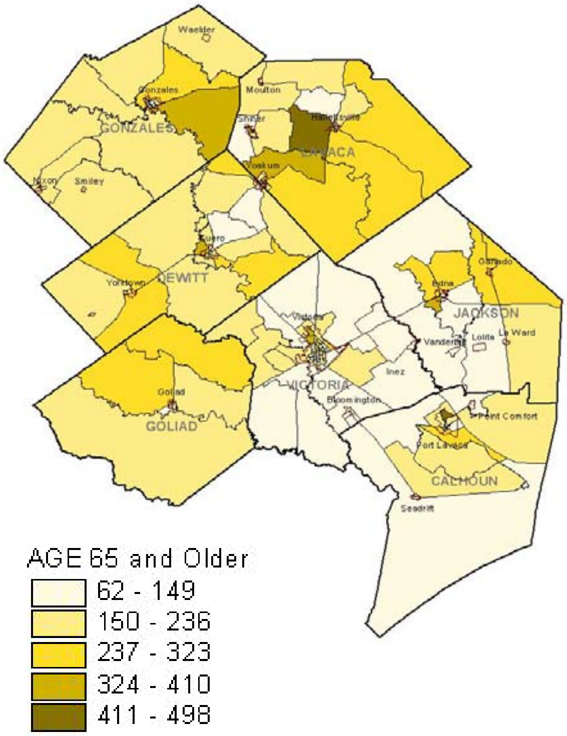
580 - 770
771 - 960
961 - 1151

**AGE 65 AND OLDER**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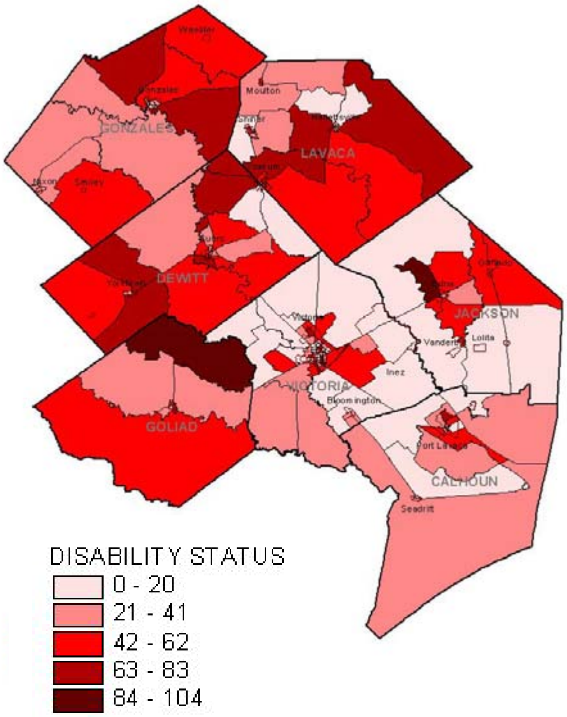
Lolita
La Ward
Point Comfort
Port Lavaca
CALHOUN
Seadrift
AGE 65 and Older
62 - 149
150 - 236
237 - 323
324 - 410
411 - 498

**DISABILITY STATUS**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DISABILITY STATUS
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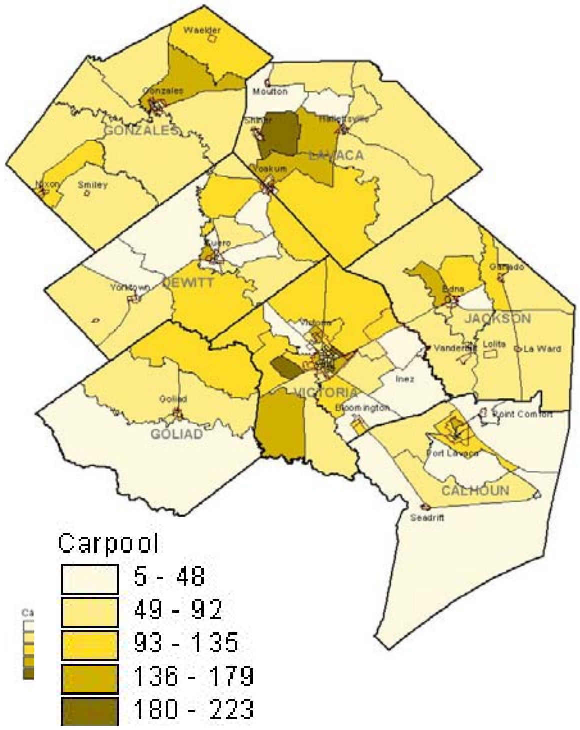
42 - 62
63 - 83
84 - 104

**CARPOOL**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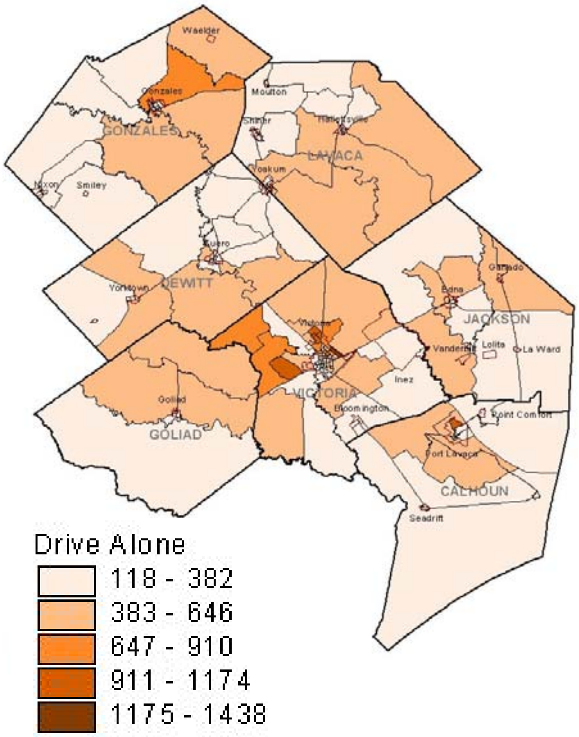
LAVACA
Yoakum
Cuero
Yorktown
DEWITT
Garwood
Edna
JACKSON
Victoria
Vanderbilt
Lolita
La Ward
Inez
VICTORIA
Bloomington
Point Comfort
Goliad
GOLIAD
Port Lavaca
CALHOUN
Seadrift
Carpool
5 - 48
49 - 92
93 - 135
136 - 179
180 - 223

**DRIVE ALONE**


Waelder
Gonzales
GONZALES
Nixon
Smiley
Moulton
Shiner
Hallettsville
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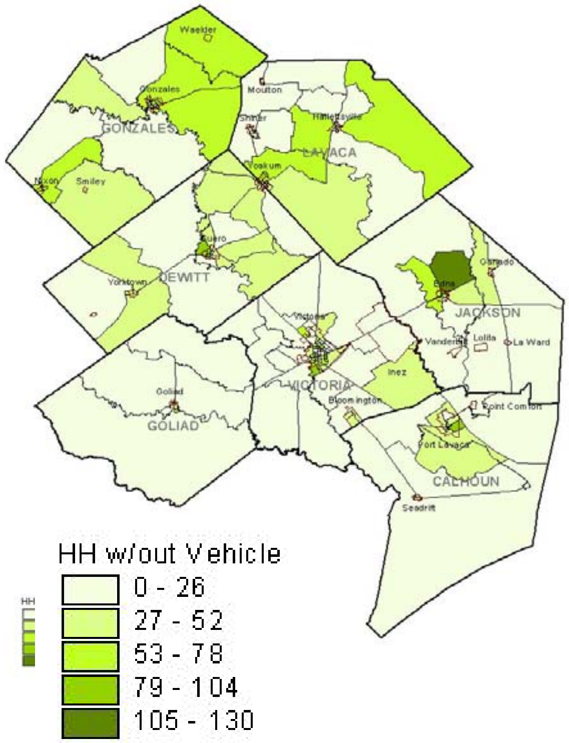
Garwood
Edna
JACKSON
Victoria
Vanderbilt
Lolita
La Ward
Inez
VICTORIA
Bloomington
Point Comfort
Goliad
GOLIAD
Port Lavaca
CALHOUN
Seadrift
Drive Alone
118 - 382
383 - 646
647 - 910
911 - 1174
1175 - 1438

**HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT VEHICLE**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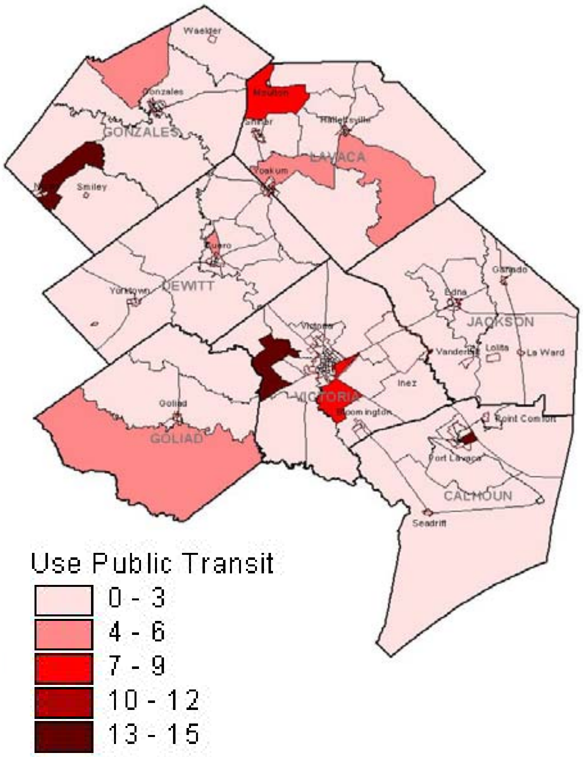
JACKSON
Victoria
Vanderbilt
Lolita
La Ward
Inez
VICTORIA
Bloomington
Point Comfort
Goliad
GOLIAD
Port Lavaca
CALHOUN
Seadrift
HH w/out Vehicle
0 - 26
27 - 52
53 - 78
79 - 104
105 - 130

**USE PUBLIC TRANSIT**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DEWITT
Garwood
Edna
JACKSON
Victoria
Vanderbilt
Lolita
La Ward
Inez
VICTORIA
Bloomington
Point Comfort
Goliad
GOLIAD
Port Lavaca
CALHOUN
Seadrift
Use Public Transit
0 - 3
4 - 6
7 - 9
10 - 12
13 - 15

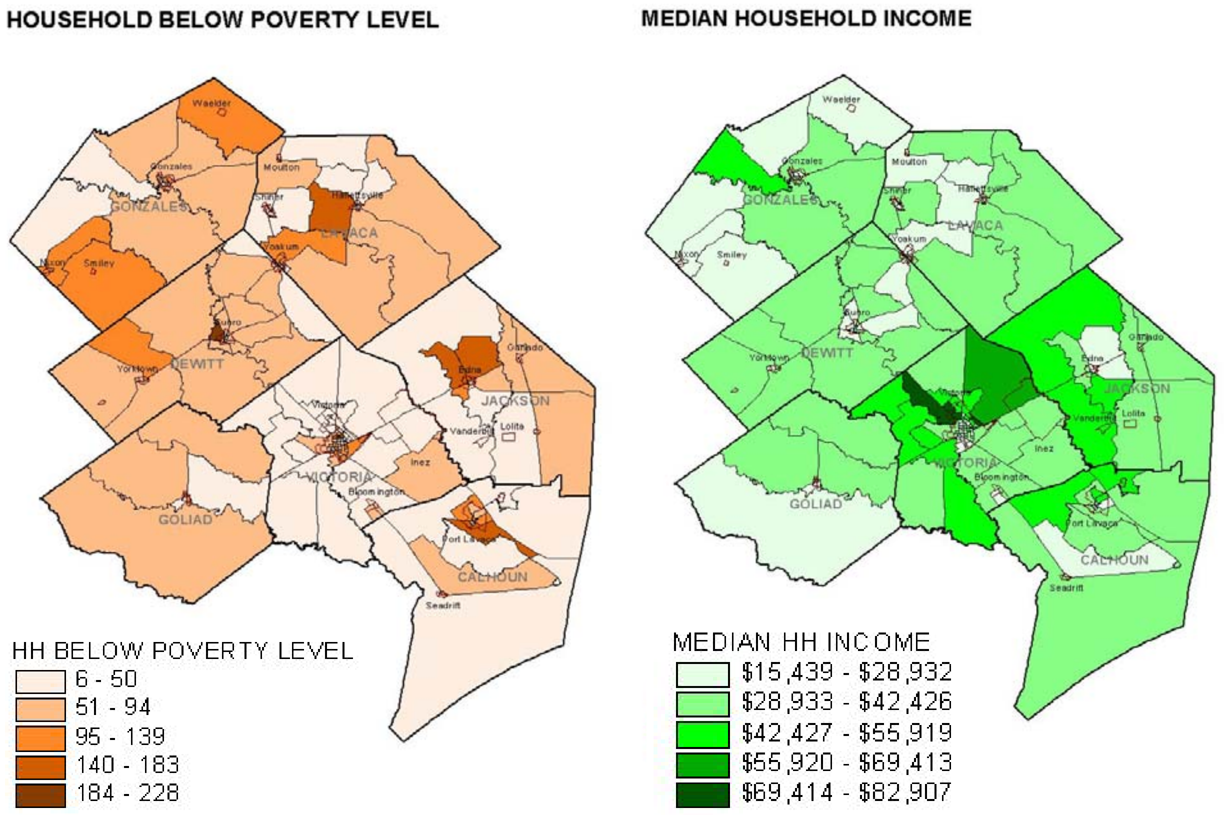

HOUSEHOLD BELOW POVERTY LEVEL
Waelder
Gonzales
GONZALES
Moulton
Shiner
Hallettsville
LAVACA
Yoakum
Nixon
Smiley
Cuero
Yorktown
DEWITT
Edna
Ganado
JACKSON
Victoria
Vanderbilt
Lolita
Inez
VICTORIA
Bloomington
GOLIAD
Port Lavaca
CALHOUN
Seadrift
HH BELOW POVERTY LEVEL
6 - 50
51 - 94
95 - 139
140 - 183
184 - 228
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
MEDIAN HH INCOME
$15,439 - $28,932
$28,933 - $42,426
$42,427 - $55,919
$55,920 - $69,413
$69,414 - $82,907

*Figure 2.1 – Golden Crescent Region Key Indicator Maps*

## Existing Coordination in Golden Crescent Region

Coordination between transit agencies is not a new concept in the Golden Crescent Region. Transit coordination is part and parcel of the service delivery approach of all of the providers within Golden Crescent Region has been extensive and vital to the existence of rural transit service.

The Golden Crescent Region has a coordinated rural transit system in which several of the counties operate their services under contract with GCRPC. GCRPC provides services directly in DeWitt County and Victoria County. GCRPC subcontracts services with either a senior citizens association or the county government in Calhoun, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, and Lavaca counties. *Figure 2.2* shows the counties and the service providers in each county.

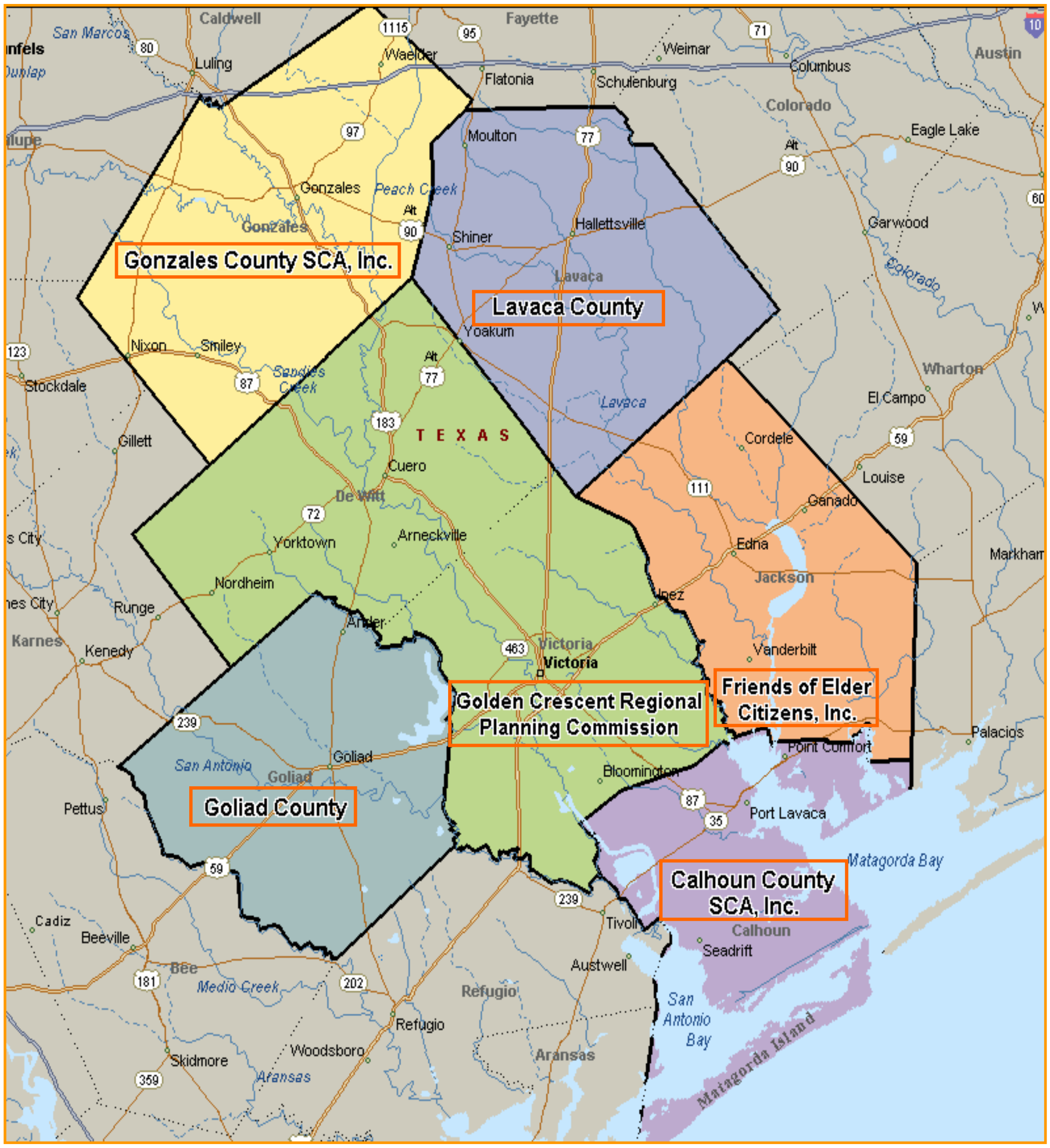

Gonzales County SCA, Inc.
Lavaca County
Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission
Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc.
Goliad County
Calhoun County SCA, Inc.
TEXAS
Gonzales
Lavaca
De Witt
Jackson
Goliad
Victoria
Calhoun
Cuero
Yoakum
Hallettsville
Shiner
Moulton
Edna
Ganado
Port Lavaca
Seadrift
Matagorda Bay
San Antonio Bay
Matagorda Island

*Figure 2.2 – Golden Crescent Region Service Providers*

Victoria is the economic and political center of the Golden Crescent Region. RTransit coordinates all the rural transit services in the region and, in recent years, has developed fixed-route services within the city of Victoria. The contractual system developed provides a balance between local autonomy and more effective regional coordination of service.

### Governance and Local Funding

The issue of funding is the core challenge for most rural public transit agencies in the United States. While most large urban agencies can rely on one or more dedicated local funding source, rural systems especially need to rely on a patchwork of funding sources, along with limited local support from county and municipal governments.

Counties in the Golden Crescent Region provide varied levels of direct assistance. *Table 2.2* shows the local funding provided to each of the Golden Crescent Region counties excluding the monies received from the Medical Transportation Program. *Table 2.2* shows the local contributions to transit services in the region.

***Table 2.2 – Local Contributions to Transit Services in the Region***

| *County* | *Rural Provider* | *FY2005 County General Fund Contribution* | *FY2005 Coordination Revenue* | *Total Local Revenue FY2005* | *County Population* | *Per Capita Contribution* | *Per Capita Local Only* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Calhoun | Calhoun SCA | $15,349 | 19,574 | $34,923 | 20,647 | $ 1.69 | $1.35 |
| DeWitt | Golden Crescent | $4,320 | 34,123 | $38,443 | 20,507 | $1.87 | $4.75 |
| Goliad | Goliad County | $14,399 | $16,852 | $31,251 | 7102 | $4.40 | $ 0.49 |
| Gonzales | Gonzales SCA | $9,279 | $68,056 | $77,335 | 19,587 | $3.95 | $2.11 |
| Jackson | Friends of Elder Citizens | $14,417 | $25,317 | $39,734 | 14,339 | $2.77 | $0.99 |
| Lavaca | Lavaca County | $46,226 | $63,818 | $110,044 | 19,210 | $5.73 | $0.42 |
| Victoria | Golden Crescent | $4,320 | $34,799 | $39,119 | 23,485 | $1.67 | $5.44 |
| ***Total GCRPC*** | | **$108,310** | **$262,539** | **$370,849** | **124,877** | **$ 2.97** | **$1.15** |

### Regional Coordination

The Medical Transportation Program (MTP) is an outstanding example of successful regional coordination in the Golden Crescent Region. The GCRPC has always contracted directly for the MTP in the Golden Crescent Region and subcontracted with their rural providers in Calhoun, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, and Lavaca counties. One significant challenge involves Medicaid transportation in Matagorda County. The GCRPC previously served the MTP trips in Matagorda County. Under the new guidelines, Matagorda County Medicaid services had to be bid from a different region, the Houston Gulf Coast Region. As a result of the RFP, the coordinated transportation arrangement for Medicaid between Golden Crescent and Matagorda County was no longer feasible.

GCRPC RTransit was not equipped with sufficient resources to bid on the entire Houston Gulf Coast Region. As a result, GCRPC's subcontractor, Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc., had to subcontract with AMR for Medicaid transportation in Matagorda County.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) awarded the contract to RTransit for Region 17 – Golden Crescent. Service under the new contract commenced in June 2006 and, while many of the stipulations of the new state contract have been challenging to implement, RTransit has successfully developed an effective coordinated regional system for Medical Transportation in the Golden Crescent Region.

### RTransit and Coordination

A coordinated model of senior, public and Medicaid Transportation exists in the Golden Crescent Region. RTransit began operations in November 1986. *Figure 2.3* shows the coordination model of RTransit. The coordination model involves providing transportation to all seven counties within the Golden Crescent Region under a series of contracts with different counties in different agencies. RTransit provides technical assistance from their fleet staff and assists their providers to find local vendors to address maintenance issues.

RTRANSIT
Rural Public Transportation

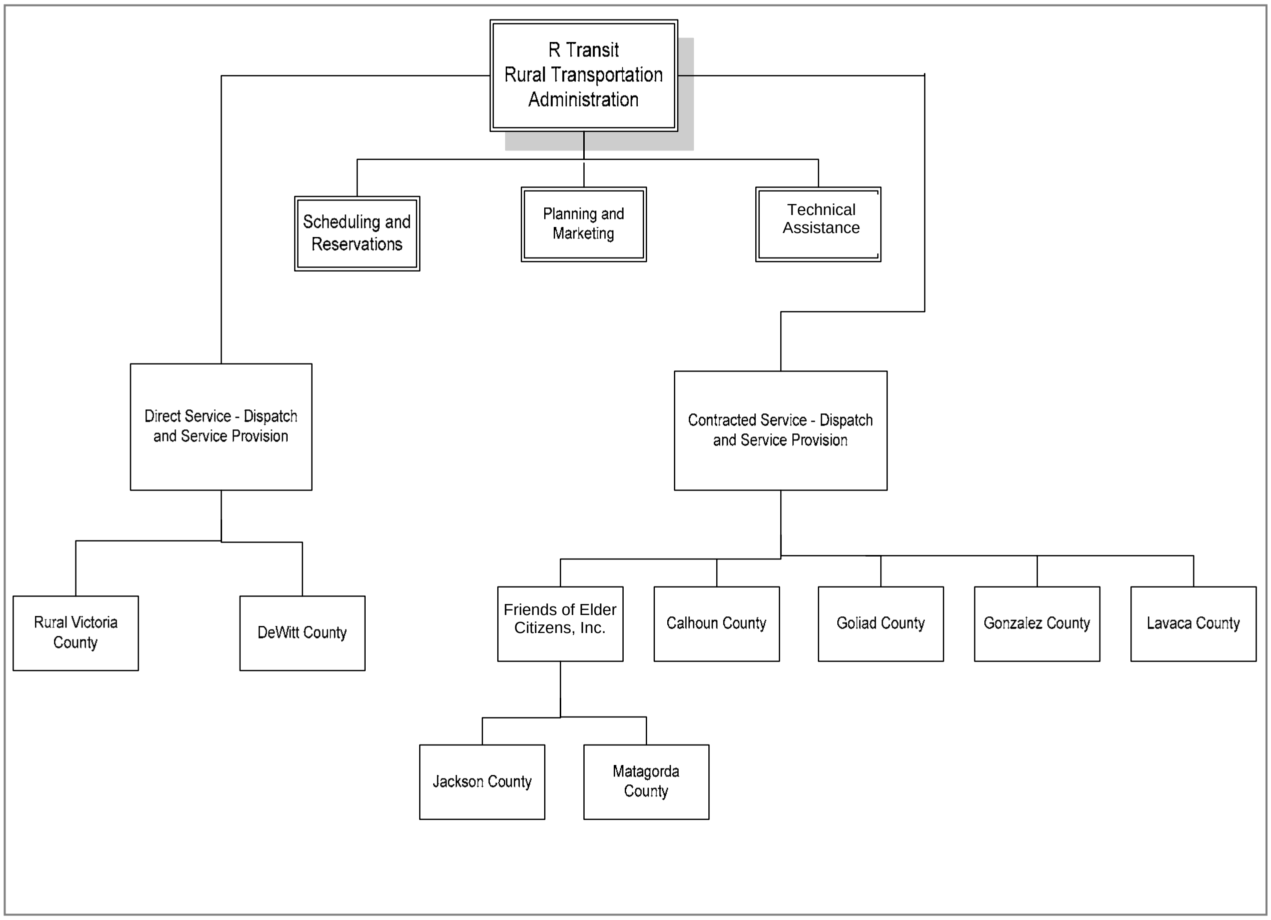

R Transit
Rural Transportation
Administration
Scheduling and Reservations
Planning and Marketing
Technical Assistance
Direct Service - Dispatch and Service Provision
Contracted Service - Dispatch and Service Provision
Rural Victoria County
DeWitt County
Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc.
Calhoun County
Goliad County
Gonzalez County
Lavaca County
Jackson County
Matagorda County

*Figure 2.7 – RTransit Consolidation Chart*

## *Service Area Need and Service Level*

Transit policymakers have recognized that rural areas of the United States are underserved and underfunded vis-à-vis public transit needs. Public support for rural transit service generally started later than it did for its urban counterparts, rural service built local support and funding significantly through coordinated transportation service contracts. Local support in the form of direct revenue assistance at the county and community levels is an important factor in the Golden Crescent Region. However, in many counties in the Golden Crescent Region, coordinated transportation comprises the majority of local support.

Two methodologies have been developed to assess the level of service and need in the Golden Crescent Region. Each measure provides a potential perspective in how much transit service is needed for the seven counties in the region. The measures are based for rural service and exclude the City of Victoria.

The first measure is a per capita approach to transit need, positing transit need based upon population. For the sake of clarity, this method will be described as the Per Capita Approach to transit need and service. The method provides a rough approximation of a reasonable service level and the relative performance of the transit providers in the seven counties.

A second approach has been developed which examines transit need based upon five demographic indicators compared with Texas as a whole. A separate measure examines the overall level of transit service within the county. Type of service availability (with existence and level of general public transportation being deemed the most significant factor) A score of zero or one is given for all indicators of service except the existence and level of general public transportation which is scored between 1 and 3.

Rural transportation is public transportation, but it is not as efficient nor does it provide the number of trips that large urban or even small urban transportation can provide. Densities are low, average trip lengths are high. However, significant numbers of individuals need transit service. The Golden Crescent Region faces challenges with respect to an aging population, lower incomes, and long distances to travel. As a result, there are clear needs for transit service. Examining transit needs in the Golden Crescent Region indicate the relative level of rural transit need in that region is higher than in Texas as a whole.

### Per Capita Approach

Research conducted by “TRCP Project A-3: Rural Transit Demand Estimation Techniques” posits four persons per capita as a reasonable maximum level of travel demand for highly rural areas such as Golden Crescent. Four persons per capita are referred to as a maximum adequate demand level. One person per capita can be viewed as a minimum service level where basic demand is being met. Due to the cost of rural transit services, reaching the level of one passenger per capita in rural counties is a difficult and costly challenge.

*Table 2.3* examines what would be the level of demand needed to meet minimum service demands and then comparing the existing service levels to the minimum demand to gain an idea of what sort of gap exists between demand and service levels. The rural population of each county is shown per the Census 2000 and the total ridership for the service area of each transit is shown. None of the three rural providers meet the minimum demand for service. The Golden Crescent Region overall provides slightly more than 76% of minimum demand and hence has a

24% gap from minimum demand. Gonzales and Lavaca counties have transit ridership that exceeds 1.0 passenger per capita. Lavaca County has the highest ridership level per capita at 1.49 passengers. DeWitt and Victoria are the only two counties with the ridership levels below 0.50 passengers per capita.

***Table 2.3 – Minimal Transit Demand Level***

| *County* | *Rural Population (Census 2000)* | *Ridership (FY2005)* | *Per Capita Ridership* | *Minimal Per Capita* | *Rural Demand (Minimum)* | *Minimal Demand Gap (Number)* | *Minimal Demand Gap (Percentage)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Calhoun | 20,647 | 14,184 | 0.69 | 1.0 | 14,184 | 6,463 | 31.30% |
| DeWitt | 20,507 | 7,133 | 0.35 | 1.0 | 7,133 | 13,374 | 65.22% |
| Goliad | 7,102 | 5,610 | 0.79 | 1.0 | 5,610 | 1,492 | 21.01% |
| Gonzales | 19,587 | 22,577 | 1.15 | 1.0 | 22,577 | (2,990) | -15.27% |
| Jackson | 14,339 | 9,948 | 0.69 | 1.0 | 9,948 | 4,391 | 30.62% |
| Lavaca | 19,210 | 28,534 | 1.49 | 1.0 | 28,534 | (9,324) | -48.54% |
| Victoria (Rural) | 23,485 | 7,448 | 0.32 | 1.0 | 7,448 | 16,037 | 68.29% |
| ***Total GCRPC*** | **124,877** | **95,434** | **0.76** | **1.0** | **124,877** | **29,443** | **23.58%** |

### Transit Needs Index

The Transit Needs Index provides a tool to assist in assessing both the relative level of transit need combined with assessing the level of service provided. Transit need is determined by measuring key demographic indicators of the level of transportation need. Data is derived from the U.S. Census 2000. The transit need median is based on the level of the demographic indicator for the state of Texas.

Transportation need consider the following demographic indicators.

- **Percentage of Households without an Automobile** (mobility challenged). A higher percentage of households, translates to a higher transit need.
- **Median Household Income –** (resources available) lower average income translates to a higher transit need due to assumed vehicle reliability and cost of gasoline.
- **Percentage Persons over 65** (seniors**) -** Higher senior population tends to result in higher percentage of persons who cannot use a vehicle, hence a need for alternate transportation.
- **Percentage Persons with a Disability** (persons with disabilities). Indicator attempts to measure need based on percentage of persons with disability which *may* also result in a greater need for alternate transportation.
- **Percentage of Households below Poverty Line** (economically disadvantaged). Represents a level of economic need and need for less expensive mobility options.

Each indicator is measure on a scale of $\boxed{1}$ to $\boxed{3}$ with $\boxed{1}$ indicating lowest need for transit and $\boxed{3}$ indicating the most need for transit. Texas transit statistics represent the base point for each measurement since need is being measured versus relative need in Texas as a whole. The measurement of transit need is not seen as an absolute measurement of service need, but as a tool to understand relative levels of need throughout the region. *Table 2.4* shows the three point scoring system based on the level for the entire state of Texas. Counties where the need is substantially higher than the Texas average (more than 20% above state average – except for median household income which is lower) are scored as a three. Counties where the need is substantially lower than the Texas average (more than 20% below the state average – except for median household income which is higher) are scored as a one. Counties in which the need is within 20 percent of the state level are scored as a two. Therefore, scores higher than 10 indicate transit need higher than the state (15 is the maximum score and 5 is the minimum score). *Table 2.5* shows the key demographic indicators by county in the Golden Crescent Region. As shown in *Table 2.4*, these indicators form the information used to score transit needs in different counties.

***Table 2.4 – Scoring for Transit Needs Index***

| | ***% of Households Without Auto*** | ***Median Household Income*** | ***% of Persons over 65*** | ***% of Persons with a Disability 21-64*** | ***% of Households Below Poverty Line*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **What It Measures** | Mobility challenge | Financial resources | Senior population | Disability population | Economically disadvantaged |
| **Texas** | 7.40% | $39,927 | 9.90% | 19.90% | 12.00% |
| **High Need** | 8.88% or higher | $31,942 or lower | 11.88% or higher | 23.88% or higher | 14.40% or higher |
| **High Score** | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **Medium Need** | between 5.92% and 8.88% | between $31,942 and $47,912 | Between 7.92% and 11.88% | between 15.92% and 23.88% | between 9.6% and 14.40% |
| **Medium Score** | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **Low Need** | lower than 5.92% | higher than $47,912 | lower than 7.92% | lower than 15.92% | lower than 9.6% |
| **Low Score** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

| *Table 2.5 – Golden Crescent Region Key Demographic Indicators* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***County*** | ***Population (2000)*** | ***% of Persons Over 65*** | ***% of Households without Auto*** | ***% of Persons 21-65 with a Disability*** | ***Per Capita Income*** | ***Household Poverty Rate*** |
| **Calhoun** | 20,647 | 13.3% | 7.2% | 16.40% | $35,849 | 12.70% |
| **DeWitt** | 20,507 | 17.8% | 9.2% | 25.00% | $28,714 | 15.30% |
| **Goliad** | 7,102 | 17.2% | 5.7% | 16.70% | $34,201 | 11.90% |
| **Gonzales** | 19,587 | 15.9% | 11.2% | 23.60% | $28,368 | 13.80% |
| **Jackson** | 14,339 | 15.3% | 7.1% | 24.40% | $35,254 | 12.20% |
| **Lavaca** | 19,210 | 21.5% | 7.5% | 22.80% | $29,132 | 10.20% |
| **Victoria** | 85,648 | 12.4% | 7.0% | 20.10% | $38,172 | 10.50% |
| **Texas** | **20,851,820** | **9.9%** | **7.4%** | **19.90%** | **$39,842** | **12.00%** |
| Source: U.S. Census 2000 | | | | | | |

| *Table 2.6 – Golden Crescent Scoring of Estimated Transit Need* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***County*** | ***Persons Over 65*** | ***Households without Auto*** | ***% of Persons 21-65 with a Disability*** | ***Median Household Income*** | ***Household Poverty Rate*** | ***Total Score*** |
| **Calhoun** | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **11** |
| **DeWitt** | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | **15** |
| **Goliad** | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **11** |
| **Gonzales** | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | **13** |
| **Jackson** | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | **13** |
| **Lavaca** | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | **12** |
| **Victoria** | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **11** |
| **Texas** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **10** |
| Source: U.S. Census 2000 | | | | | | |

Based on *Table 2.6*, all seven counties in the Golden Crescent Region show a higher level of transit need than the state as a whole. Reasons for this higher need include the following:

- The percentage of persons over 65 is more than 20% higher than the state average in all seven counties.
- The percentage of households without an auto is either equivalent or substantially higher (as is the case with DeWitt and Gonzales counties).
- Five of the seven counties have approximately the same level of persons with disabilities as the state average. However two counties, Dewitt and Jackson, have a substantially higher percentage of persons with disabilities. In each county, approximately one quarter of the non-senior population has a disability as shown in the U.S. Census 2000.

- The median household income that is lower than the state average in all seven of the Golden Crescent Region counties. DeWitt, Gonzales, Jackson, and Lavaca counties all have median household incomes more than 20% below the Texas average.
- With respect to the household poverty rate, all seven counties have a poverty rate at least equivalent to the state average. DeWitt County has a household poverty rate more than 20% higher than the state average.

DeWitt County shows the highest level of transit need of any county in the region based on the five demographic indicators. The DeWitt County score is the highest possible score using this method -- 15. A reasonable conclusion is that, while the transit need is significant in all seven counties, the greatest need for transit services is in DeWitt County based on the demographic factors.

## *Transit Availability*

Transit availability is primarily based on the amount of public transit per capita available within the county or region. The index results in scores between 0 and 11, and includes the role that human service transportation may provide within the community. A score of 0 would indicate no human service or rural public transportation is provided within the community and 11 would indicate that the rural service meets a substantial level of community need for transportation service. Scoring less than 5 would indicate a very low level of service. None of the Golden Crescent counties score below 5 (although some counties in other parts of Texas would score below 5). A score of 11 does not indicate all needs are met. Scoring less than 10 is not meant to be a criticism any of the transit agencies since many of the rural agencies in Texas lack the resources to score a higher than a 7 or 8.

Either a county or a region can be scored with this analysis.

| ***Criteria for Transit Availability Index*** | ***Points*** |
|---|---|
| Availability of Senior Center services to residents of county (can be contracted to transit provider) | 1 point |
| Availability of MHMR services to group homes, workshops (can be contracted to transit provider) | 1 point |
| Medicaid transportation (can be contracted to transit provider) | 1 point |
| General rural transportation | 3 points |
| No General rural transportation | 0 points |
| General rural transportation providing more than 1.00 trips per capita | 3 points |
| General rural transportation providing between than .50 and trips per capita | 2 points |
| General rural transportation providing less than .50 trips per capita | 1 point |
| General rural transportation providing no trips | 0 points |
| Rural transportation providing evening service | 1 point |
| Rural transportation providing weekend service | 1 point |

Calhoun and Gonzales counties scored the highest among the counties in the Golden Crescent Region with a ranking of 9. All of the scores reflect a significant level of rural transit service although not an optimal level of service. The higher score is based on the fact that each of those counties provides more than 1.0 trip per capita. *Table 2.7* shows the relative scores of the seven counties. The average available level for the seven counties is 7.9.

***Table 2.7 – Transit Availability Index***

| ***County*** | ***General Rural Transit Service Provided*** | ***Rural Service Level*** | ***General Rural Evening Service*** | ***General Rural Weekend Service*** | ***Medical Transportation Program*** | ***Senior Transportation*** | ***MHMR Transportation*** | ***Total Score*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Calhoun | 3 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **9** |
| DeWitt | 3 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **7** |
| Goliad | 3 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **8** |
| Gonzales | 3 | 3 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **9** |
| Jackson | 3 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **7** |
| Lavaca | 3 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **7** |
| Victoria | 3 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | **8** |
| ***Average*** | **3** | **1.86** | **-** | **-** | **1.00** | **1.00** | **1.00** | **7.9** |

## Service Provider Profiles and Capabilities

The Golden Crescent Region covers a seven-county area. RTransit coordinates service to eight counties. Matagorda County, through the Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc., coordinates public and senior transportation services with RTransit. However, Matagorda County is part of the Gulf Coast/Houston region, and services within the county are being addressed in another study. As services are examined in this study, although RTransit has a contractual relationship in providing services to Matagorda County, only the seven Golden Crescent counties will be analyzed in detail.

### Victoria Transit

Victoria Transit has developed and grown in the last decade. Many other urban transit systems in smaller and larger cities came about as a result of the failure of private bus services in the 1960s and 1970s. Victoria Transit has been "built from scratch" over the last decade.

The Victoria County Metropolitan Planning Organization conducted a Transit Feasibility Study in 1995. Upon conclusion of the study, the Urban Transit District for the City of Victoria was created in 1997, with the service to be administrated by the GCRPC per Interlocal Agreement. RTransit has been providing rural demand-response and coordinating transportation services in the Golden Crescent Region since 1986. The service was based in Victoria and, therefore, was ideally positioned to assume responsibility for the urban system. The distinction between urban and rural service under federal transit guidelines is based on a population of 50,000 or greater. When a metropolitan area has a population greater than 50,000 but less than 200,000, the Federal Transit

Administration (FTA) considered that Metropolitan area to be a Small Urban entity for funding and reporting purposes. Victoria has grown to population over 60,000 in the U.S. Census 2000, and continues to grow.

Demand-response transit service started in Victoria in January 1999 and grew rapidly. This service began to seriously tax available resources of vehicles and staff. Demand-response service, especially in an urban area, can result in high levels of demand that are very expensive to provide. Fixed-route service began in March 2002 with three routes. Fixed-route service was a new challenge and a new service for the city of Victoria. Startup months showed strong initial ridership when free fares were offered. However, ridership declined over the next few months in 2002.

In order to evaluate the new fixed-route service in Victoria, LKC Consulting Services, Houston, Texas, conducted studies in 2002 and 2003. Modifications to service were made and ridership has been increasing steadily.

*Table 2.8* shows a distinctive and consistent upward trend in fixed-route and paratransit ridership in FY2005 and FY2006. Ridership increased 28.56 percent during the first seven months of FY2006 versus the same seven months in FY2005. If that trend continues for the rest of the year, ridership on fixed-route and paratransit services in Victoria will approach 200,000 trips.

***Table 2.8 – Victoria Transit Fixed-Route and Paratransit Ridership***

| ***Month*** | ***FY2005*** | ***FY2006*** | ***Net Increase in Riders*** | ***% Change*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sep | 12,188 | 13,960 | 1,772 | 14.54% |
| Oct | 12,903 | 15,499 | 2,596 | 20.12% |
| Nov | 11,706 | 16,247 | 4,541 | 38.79% |
| Dec | 12,716 | 15,503 | 2,787 | 21.92% |
| Jan | 12,244 | 16,815 | 4,571 | 37.33% |
| Feb | 11,794 | 15,271 | 3,477 | 29.48% |
| Mar | 12,572 | 17,423 | 4,851 | 38.59% |
| Apr | 12,130 | 15,594 | 3,464 | 28.56% |
| May | 12,833 | 16,498 | 3,665 | 28.56% |
| Jun | 14,456 | 18,585 | 4,129 | 28.56% |
| Jul | 13,810 | 17,754 | 3,944 | 28.56% |
| Aug | 15,611 | 20,070 | 4,459 | 28.56% |
| ***Total*** | **154,963** | **199,219** | **44,256** | **28.56%** |

## Service Features

Victoria, like many modern American cities, has a fairly decentralized concentration of locations that would be considered transit attractors and destinations. Hence, the "hub-and-spoke system" would not be effective in Victoria. Key travel destinations for the fixed-route service in Victoria generally travel along a north-south axis. Victoria Transit utilizes six revenue vehicles for fixed-route services.

There are three existing fixed routes, with a fourth route planned to start in the near future. Each is separated into a northern and southern component that takes approximately 30 minutes to travel. Routes may intersect with each other allowing transfers, but they do not gather in a central hub. A feasibility study to construct an Intermodal Terminal in Victoria is being conducted at the same time as this study and will be completed December 2006. The Red and Blue lines run between the central areas of the city and the northern areas of the city, while the Green line runs between the central areas in the southern part of Victoria. Two buses run per hour on each route between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. The travel headway on each of the three routes is 30 minutes. Fares were lowered from $1 to $.50 in November 2003 to increase ridership. Persons over 60 and persons with disability can ride fixed-route service for $0.25. Discount 10- and 20-trip passes are also available. Daily passes (equivalent to three one-way trips) and monthly passes also are sold. Transfers to other routes are free but non-transferable.

### Demand-Response Service in Victoria Urbanized Area

Since Victoria Transit began to provide fixed-route service in 2002, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), complementary paratransit for persons with disabilities who are unable to access fixed-route service as a result of a disability. In the past, complying with ADA requirements meant providing demand-response service, with the exception that it needed to meet the stricter regulatory standards required with respect to ADA complementary paratransit. Eight vehicles are used for demand-response service.

### Eligibility

Applications for ADA eligibility are mailed in for determination. Victoria Transit staff review the applications and an eligibility determination is normally made within two weeks. Victoria Transit presumes the applying person is eligible and therefore the person can utilize this service during the two-week determination period. The individual will receive written notification that they have been certified as eligible.

### Reservations

Trips must be reserved at least one day in advance. Passengers will be given a trip time (the time they are to be picked up); however, passengers must be available 15 minutes before the trip time.

### Fares

The regular ADA paratransit fare is $.60. Books of 10 and 20 tickets are available; however, unlike fixed-route fares, there is no volume discount for purchase of these tickets.

### Pickup Window

Passengers must be ready 15 minutes before the time they are scheduled to be picked up as drivers are permitted what is known as a 15-minute pickup window. This means that when the trip is scheduled for 10 a.m., the passengers should be aware that the vehicle is scheduled to arrive sometime between 9:45 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. Once the vehicle arrives within that time frame, it will wait five minutes for the passenger.

### No Shows

Passengers who do not appear for their schedule pickups will receive a no-show. Three no-shows within a 30-day period can result in the passenger being suspended from transportation services for up to one month.

***Table 2.9 – Paratransit Operating Performance***

| *Month* | *Total Revenue Hours* | *Total Revenue Miles* | *Total Trips* | *Trips Per Revenue Hour* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sep 2004 | 742 | 8,462 | 1,919 | 2.59 |
| Oct 2004 | 729 | 8,667 | 1,976 | 2.71 |
| Nov 2004 | 686 | 8,129 | 1,896 | 2.76 |
| Dec 2004 | 569 | 6,637 | 1,476 | 2.60 |
| Jan 2005 | 765 | 8,447 | 1,873 | 2.45 |
| Feb 2005 | 752 | 8,370 | 1,672 | 2.22 |
| Mar 2005 | 843 | 9,267 | 1,968 | 2.34 |
| Apr 2005 | 741 | 9,552 | 1,995 | 2.69 |
| May 2005 | 776 | 9,070 | 1,895 | 2.44 |
| Jun 2005 | 890 | 10,161 | 2,040 | 2.29 |
| Jul 2005 | 852 | 10,017 | 2,095 | 2.46 |
| Aug 2005 | 1106 | 13,931 | 2,408 | 2.18 |
| ***Total*** | **9,450** | **110,710** | **23,213** | **2.46** |

*Table 2.9* shows the operating data for ADA paratransit during FY2005. Total passenger trips during FY2005 were 23,213. Total revenue hours were 9,450. Total revenue miles were 110,710. Passenger productivity was 2.46 passengers per revenue hour, a reasonable level of productivity for an ADA paratransit system of this size in terms of geography and ridership.

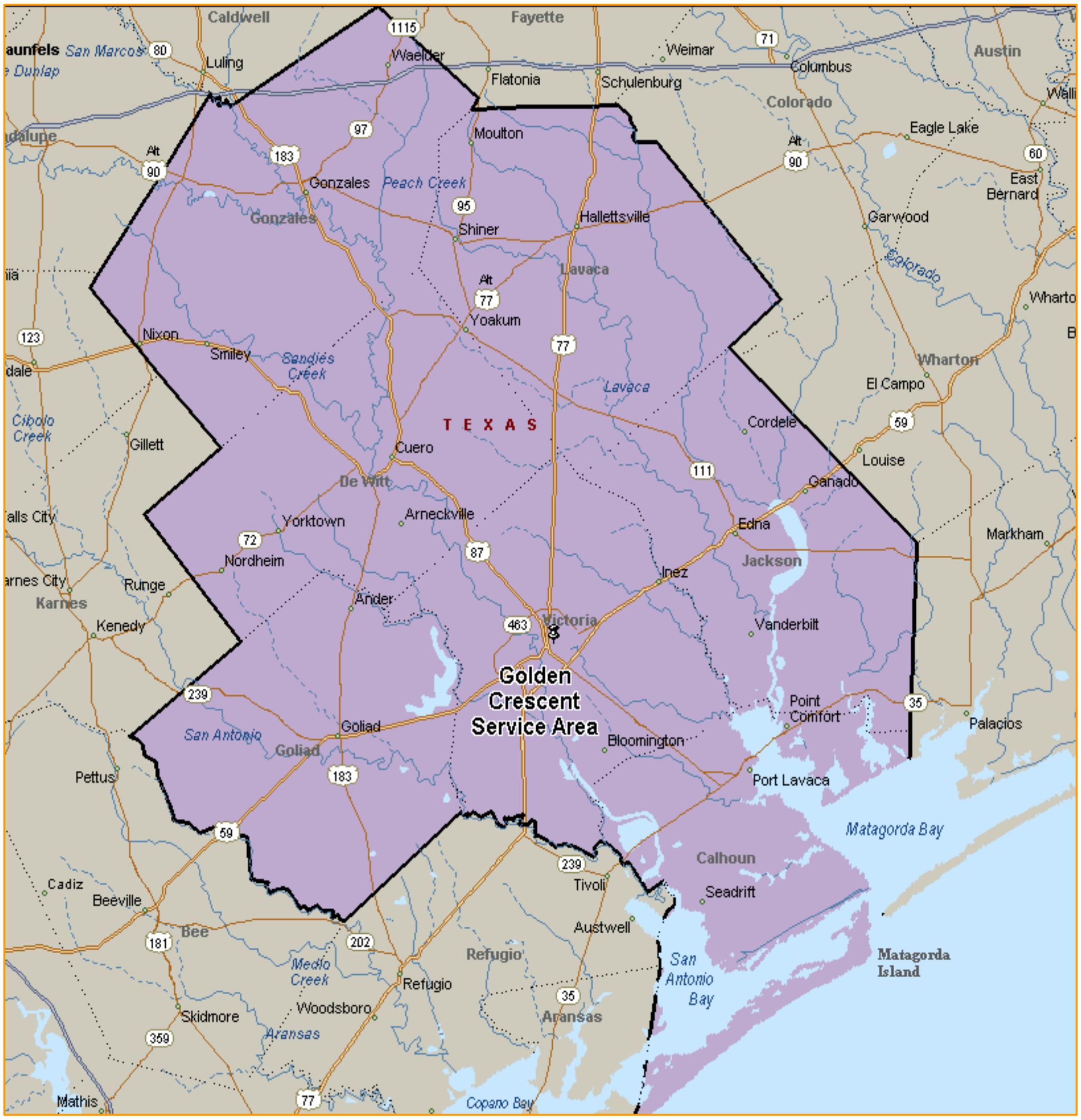
### Maintenance and Vehicles for Victoria Transit and RTransit

Victoria Transit and RTransit outsource all preventive and repair work for their vehicles, as well as their subcontractors. They do maintain a fleet staff consisting of one Fleet Manager and Assistant who oversee that vehicles are maintained. The fleet staff also provides technical support to subcontractors on maintenance issues. Bus porters are also utilized to clean vehicles on a regular basis. In-house maintenance is desired by Victoria Transit and RTransit to gain control of this aspect of service. The proposed City of Victoria Intermodal Terminal will include a maintenance building.

GCRPC purchases all of the vehicles for its providers and for its direct operation. Therefore, purchasing is coordinated at the regional level.

## *County Demographics and Transit Service*

The following section provides an examination of each individual county within the Golden Crescent Region. The purpose of this section is to provide a county-by-county examination of the current relevant circumstances and the existing transit within each county. *Figure 2.8* shows the Golden Crescent Region urban and rural service area.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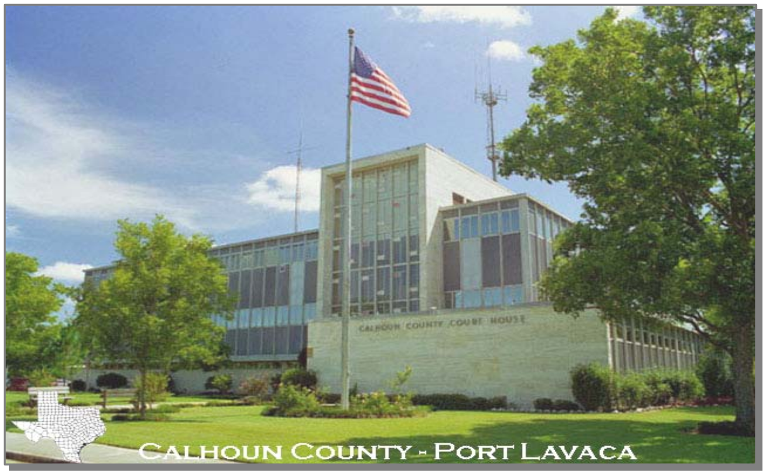
Fayette
aunfels
San Marcos
Dunlap
Luling
Waelder
Flatonia
Schulenburg
Weimar
Columbus
Austin
Walli
Colorado
Eagle Lake
East Bernard
Moulton
Gonzales
Peach Creek
Gonzales
Shiner
Hallettsville
Lavaca
Garwood
Colorado
Wharto
Yoakum
Nixon
Smiley
Sandies Creek
Lavaca
Wharton
El Campo
Cibolo Creek
Gillett
TEXAS
Cuero
Cordele
Louise
De Witt
Ganado
Arneckville
Yorktown
Edna
Nordheim
Jackson
Markham
alls City
arnes City
Runge
Karnes
Kenedy
Ander
Inez
Victoria
Vanderbilt
Golden Crescent Service Area
Point Comfort
Palacios
San Antonio
Goliad
Goliad
Bloomington
Pettus
Port Lavaca
Matagorda Bay
Calhoun
Cadiz
Beeville
Seadrift
Tivoli
Bee
Austwell
Matagorda Island
Medio Creek
Refugio
Refugio
San Antonio Bay
Woodsboro
Skidmore
Aransas
Aransas
Mathis
Copano Bay
1115
80
71
97
183
Alt 90
Alt 90
60
95
Alt 77
123
77
59
111
72
87
463
239
35
183
59
239
181
202
35
359
77

*Figure 2.8 – Golden Crescent Region Urban and Rural Service Area*

# Calhoun County


CALHOUN COUNTY COURT HOUSE
CALHOUN COUNTY - PORT LAVACA

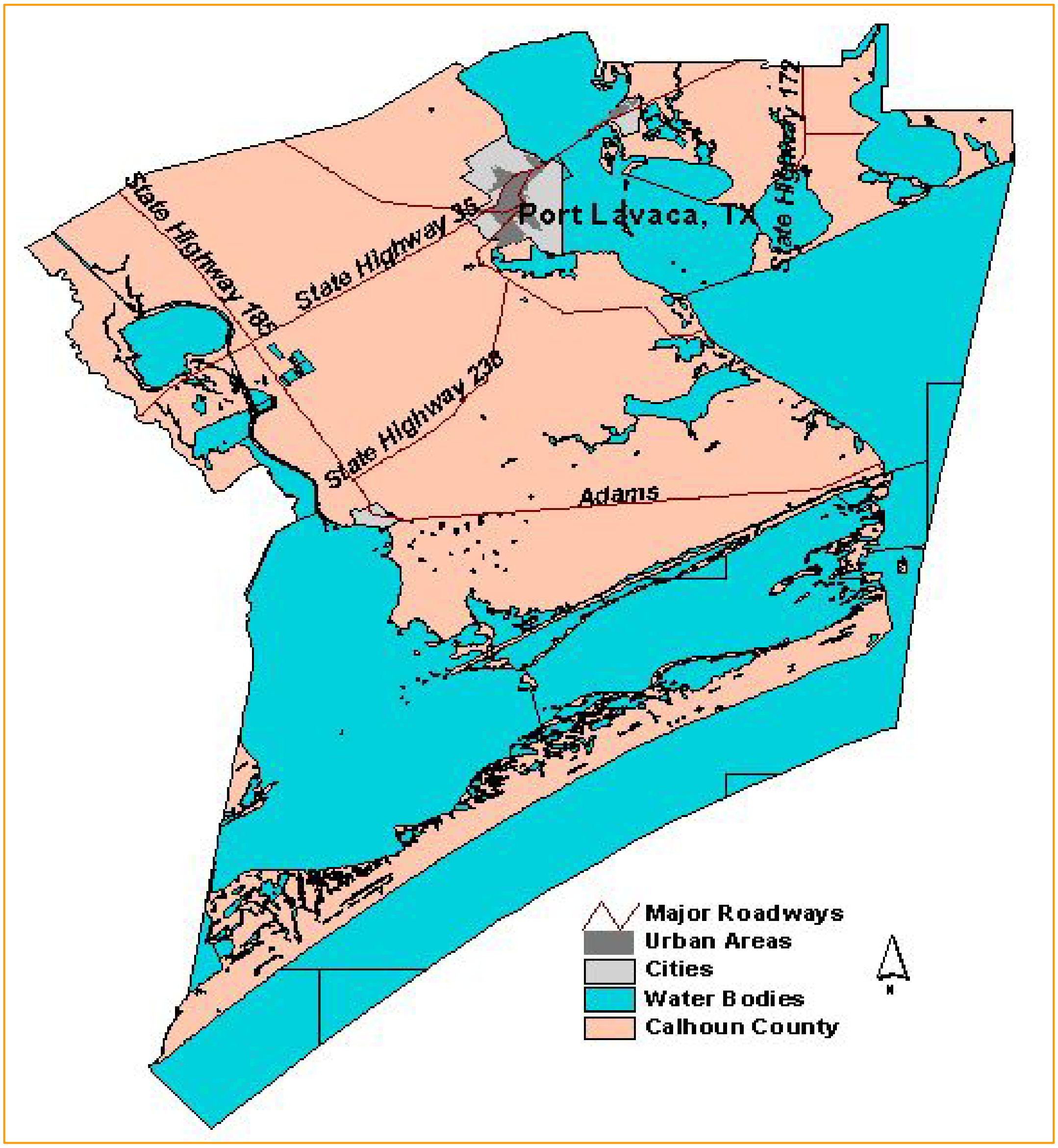

State Highway 185
State Highway 35
Port Lavaca, TX
State Highway 172
State Highway 238
Adams
Major Roadways
Urban Areas
Cities
Water Bodies
Calhoun County
N

*Figure 2.9 – Calhoun County*

*Demographic Summary*

Calhoun County is located at the southern edge of the Golden Crescent Region along the Gulf Coast. The population of Calhoun County was 20,647 as of the Census 2000. Steady growth occurred during the last decade which saw Calhoun County grow by 8.4 percent. Port Lavaca is the county seat with a population of 12,035 as of the Census 2000. Most of the county is a peninsula with Matagorda Bay on the north, and San Antonio Bay on the South. Matagorda Island, which is a barrier island, is also part of Matagorda County. Calhoun County has an area of 1,032 square miles, with a population density of 40.3 residents per square mile.

Petrochemical manufacturing is the largest employment sector of the Calhoun County economy with both Alcoa and Dow having facilities within the county. Construction is also a significant employer within the region, and Port Lavaca is expanding as a retirement community.

Among the significant demographic features of Calhoun County, the population of residents over 65 exceeds the Texas state average by more than 30%. The percentage of households without an automobile is approximately on par with the state average. Persons between 21 and 64 with the disability are approximately 15% lower than the state average at 16.4% according to the Census 2000. Median household income is about 9% lower at $35,849 per household. The Calhoun County poverty rate for households is about 5% higher than the Texas average of 12%. In Calhoun County the rate as of 2000 was 12.7%. *Table 2.10* provides a summary of the Calhoun County demographic profile.

| ***Table 2.10 Calhoun County Demographic Profile*** | |
|---|---:|
| 2000 Population | 20,647 |
| 2005 Population | 20,606 |
| 2000-2005 Change | -0.2% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 8.4% |
| % Persons over 65 (2000) | 13.9% |
| % Persons under 5 (2000) | 8.0% |
| % Persons with Disability (2000) | 18% |
| Median Household Income, $(2003) | $35,419 |
| Persons Below Poverty Line, % 1999 | 12.1% |
| % Households without Auto | 6.13% |
| Land Area (square miles) | 653 |
| Persons per square mile | 36.1 |

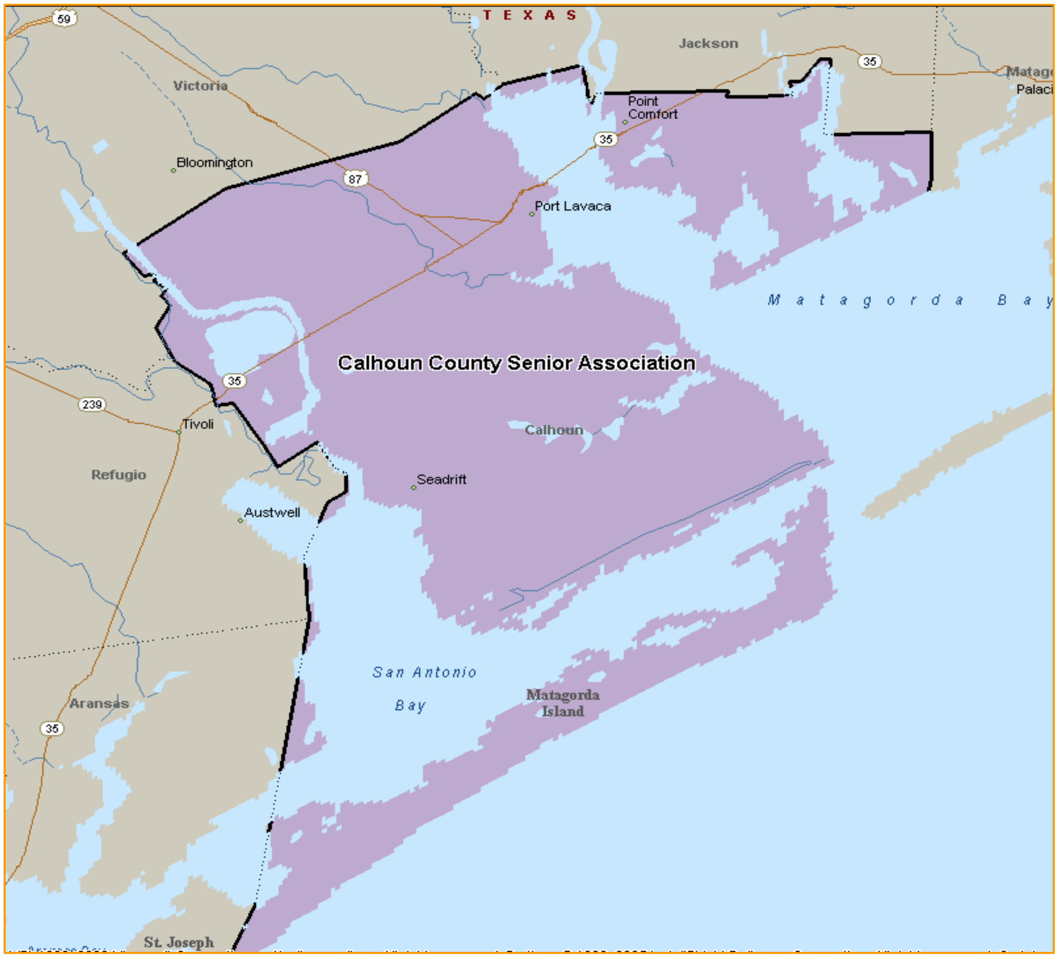

TEXAS
Jackson
Victoria
Bloomington
Point Comfort
Port Lavaca
Matagorda Bay
Calhoun County Senior Association
Calhoun
Tivoli
Refugio
Seadrift
Austwell
San Antonio Bay
Matagorda Island
Aransas
St. Joseph
59
35
87
239

*Figure 2.10 – Calhoun County Rural Service Area*

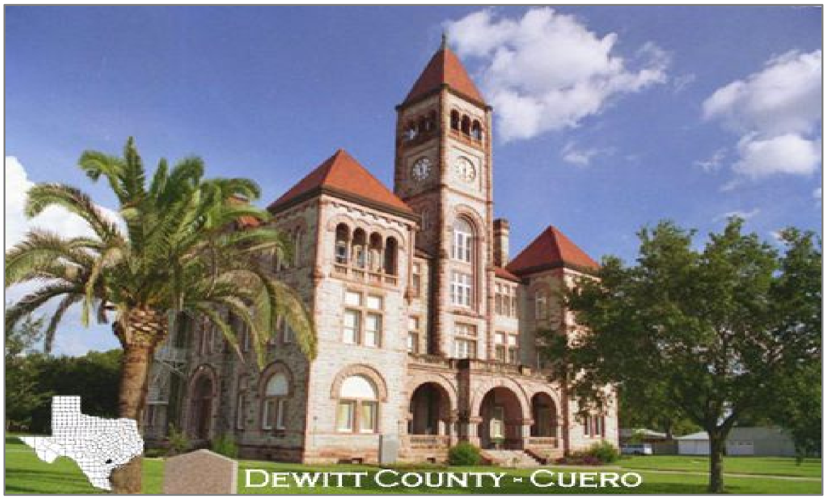
*Transportation Summary*

General public transit service and coordinated transit services are provided in Calhoun County through RTransit. Calhoun County Senior Citizens Association, Inc. provides the transportation service. During FY2005, Calhoun County Senior Citizens provided 14,184 trips using three revenue vehicles. Total operating cost for this service was $105,441, or an average of $10.03 per trip. Local and contract revenue provided nearly 40% of operating cost. During FY2006, ridership has risen by 28.9% during the first three quarters of the year, which would project out for the entire year to 18,283 passenger trips in 2006. Productivity is fairly good at 2.6 passengers per revenue hour for FY2005.

Coordinated programs provided with in Calhoun County include the Medical Transportation Program and the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). *Table 2.11* summarizes the operating transit information for Calhoun County.

| ***Table 2.11 – Calhoun County Operating and Financial Information*** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Calhoun County Operating Information*** | ***Ridership*** | ***Revenue Miles*** | ***Revenue Hours*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Mile*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Hour*** |
| 1st Quarter | 3,594 | 20,580 | 1,186 | 0.17 | 3.03 |
| 2nd Quarter | 3,242 | 17,530 | 1,995 | 0.18 | 1.63 |
| 3rd Quarter | 3,272 | 18,618 | 1,073 | 0.18 | 3.05 |
| 4th Quarter | 4,076 | 18,950 | 1,202 | 0.22 | 3.39 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **14,184** | **75,678** | **5,456** | **0.19** | **2.60** |
| | | | | | |
| ***Calhoun County Financial Information*** | ***Total Expenses*** | ***Local Revenue (excluding fares)*** | ***Coordination Revenue*** | ***% of Operating Cost*** | ***Trips Per Capita*** |
| 1st Quarter | $23,235 | $5,813 | 4,825 | 45.78% | 0.70 |
| 2nd Quarter | $26,468 | $2,365 | 3,434 | 21.91% | 0.63 |
| 3rd Quarter | $29,401 | $1,852 | 4,472 | 21.51% | 0.63 |
| 4th Quarter | $26,337 | $5,319 | 6,843 | 46.18% | 0.79 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **$105,441** | **$15,349** | **19,574** | **33.12%** | **0.69** |
| ***Per Capita Expenses*** | **$5.11** | **$ 0.74** | **$0.95** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

# DeWitt County


DEWITT COUNTY - CUERO

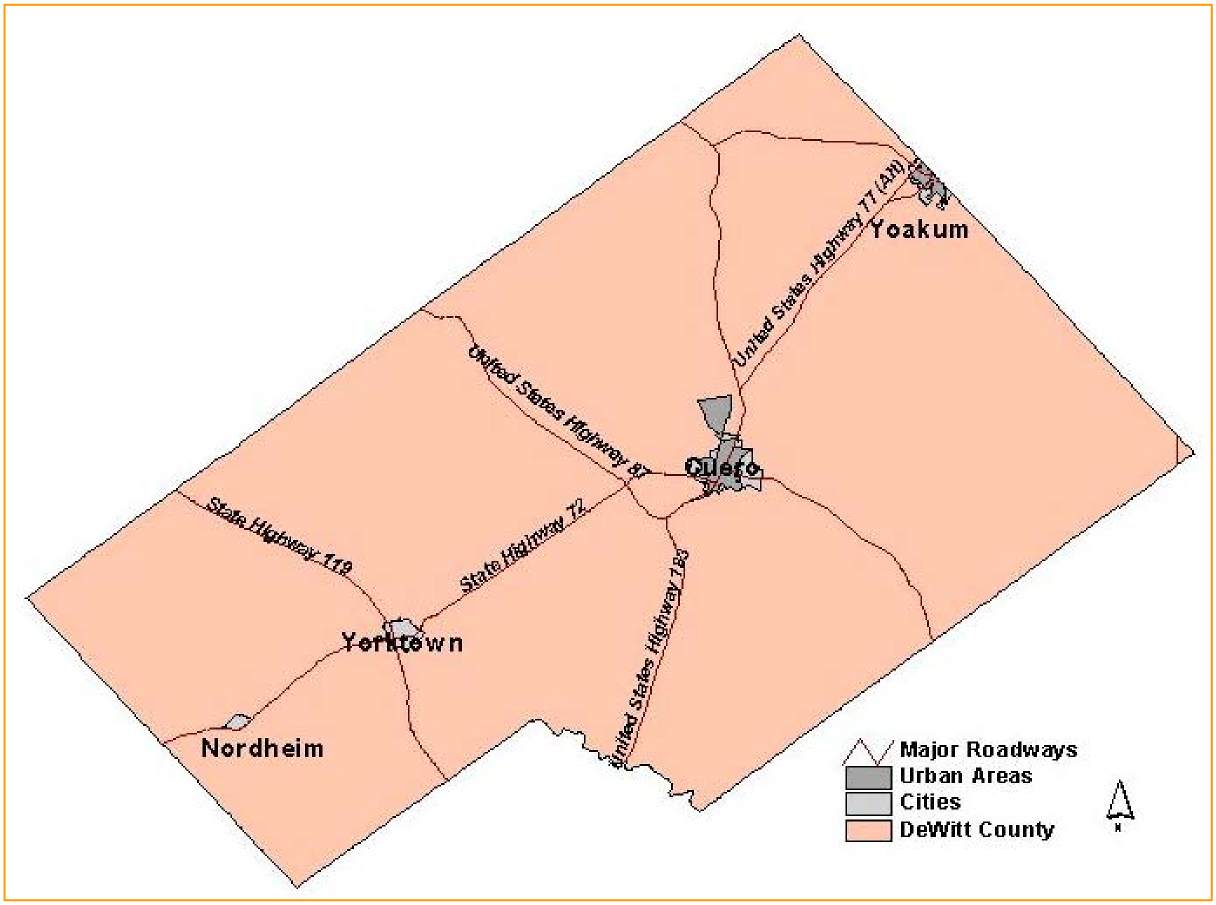

Yoakum
United States Highway 77 (Alt)
United States Highway 87
Cuero
State Highway 119
State Highway 72
Yorktown
United States Highway 183
Nordheim
Major Roadways
Urban Areas
Cities
DeWitt County
N

*Figure 2.11 – DeWitt County*

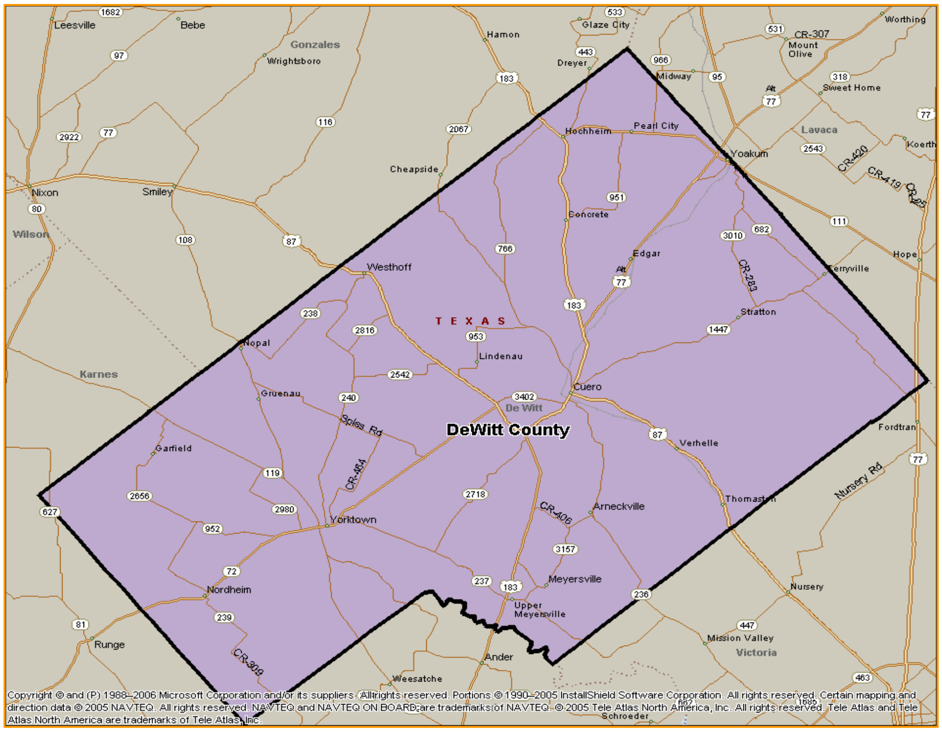
### *Demographic Summary*

DeWitt County is located in the central part of the Golden Crescent Region. The population of DeWitt County was 20,013 as of the U.S. Census 2000. Relatively slow growth occurred during the last decade that saw DeWitt County grow by 6.2%. The city of Cuero is the county seat with a population of 6,571 as of the Census 2000. Yorktown, which is southwest of Cuero, has a population of 2,271 per the Census 2000, and is the second largest city in the county. Texas 183 and Texas 87 are the primary roads through the county. DeWitt County has an area of 910 square miles, with a population density of 22.0 residents per square mile.

Among the significant demographic features of DeWitt County, the population of residents over 65 exceeds the Texas state average by more than 75 percent. The percentage of households without an automobile is approximately 25 percent higher with 9.2 percent of all households in DeWitt County not having access to an automobile. Persons between 21 and 64 with a disability are the highest among all counties in the Golden Crescent Region according to the Census 2000. The reported rate is 25 percent of all persons between 21 and 65, more than double the state average. Median household income is about 30 percent lower at $28,714 per household than the Texas average of $39,942. The poverty rate for households is about approximately 25 percent higher than the Texas average of 12 percent. In DeWitt County the rate as of 2000 was 15.3 percent, highest among Golden Crescent counties. *Table 2.12* provides a DeWitt County demographic profile summary.

***Table 2.12 – Dewitt County Demographic Profile***

| | |
|---|---:|
| 2000 Population | 20,013 |
| 2004 Population | 20,507 |
| 2000-2004 Change | 2.5% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 6.2% |
| % Persons over 65 (2000) | 17.8% |
| Persons with Disability, age 5+ (2000) | 2,723 |
| % Persons with Disability (2000) | 25.0% |
| Median Household Income, $ (2003) | $ 28,714 |
| Persons below poverty line, %, 1999 | 15.3% |
| % Households without an automobile | 9.20% |
| Land Area (square miles) | 1,386 |
| Persons per square mile | 174.4 |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Bebe
Gonzales
Wrightsboro
Hamon
Glaze City
Dreyer
Midway
CR-307
Mount Olive
Worthing
Sweet Home
Hochheim
Pearl City
Lavaca
Yoakum
Koerth
Cheapside
Nixon
Smiley
Wilson
Concrete
Edgar
Westhoff
Hope
Yorktown
Nopal
TEXAS
Lindenau
Stratton
Karnes
Gruenau
Cuero
De Witt
DeWitt County
Spiess Rd
Verhelle
Fordtran
Garfield
CR-464
Thomaston
Nursery Rd
Arneckville
CR-406
Meyersville
Upper Meyersville
Nordheim
Nursery
Mission Valley
Victoria
Runge
Ander
Weesatche
Schroeder
CR-309
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***Figure 2.12 – DeWitt County Rural Service Area***

*Transportation Summary*

DeWitt County provides general transit service and is directly operated by RTransit in Victoria. During FY2005, RTransit provided 7,133 trips using two revenue vehicles. Total operating cost for this service was $124,502, or an average of $23.15 per trip. Local and contract revenue provided approximately 40% of operating cost. The direct county contribution is only providing approximately 4 percent of operating cost. During FY2006, ridership has declined slightly by 0.8% during the first three quarters of the year, which would project out for the entire year to 7,075 passenger trips in 2006. The amount of the trips per capita is relatively low at 0.35 trips per person. The third fewest rural trips in the Golden Crescent Region originate in DeWitt County. Passenger productivity is fairly low at 1.72 passengers per revenue hour during FY2005.

Coordinated programs provided with in DeWitt County include the Medical Transportation Program and the AAA. *Table 2.13* summarizes the operating transit information for DeWitt County.

***Table 2.13 – Dewitt County Operating and Financial Information***

| ***Dewitt County Operating Information*** | ***Ridership*** | ***Revenue Miles*** | ***Revenue Hours*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Mile*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Hour*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Quarter | 1,825 | 19,500 | 977 | 0.09 | 1.87 |
| 2nd Quarter | 1,587 | 16,890 | 942 | 0.09 | 1.68 |
| 3rd Quarter | 1,890 | 21,242 | 1,108 | 0.09 | 1.71 |
| 4th Quarter | 1,831 | 21,839 | 1,112 | 0.08 | 1.65 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **7,133** | **79,471** | **4,139** | **0.09** | **1.72** |
| | | | | | |
| ***Dewitt County Financial Information*** | ***Total Expenses*** | ***Local Revenue (Excluding fares)*** | ***Coordination Revenue*** | ***Percent of Operating Cost*** | ***Trips Per Capita*** |
| 1st Quarter | $28,261 | $1,080 | $5,886 | 24.65% | 0.35 |
| 2nd Quarter | $24,210 | $1,080 | $4,757 | 24.11% | 0.31 |
| 3rd Quarter | $36,119 | $1,080 | $14,641 | 43.53% | 0.37 |
| 4th Quarter | $35,912 | $1,080 | $8,839 | 27.62% | 0.35 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **$124,502** | **$ 4,320** | **$34,123** | **30.88%** | **0.35** |
| ***Per Capita Expenses*** | **$ 6.03** | **$0.21** | **$1.65** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

# Goliad County

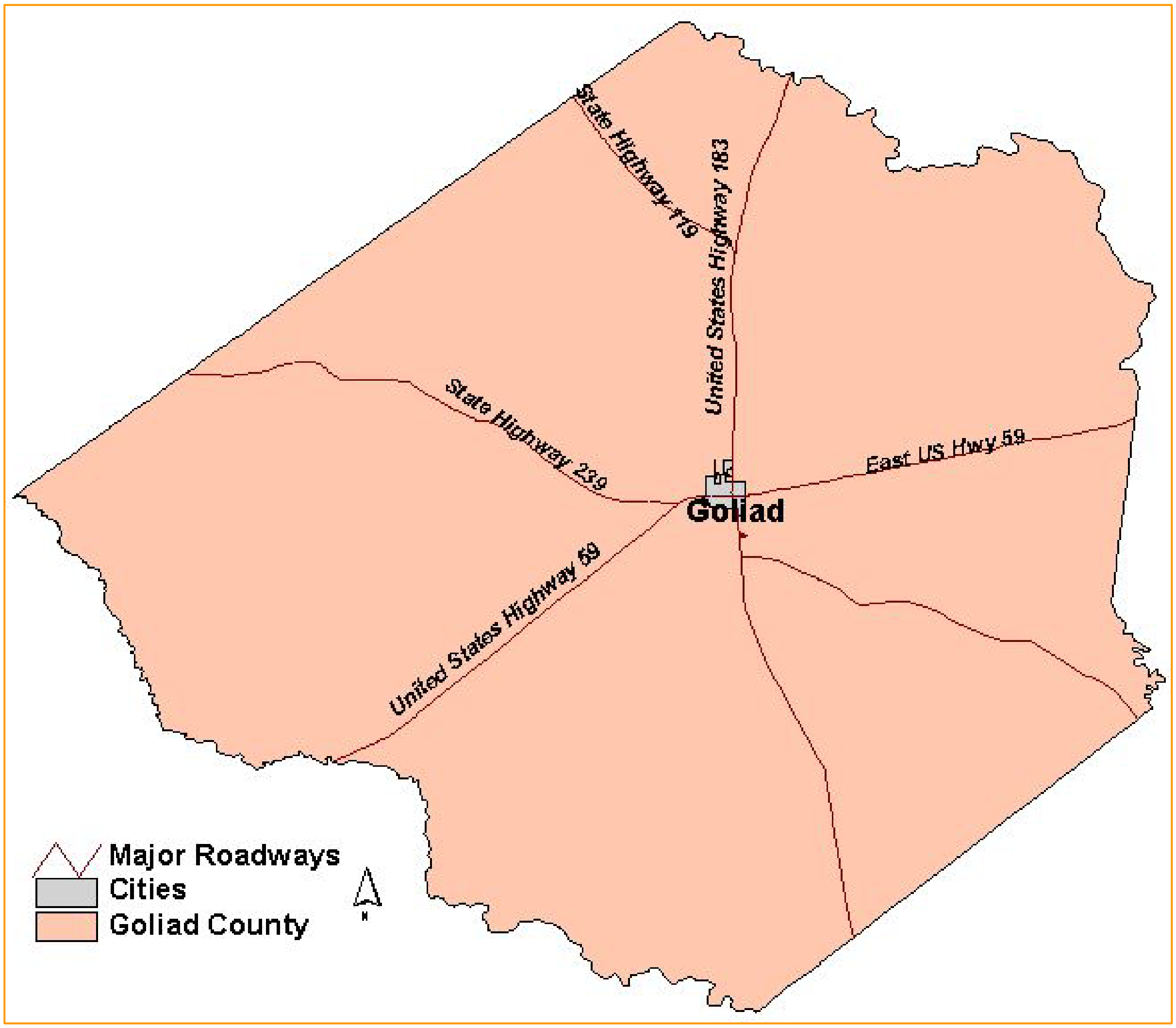

State Highway 119
United States Highway 183
State Highway 239
East US Hwy 59
Goliad
United States Highway 59
Major Roadways
Cities
Goliad County
N

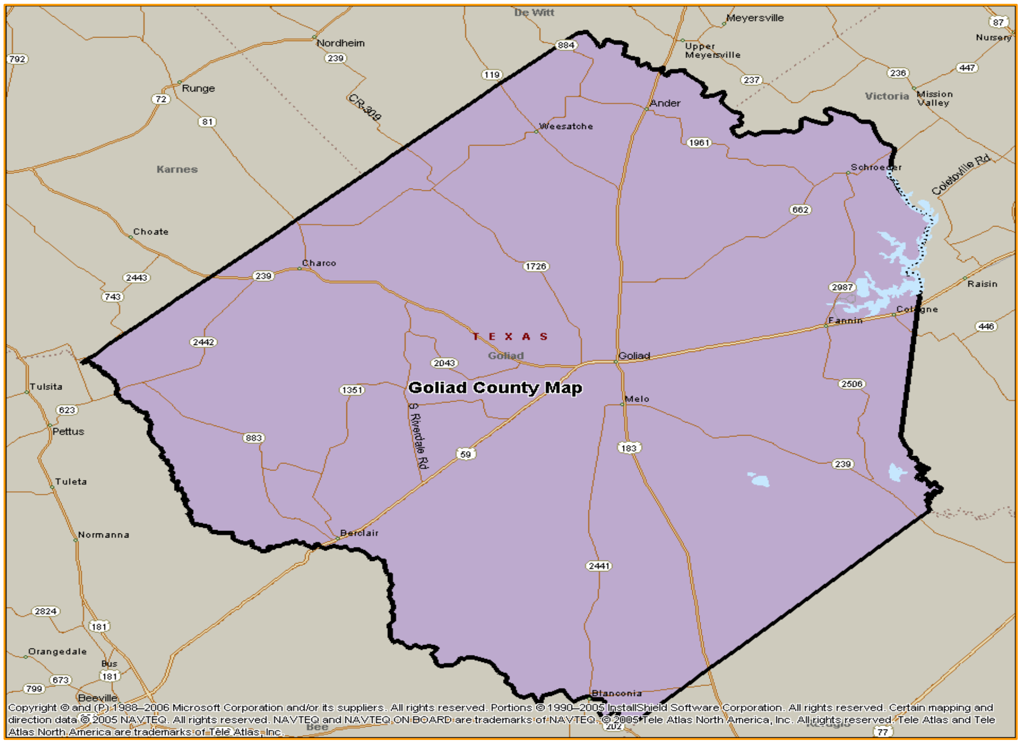
*Figure 2.13 – Goliad County*

### *Demographic Summary*

Goliad County is located in the southwestern portion of the Golden Crescent. The population of Goliad County is 6,928 as of the U.S. Census 2000, making Goliad County the smallest County within the Golden Crescent Region. Steady growth occurred during the last decade, which saw Goliad County grow by 15.9%. Goliad is the county seat with a population of 1,975 as of the 2000. Texas 183 intersects the county from north to south and Texas 59 is the primary east-west road through the county. Goliad County has an area of 854 square miles, with a population density of 8.1 residents per square mile, easily the most sparsely populated County in the Golden Crescent Region.

Among the significant demographic features of Goliad County, the population of residents over 65 exceeds the Texas state average by more than 70%. The percentage of households without an automobile is approximately 20% lower than the state average with 5.7% of all households in Goliad County not having access to an automobile. Persons between 21 and 64 with a disability are at 16.7% or more than 15% below the state average of 19.9%. Median household income is about 15% lower at $34,201 per household than the Texas average of $39,942. The poverty rate for households is about the same as the Texas the Texas poverty rate of 12%, in Goliad County the rate as of 2000 was 11.9%. *Table 2.14* provides a Goliad County demographic profile summary.

| ***Table 2.14 – Goliad County Demographic Profile*** | |
|---|---:|
| 2000 Population | 6,928 |
| 2004 Population | 7,102 |
| 2000-2004 Change | 2.5% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 15.9% |
| % Persons over 65 (2000) | 17.2% |
| % Persons under 5 (2000) | 5.5% |
| Persons with a disability, age18+ (2000) | 3,592 |
| % Persons with a disability (2000) | 16.7% |
| Median Household Income, $ (2003) | $36,095 |
| Families below poverty line, %, 1999 | 11.9% |
| % Households without an automobile | 5.7% |
| Private Non-farm employment | 812 |
| Land Area (square miles) | 8.1 |
| Persons per square mile | 43.4 |


Goliad County Map
TEXAS
Goliad
De Witt
Meyersville
Upper Meyersville
Nordheim
Runge
Karnes
Choate
Charco
Weesatche
Ander
Victoria
Mission Valley
Schroeder
Coleto Creek
Raisin
Fannin
Coleto Creek
Melo
Tulsita
Pettus
Tuleta
Normanna
Berclair
Orangedale
Beeville
Bee
Blanconia
CR-309
S Riverdale Rd
Coletoville Rd
Nursery
792
884
119
239
72
81
237
236
447
87
1961
662
1726
2443
743
2987
2442
2043
1351
623
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183
2506
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446
2441
2824
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Bus 181
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799
202
77
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*Figure 2.14 – Goliad County Rural Service Area*

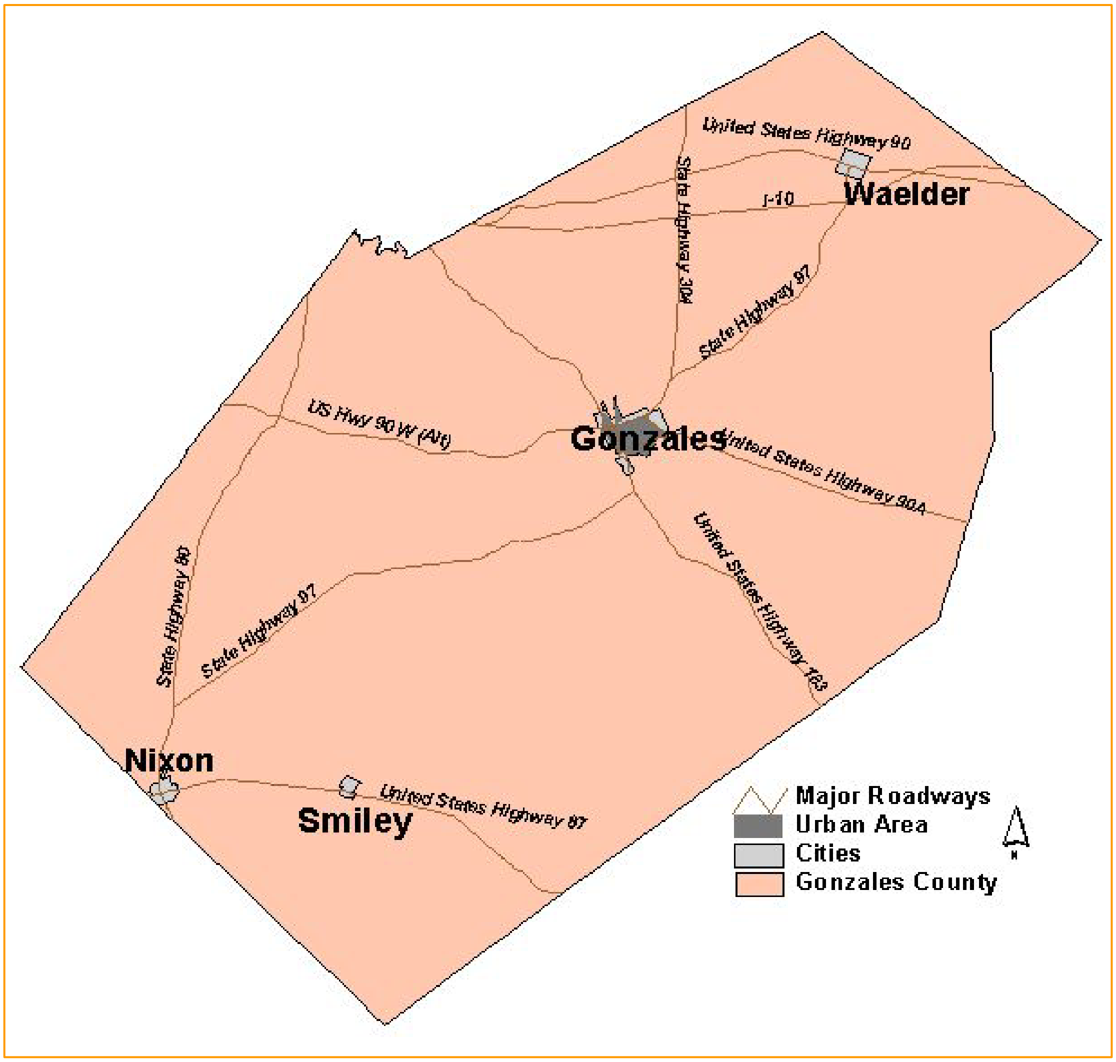
### *Transportation Summary*

Goliad County provides general public transit service and coordinated transit service through contract with the GCRPC. During FY2005, RTransit provided 5,610 trips using two revenue vehicles. Total operating cost for this service was $116,687, or an average of $27.83 per trip. Local and contract revenue provided approximately 27% of operating cost. However, contributed services of $5,950 during FY2005, raise the actual level of local match to over 30%. During FY2006, ridership has declined sharply by 15.1% during the first three quarters of the year, which would project out for the entire year to 4,762 passenger trips in 2006. The amount of the trips per capita is relatively high at 0.81 trips per person in FY2005. The fewest amount of rural trip in the Golden Crescent Region originate in Goliad County, which is to be expected given its population. Passenger productivity is quite low and only 1.51 passengers per hour, which is due to the sparse population and substantial length of trips to Victoria and other destinations. Coordinated programs provided with in Goliad County include the Medical Transportation Program and the AAA. *Table 2.15* shows transit operating and financial information for Goliad County.

| *Table 2.15 – Goliad County Operating and Financial Information* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Goliad County Operating Information*** | ***Ridership*** | ***Revenue Miles*** | ***Revenue Hours*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Mile*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Hour*** |
| 1st Quarter | 1,458 | 7,540 | 977 | 0.19 | 1.49 |
| 2nd Quarter | 1,251 | 8,181 | 942 | 0.15 | 1.33 |
| 3rd Quarter | 1,522 | 8,233 | 901 | 0.18 | 1.69 |
| 4th Quarter | 1,379 | 8,595 | 905 | 0.16 | 1.52 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **5,610** | **32,549** | **3,725** | **0.17** | **1.51** |
| | | | | | |
| ***Goliad County Financial Information*** | ***Total Expenses*** | ***Local Revenue (Excluding fares)*** | ***Coordination Revenue*** | ***Percent of Operating Cost*** | ***Trips Per Capita*** |
| 1st Quarter | $25,971 | $5,697 | $ 3,163 | 34.11% | 0.84 |
| 2nd Quarter | $28,424 | $3,050 | $ 4,403 | 26.22% | 0.72 |
| 3rd Quarter | $32,420 | $570 | $ 3,879 | 13.72% | 0.88 |
| 4th Quarter | $ 29,872 | $5,082 | $ 5,407 | 35.11% | 0.80 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **$116,687** | **$14,399** | **$ 16,852** | **26.78%** | **0.81** |
| ***Per Capita Expenses*** | **$20.80** | **$2.57** | **$3.00** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

GONZALES COUNTY - GONZALES

# Gonzales County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State Highway 304
I-10
Waelder
State Highway 97
US Hwy 90 W (Alt)
Gonzales
United States Highway 90A
United States Highway 183
State Highway 80
State Highway 97
Nixon
Smiley
United States Highway 87
Major Roadways
Urban Area
Cities
Gonzales County
N

*Figure 2.15 – Gonzales County*

### *Demographic Summary*

Gonzales County is located in the southwestern portion of the Golden Crescent Region. The population of Gonzales County is 18,628 as of the U.S. Census 2000, making Gonzales County the fourth largest County within the Golden Crescent Region. Steady growth occurred during the last decade, which saw Gonzales County grow by 8.3 percent. Growth accelerated somewhat between 2000 and 2005 when the population increased by 5.1 percent to 19,587. The city of Gonzales is the county seat with a population of 7,202 (Census 2000). The second-largest city in the county, located in the southwest part of the county, is the city of Nixon, population 2,186. Texas Alternate 90 intersects the county from east to west, and Texas 183 intersects the county from north to south. Gonzales County has an area of 1,068 square miles, with a population density of 17.4 residents per square mile.

Among the significant demographic features of Gonzales County, the population of residents over 65 exceeds the Texas state average by more than 60 percent. The percentage of households without an automobile is more than 50 percent higher than the state average with 11.2 percent of all households in Gonzales County not having access to an automobile. Gonzales County has by far the highest percentage of households without access to an automobile among the counties in the Golden Crescent Region. Persons between 21 and 64 with a disability are at 23.6 percent or more than 15 percent higher than the state average of 19.9 percent. Median household income is about 30 percent lower at $28,368 per household than the Texas average of $39,942. Gonzales County has the lowest household median income of any county in the Golden Crescent Region. The poverty rate for households is about 15 percent higher than the Texas poverty rate of 12 percent. In Gonzales County the rate for 2000 was 13.8 percent. *Table 2.16* provides a Gonzales County demographic profile summary.

| ***Table 2.16 – Gonzales County Demographic Profile*** | |
|---|---:|
| 2000 Population | 18,628 |
| 2004 Population | 19,587 |
| 2000-2004 Change | 5.1% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 8.3% |
| % Persons over 65 (2000) | 15.9% |
| % Persons under 5 (2000) | 8.0% |
| % Persons with a disability (21-65) | 23.6% |
| Median Household Income, $ (2003) | $28,810 |
| Persons below poverty line, %, 1999 | 13.8% |
| % Households without an automobile | 11.2% |
| Land Area (square miles) | 1,068 |
| Persons per square mile | 17.4 |

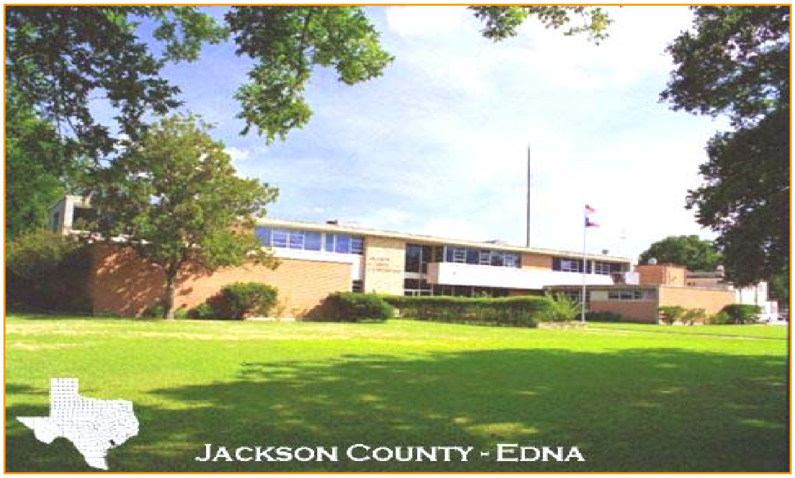
*Transportation Summary*

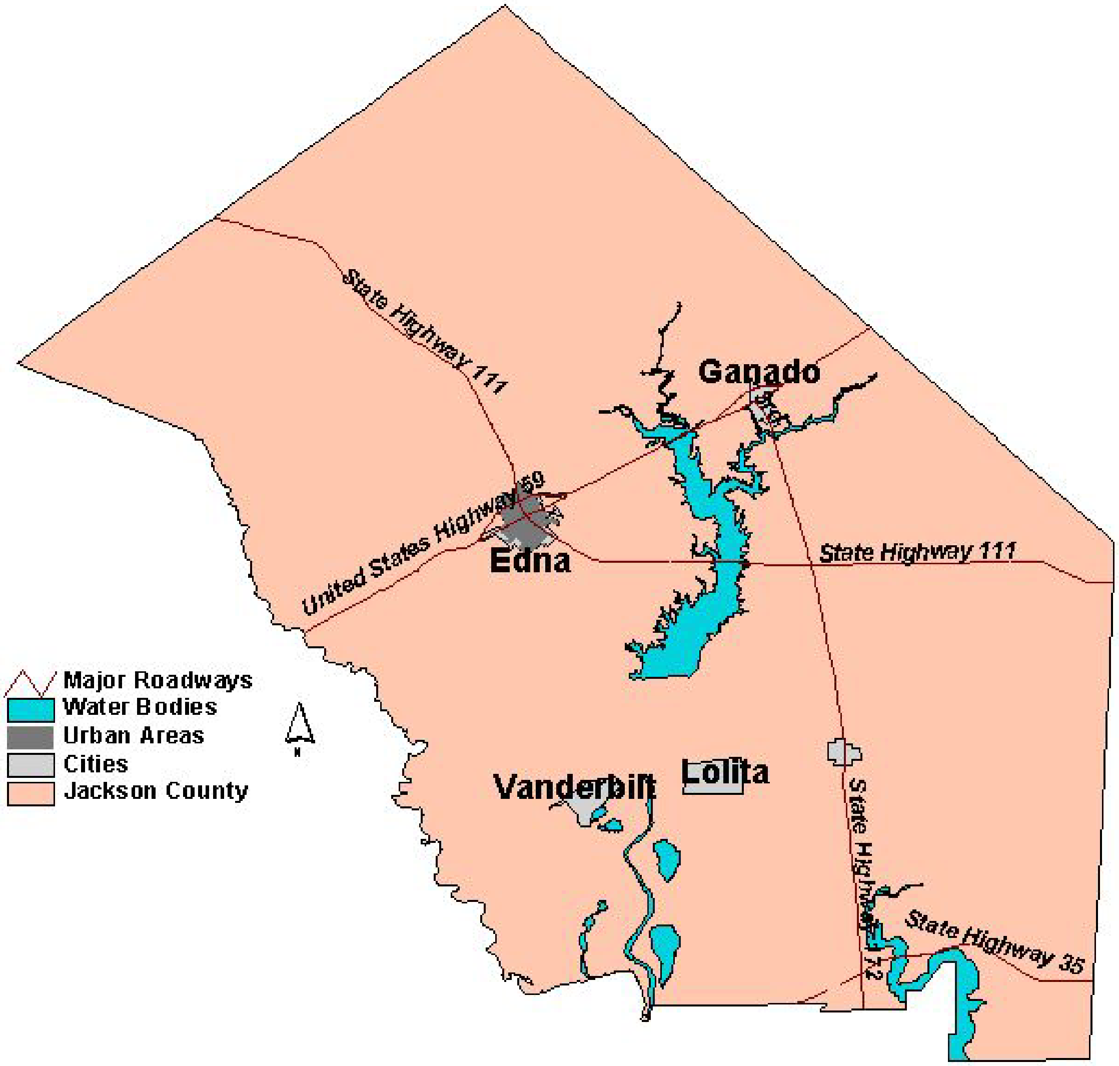
Gonzales County Seniors Citizens Association, Inc. provides general transit service and coordinated transit service through contract with the GCRPC. During FY2005, Gonzales County Senior Services provided 22,577 trips using five revenue vehicles. Total operating cost for this service was $196,331, or an average of $12.50 per trip. Local and contract revenue provided approximately 39% of operating cost. Most of the local match revenue is provided by coordination revenue, which comprises about 35% of total operating cost. Local revenue is a less significant factor, providing only about 4 percent of operating cost. During FY2006, ridership has declined sharply by 47.0% during the first three quarters of the year, which would project out for the entire year to only 12,062 passenger trips in 2006. The amount of the trips per capita is relatively high at 1.00 trips per capita in FY2005. Gonzales County has the highest productivity as measured by trip productivity with an average of 3.43 passengers per revenue hour. Coordinated programs provided with in Gonzales County include the Medical Transportation Program and the AAA. *Table 2.17* provides the operating and financial information for Gonzales County.

**_Table 2.17 – Gonzales County Operating and Financial Information_**

| ***Gonzales County Operating Information*** | ***Ridership*** | ***Revenue Miles*** | ***Revenue Hours*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Mile*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Hour*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Quarter | 7,545 | 31,130 | 1,782 | 0.24 | 4.23 |
| 2nd Quarter | 5,664 | 26,758 | 1,504 | 0.21 | 3.77 |
| 3rd Quarter | 5,828 | 26,013 | 1,448 | 0.22 | 4.02 |
| 4th Quarter | 3,540 | 24,905 | 1,849 | 0.14 | 1.91 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **22,577** | **108,806** | **6,583** | **0.21** | **3.43** |
| | | | | | |
| ***Gonzales County Financial Information*** | ***Total Expenses*** | ***Local Revenue (Excluding fares)*** | ***Coordination Revenue*** | ***Percent of Operating Cost*** | ***Trips Per Capita*** |
| 1st Quarter | $50,651 | $1,899 | $23,904 | 50.94% | 1.34 |
| 2nd Quarter | $48,114 | - | $20,138 | 41.85% | 1.00 |
| 3rd Quarter | $47,496 | $273 | $22,482 | 47.91% | 1.03 |
| 4th Quarter | $50,070 | $7,107 | $1,532 | 17.25% | 0.63 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **$196,331** | **$9,279** | **$68,056** | **39.39%** | **1.00** |
| ***Per Capita Expenses*** | **$8.70** | **$0.41** | **$3.01** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

# Jackson County


JACKSON COUNTY - EDNA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Ganado
United States Highway 59
Edna
State Highway 111
Major Roadways
Water Bodies
Urban Areas
Cities
Jackson County
N
Vanderbilt
Lolita
State Highway 172
State Highway 35

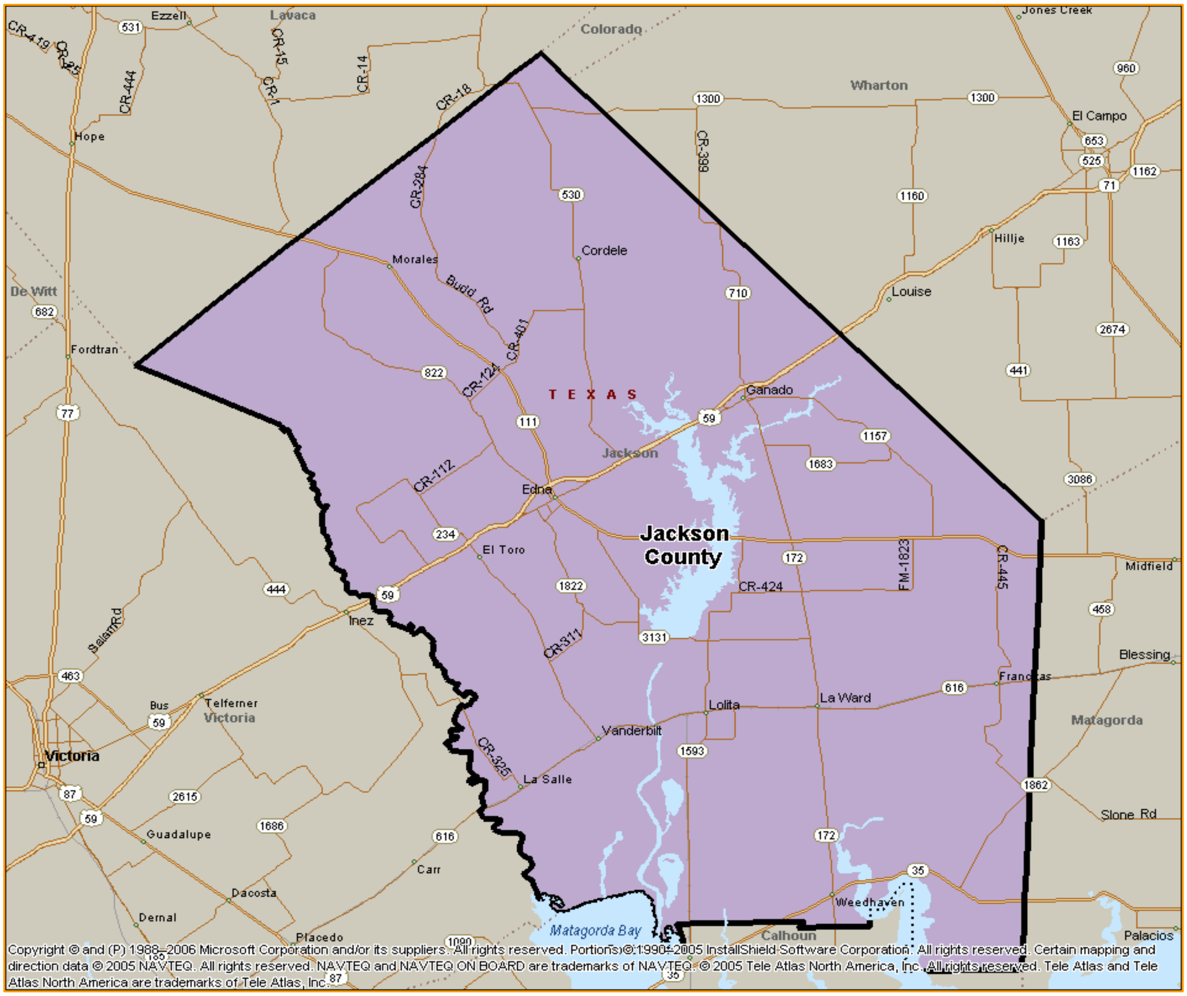
*Figure 2.16 – Jackson County*

### *Demographic Summary*

Jackson County is located in the eastern portion of the Golden Crescent Region northwest of the Victoria County along Texas Highway 59. The population of Jackson County is 14,339 as of the U.S. Census 2000. Steady growth occurred during the last decade, with the county growing by 10.4%. Edna is the county seat with a population of 5,899 as of the Census 2000. Ganado is the second-largest city in the county with a population of 1,915. Texas Highway 111 intersects the county from north to south and Texas Highway 59 is the primary east-west road through the county. Jackson County has an area of 829 square miles, with a population density of 17.3 residents per square mile.

Among the significant demographic features of Jackson County, the population of residents over 65 exceeds the Texas state average by approximately 60%. The percentage of households without an automobile is approximately the same as Texas state average with 7.1% of all households in Jackson County not having access to an automobile. Persons between 21 and 64 with a disability are at 24.4% (or more than 20% below the state average of 19.9%). Jackson County has the second-highest percentage of persons with disabilities in the Golden Crescent Region. Median household income is about 11% lower, at $35,254 per household, than the Texas state average of $39,942. The poverty rate for households is about the same as the Texas state poverty rate of 12%. In Jackson County the rate as of 2000 was 12.2%. *Table 2.18* provides a Jackson County demographic profile summary.

| ***Table 2.18 – Jackson County Demographic Profile*** | |
|---|---:|
| 2000 Population | 14,391 |
| 2004 Population | 14,339 |
| 2000-2004 Change | -0.4% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 10.4% |
| % Persons over 65 (2000) | 15.9% |
| % Persons under 5 (2000) | 7.10% |
| % Persons with a disability (2000) | 24.4% |
| Median Household Income, $ (2003) | $35,254 |
| Persons below poverty line, %, 1999 | 12.2% |
| % Households without an automobile | 7.1% |
| Land Area (square miles) | 829 |
| Persons per square mile | 17.3 |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Hope
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Ganado
Jackson
Edna
Jackson County
El Toro
Inez
CR-424
Midfield
Blessing
Francitas
Matagorda
Telferner
Victoria
Victoria
Bus
Lolita
La Ward
Vanderbilt
La Salle
Guadalupe
Dacosta
Carr
Dernal
Placedo
Weedhaven
Calhoun
Matagorda Bay
Palacios
Slone Rd
Salem Rd
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682
710
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111
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***Figure 2.17 – Jackson County Rural Service Area***

### *Transportation Summary*

Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc. of Jackson County provide general transit service and coordinated transit service through contract with the GCRPC. During FY2005, Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc., provided 9,948 trips in Jackson County using three revenue vehicles. The total operating cost for this service was $91,689 (an average of $12.80 per trip). Local and contract revenues provided approximately 31% of the operating cost. Most of the local match revenue is provided by coordination revenue, which comprises about 24% of total operating cost. Local revenue is a less significant factor, providing only about 7% of operating cost. During FY2006, ridership has declined by 12.7% during the first three quarters of the year, which would project out for the entire year to only 10,306 passenger trips in 2006. The amount of the trips per capita is low at 0.44 trips per person in FY2005. Trip productivity as measured by passengers per hour is productive at 2.68 passengers per revenue hour. Coordinated programs provided with in Jackson County include the Medical Transportation Program and the AAA. *Table 2.19* presents relevant information for Jackson County.

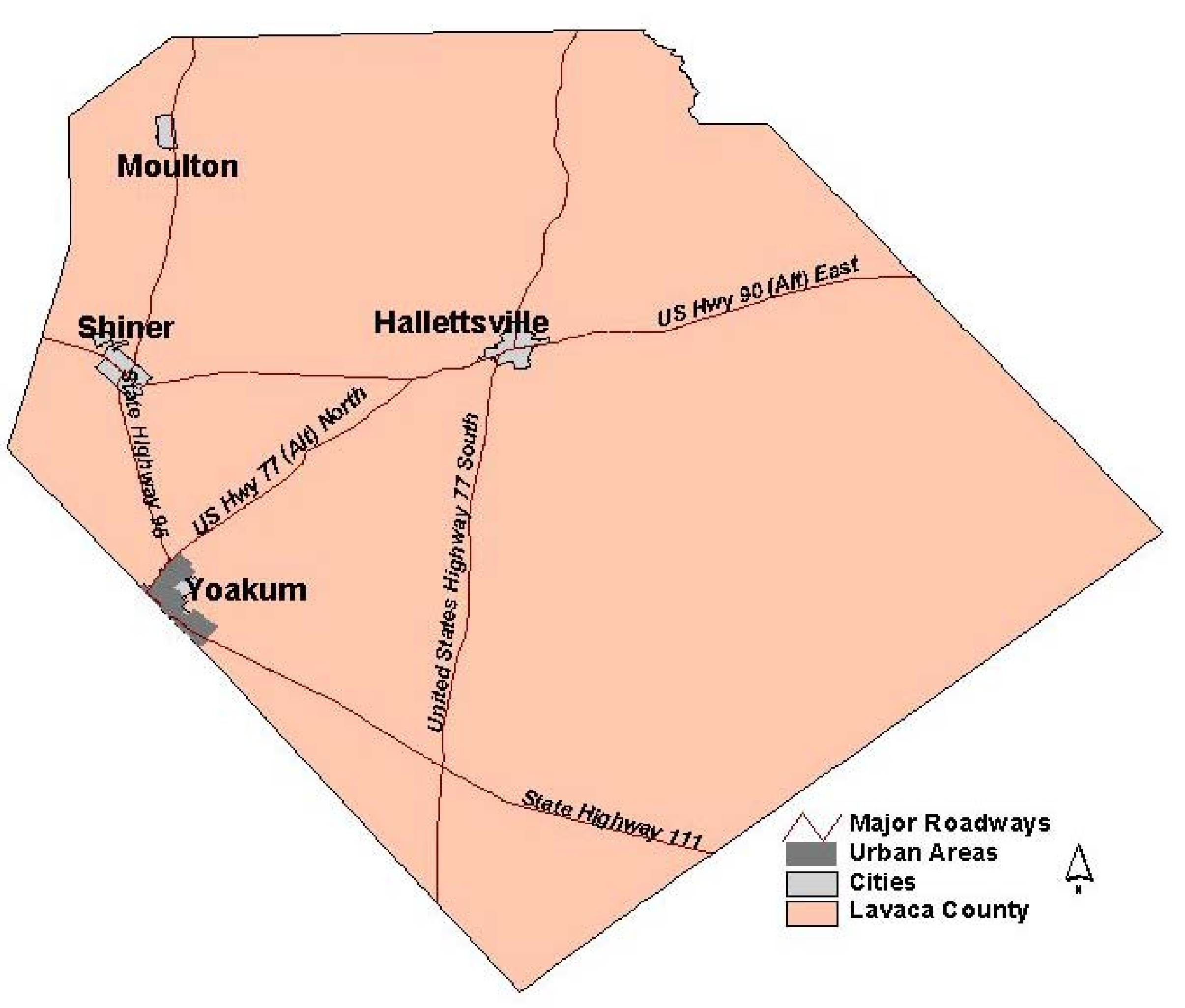
***Table 2.19 – Jackson County Operating and Financial Information***

| *Jackson County Operating Information* | *Ridership* | *Revenue Miles* | *Revenue Hours* | *Passengers Per Revenue Mile* | *Passengers Per Revenue Hour* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Quarter | 2,624 | 10,667 | 983 | 0.25 | 2.67 |
| 2nd Quarter | 2,618 | 9,545 | 941 | 0.27 | 2.78 |
| 3rd Quarter | 2,862 | 10,970 | 882 | 0.26 | 3.24 |
| 4th Quarter | 1,844 | 10,161 | 911 | 0.18 | 2.02 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **9,948** | **41,343** | **3,717** | **0.24** | **2.68** |

| *Jackson County Financial Information* | *Total Expenses* | *Local Revenue (Excluding fares)* | *Coordination Revenue* | *Percent of Operating Cost* | *Trips Per Capita* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Quarter | $20,064 | $ 300 | $ 1,754 | 10.24% | 0.46 |
| 2nd Quarter | $22,250 | $ 3,813 | $ 6,289 | 45.40% | 0.46 |
| 3rd Quarter | $23,452 | $ 900 | $ 4,968 | 25.02% | 0.51 |
| 4th Quarter | $25,923 | $ 1,032 | $ 9,418 | 40.31% | 0.33 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **$91,689** | **$ 6,045** | **$ 22,429** | **31.05%** | **0.44** |
| ***Per Capita Expenses*** | **$9.22** | **$0.61** | **$2.25** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

# Lavaca County

Lavaca County - Hallettsville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Yoakum
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State Highway 95
United States Highway 77 South
State Highway 111
Major Roadways
Urban Areas
Cities
Lavaca County
N

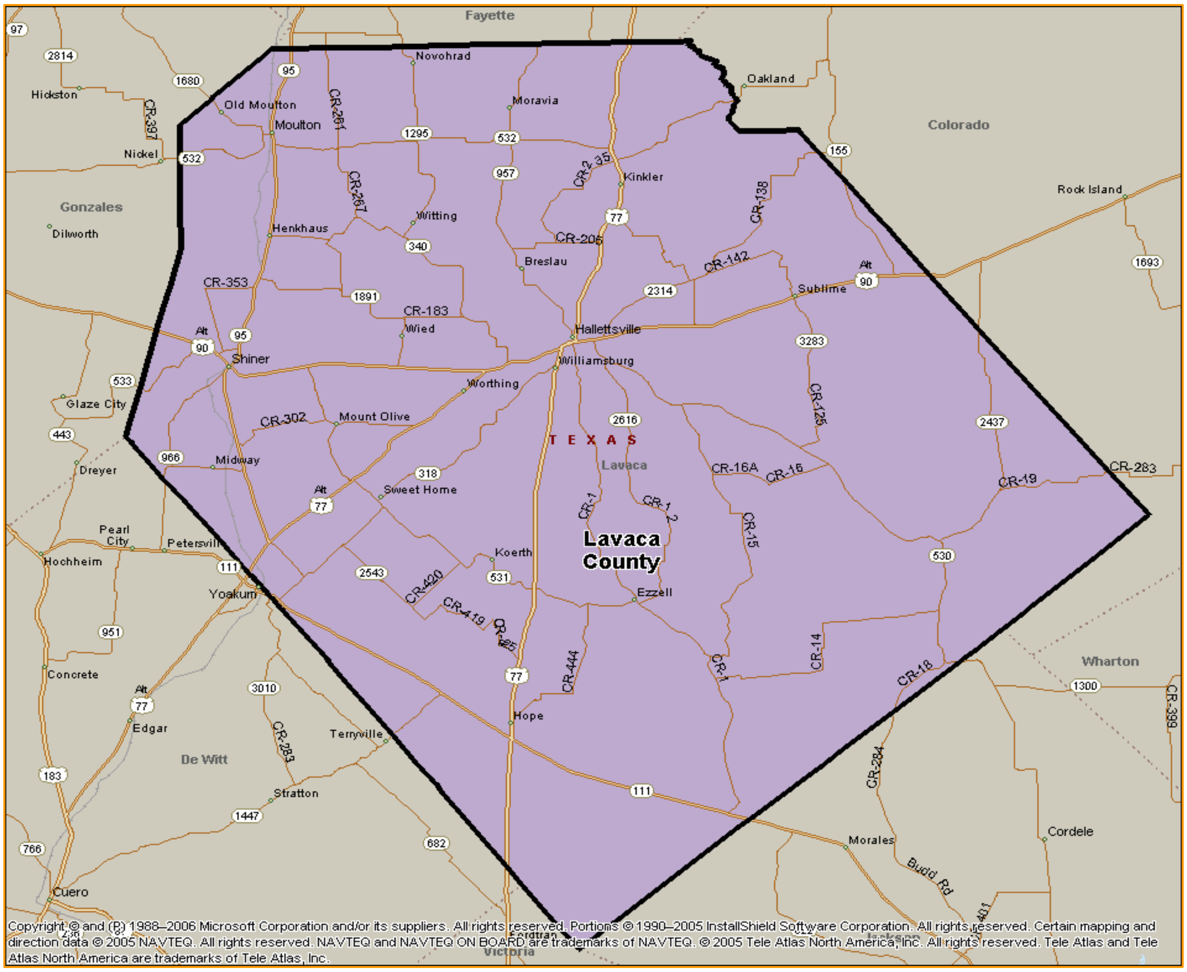
*Figure 2.18 – Lavaca County*

*Demographic Summary*

Lavaca County is located in the northeastern portion of the Golden Crescent Region along Texas Highway 71. The population of Lavaca County is 19,210 as of the U.S. Census 2000. Slow growth occurred during the last decade, with Lavaca County growing by 2.8%. However, the county population has declined by 1.5% between 2000 and 2005. Hallettsville, with a population of 2,345, is the county seat. The city of Yoakum, at the western edge of the county, is the largest city in Lavaca County, with a population of 5,731. Texas Highway 71 intersects the county from north to south and Texas Alternate 90 is the primary east-west road through the county. Lavaca County has an area of 970 square miles, with a population density of 19.8 if residents per square mile.

Among the significant demographic features of Lavaca County, the population of residents over 65 exceeds the Texas state average by more than 125%. Lavaca County has by far the largest percentage of persons over 65 in the Golden Crescent Region. The percentage of households without an automobile is slightly higher than state average with 7.5% of all households in Lavaca County not having access to an automobile. Persons between 21 and 64 with a disability are at 22.8% or more than 10% above the state average of 19.9%. Median household income is about 25% lower at $29,132 per household than the Texas average of $39,942. Lavaca County is one of the three counties in the Golden Crescent Region with a median household income more than 25% below the Texas state average. The poverty rate, however, for households is about 15% lowers than the Texas poverty rate of 12%; in Lavaca County the rate as of 2000 was 10.2%. *Table 2.20* provides a Lavaca County demographic profile.

| ***Table 2.20 – Lavaca County Demographic Profile*** | |
|---|---:|
| 2000 Population | 19,210 |
| 2004 Population | 18,931 |
| 2000-2004 Change | -1.5% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 2.80% |
| % Persons over 65 (2000) | 21.8% |
| % Persons under 5 (2000) | 5.9% |
| % Persons with a disability (2000) | 22.8% |
| Median Household Income, $ (2003) | $31,985 |
| Persons below poverty line, %, 1999 | 10.2% |
| % Households without an automobile | 7.5% |
| Land Area (square miles) | 970 |
| Persons per square mile | 19.8 |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Breslau
Rock Island
Sublime
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CR-183
Wied
Hallettsville
Williamsburg
Shiner
Glaze City
Worthing
Mount Olive
CR-302
Dreyer
Midway
Sweet Home
T E X A S
Lavaca
Lavaca County
Pearl City
Petersville
Hochheim
Koerth
Yoakum
Ezzell
Concrete
Wharton
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Terryville
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Cordele
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***Figure 2.19 – Lavaca County Rural Service Area***

### *Transportation Summary*

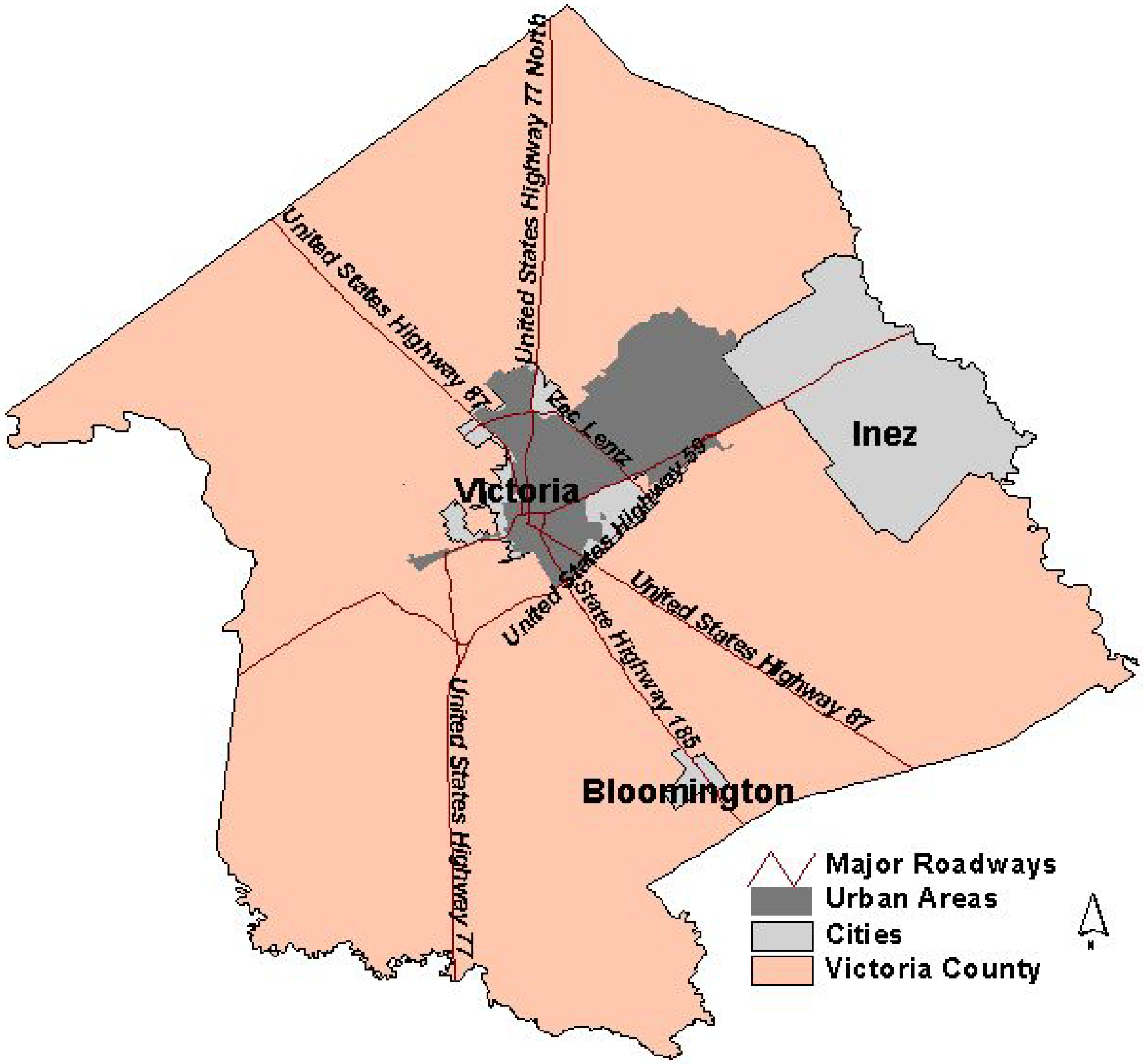
Lavaca County Senior Services provides general transit service and coordinated transit service through contract with the GCRPC. During FY2005, Lavaca County Senior Services provided 28,534 trips using seven revenue vehicles. Lavaca County provided the most trips of any County rural provider in the Golden Crescent Region. Total operating cost for this service was $236,082, or an average cost of $11.70 per trip, the second lowest cost per trip among Golden Crescent Region county providers. Local and contract revenue provided approximately 47% of operating cost, the highest percentage of local support among Golden Crescent Region providers. Slightly less than 20% of the revenue is provided by local match. The remaining 27% is provided by revenue from coordination contracts. During FY2006, ridership declined slightly by 0.6% during the first three quarters of the year compared to FY2005, which would project out for the entire year to 28,362 passenger trips in 2006. The amount of the trips per capita is relatively the highest among Golden Crescent Region counties at 1.49 trips per person in FY2005. Trip productivity as measured by passengers per hour is productive at 2.33 passengers per revenue hour. Coordinated programs provided in Lavaca County include the Medical Transportation Program and the AAA. *Table 2.21* provides operating and financial information for Lavaca County.

*Table 2.21 – Lavaca County Operating and Financial Information*

| *Lavaca County Operating Information* | *Ridership* | *Revenue Miles* | *Revenue Hours* | *Passengers Per Revenue Mile* | *Passengers Per Revenue Hour* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Quarter | 8,338 | 54,972 | 3,527 | 0.15 | 2.36 |
| 2nd Quarter | 7,418 | 46,660 | 3,245 | 0.16 | 2.29 |
| 3rd Quarter | 7,707 | 49,396 | 3,416 | 0.16 | 2.26 |
| 4th Quarter | 5,071 | 29,964 | 2,047 | 0.17 | 2.48 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **28,534** | **180,992** | **12,235** | **0.16** | **2.33** |
| | | | | | |
| ***Lavaca County Financial Information*** | ***Total Expenses*** | ***Local Revenue (Excluding fares)*** | ***Coordination Revenue*** | ***Percent of Operating Cost*** | ***Trips Per Capita*** |
| 1st Quarter | $55,877 | $10,254 | $16,852 | 48.51% | 1.74 |
| 2nd Quarter | $69,909 | $ 2,506 | $16,451 | 27.12% | 1.54 |
| 3rd Quarter | $41,135 | $ 9,704 | $14,060 | 57.77% | 1.60 |
| 4th Quarter | $ 69,131 | $23,762 | $16,455 | 58.18% | 1.06 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **$236,052** | **$46,226** | **$63,818** | **46.62%** | **1.49** |
| ***Per Capita Expenses*** | **$8.27** | **$1.62** | **$2.24** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

# Victoria County

VICTORIA COUNTY - VICTORIA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Zac Lentz
Inez
Victoria
State Highway 59
United States Highway 59
United States Highway 87
State Highway 185
United States Highway 77
Bloomington
Major Roadways
Urban Areas
Cities
Victoria County
N

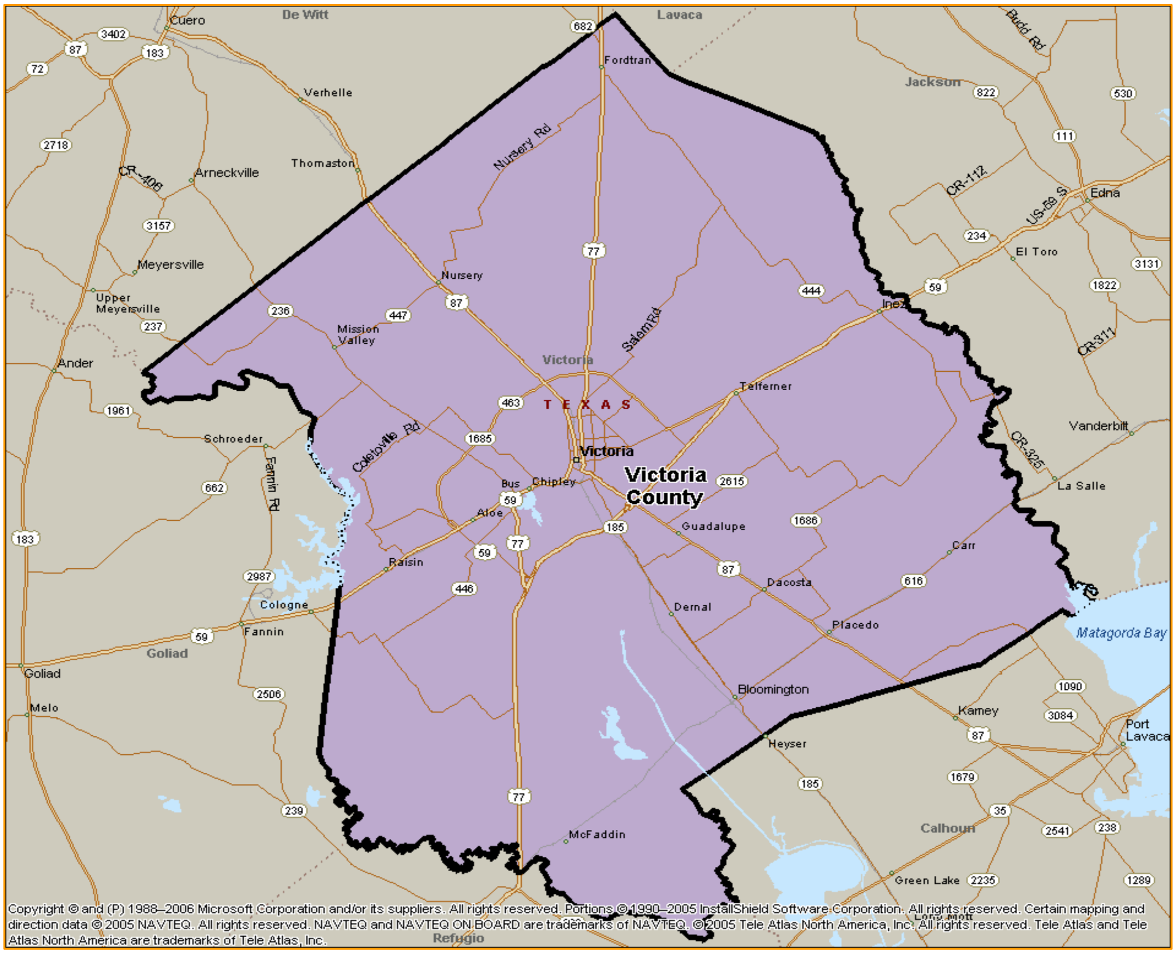
*Figure 2.20 – Victoria County*

### *Demographic Summary*

Victoria County is located in the central portion of the Golden Crescent Region and is where the largest city, Victoria, is located. The population of Victoria County is 84,088 as of the U.S. Census 2000. Slow growth occurred during the last decade, which saw Victoria County grow by 2.8%. However, the county population has declined by 1.5% between 2000 and 2005. Texas Highway 77 intersects the county from north to south and Texas Highway 59 is the primary east-west road through the county. Victoria County has an area of 970 square miles, with a population density of 19.8 if residents per square mile.

Among the significant demographic features of Victoria County, the population of residents over 65 exceeds the Texas state average by more about 25%. Victoria County has the lowest percentage of persons over 65 in the Golden Crescent Region although it is still significantly higher than the state average. The percentage of households without an automobile is slightly lower than state average with 7.0% of all households in Victoria County not having access to an automobile. Persons between 21 and 64 with a disability are at 20.1% or only slightly higher than the state average of 19.9%. Median household income is about 4% lower at $38,172 per household than the Texas average of $39,942. Among counties in the Golden Crescent Region, Victoria County has the highest per capita income. The poverty rate, however, for households is about 10.5% more than 10% lower than the Texas state poverty rate of 12%. *Table 2.22* provides a Victoria County demographic profile.

| ***Table 2.22 – Victoria County Demographic Profile*** | |
|---|---:|
| 2000 Population | 84,088 |
| 2005 Population | 85,648 |
| 2000-2005 Change | 1.9% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 13.1% |
| % Persons over 65 (2000) | 15.7% |
| % Persons under 5 (2000) | 7.6% |
| % Persons with a disability (2000) | 20.1% |
| Median Household Income, $, 2003 | $38,732 |
| Persons below poverty line, %, 1999 | 10.5% |
| % Households without an automobile | 7.0% |
| Land Area (square miles) | 882 |
| Persons per square mile | 95.3 |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Upper Meyersville
Nursery
El Toro
Inez
Mission Valley
Salem Rd
CR-311
Ander
Victoria
T E X A S
Telferner
Schroeder
Coletoville Rd
Vanderbilt
Fannin Rd
CR-325
Victoria
Victoria County
La Salle
Bus
Chipley
Aloe
Guadalupe
Raisin
Carr
Dacosta
Cologne
Fannin
Dernal
Placedo
Goliad
Matagorda Bay
Goliad
Bloomington
Melo
Kamey
Heyser
Port Lavaca
Calhoun
McFaddin
Green Lake
Long Mott
Refugio
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***Figure 2.21 – Victoria County Rural Service Area***

*Transportation Summary*

The GCRPC provides direct rural service to Victoria County through RTransit. During FY2005, Victoria County Rural Transportation provided 7,448 trips using three revenue vehicles. Victoria County provided the fewest trips of any County rural provider in the Golden Crescent Region. Total operating cost for this service was $134,320 or an average of $24.04 per trip, the second highest cost per trip among Golden Crescent Region counties. Local and contract revenue provided approximately 29% of operating cost, Slightly more than 3% of the revenue it is provided by local match, and the remaining 26% is provided by the revenue from coordination contracts. During FY2006, ridership has decreased by 11.4% during the first three quarters of the year compared to FY2005, which would project out for the entire year to 6,916 passenger trips in 2006. The amount of the trips per capita is low among Golden Crescent Region counties at 0.32 trips per person trips per person in FY2005. The population of the city of Victoria is not included in the per capita estimate. Trip productivity as measured by passengers per hour is low at 1.43 passengers per revenue hour. Coordinated programs provided with in Victoria County include the Medical Transportation Program and the AAA. *Table 2.23* provides rural operating and financial information for Victoria County.

| *Table 2.23 – Victoria Rural Operating and Financial Information* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Victoria County (Rural) Operating Information*** | ***Ridership*** | ***Revenue Miles*** | ***Revenue Hours*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Mile*** | ***Passengers Per Revenue Hour*** |
| 1st Quarter | 1,837 | 25,703 | 1,313 | 0.07 | 1.40 |
| 2nd Quarter | 1,731 | 26,077 | 1,308 | 0.07 | 1.32 |
| 3rd Quarter | 2,007 | 27,716 | 1,362 | 0.07 | 1.47 |
| 4th Quarter | 1,873 | 26,802 | 1,218 | 0.07 | 1.54 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **7,448** | **106,298** | **5,201** | **0.07** | **1.43** |
| | | | | | |
| ***Victoria County (Rural) Financial Information*** | ***Total Expenses*** | ***Local Revenue (Excluding fares)*** | ***Coordination Revenue*** | ***Percent of Operating Cost*** | ***Trips Per Capita*** |
| 1st Quarter | $34,356 | $1,080 | $8,245 | 27.14% | 0.31 |
| 2nd Quarter | $30,381 | $1,080 | $12,947 | 46.17% | 0.29 |
| 3rd Quarter | $37,335 | $1,080 | $12,854 | 37.32% | 0.34 |
| 4th Quarter | $32,348 | $1,080 | $753 | 5.67% | 0.32 |
| ***FY2005 Total*** | **$134,420** | **$ 4,320** | **$34,799** | **29.10%** | **0.32** |
| ***Per Capita Expenses*** | **$18.05** | **$0.58** | **$4.67** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

## *Public Involvement Process*

Understanding the public's transportation needs and identifying transportation coordination opportunities can only be determined by obtaining direct input from key stakeholders. This section provides a summary of the Public Outreach conducted to gather information and gain support for the regional transportation coordination planning effort.

### Public Involvement Process

In fall 2005, the Advisory Committee convened to discuss relevant transportation needs and opportunities for improved services in its seven-county region. To establish an identity for the project, Advisory Committee members designed a logo that was used on all outgoing materials, i.e. flyers, press releases. A website, *www.goldencrescenttransit.com*, was developed for the project to use as a resource for the stakeholders and committee to be updated and relevant project information for the public's use. The website has the potential to be developed to a greater degree in the future as a one-stop source for regional transit information to the public.

### Public Meetings

On May 10, 2006, the Committee decided to hold two public meetings: June 27th at Port Lavaca's City Hall and June 28th at the Gonzales County Courthouse in the Commissioner's Court Room. The Committee worked with the project team to find meeting locations based on the following:

- Target audience and best methods of reaching the audience
- Location (accessibility and familiarity)
- Facility availability (date and time)

Because the Advisory Committee partnered with city and county local governments, the facilities were used at no cost. Texas Southern University (TSU) verified media contact information and publication details in the media database.

### Promoting Public Meetings

TSU sent two press releases to 28 newspapers, five television stations, and 12 radio stations. In addition, GCRPC invited elected officials, community organizations and key stakeholders to participate at the public meetings.

TSU staff prepared and distributed flyers to GCRPC and Advisory Committee members. Meeting information was also placed on the project website and Committee members were asked to post the meeting locations on their websites or distribute at their respective locations.

To increase public participation, various surveys were used in this process. These surveys are discussed in greater detail below. At their convenience, the public could also access the project website and respond to the appropriate surveys.

## *Surveys*

Surveys can be a very important part of the coordination process to learn more about the existing services that are provided and opportunities to coordinate existing resources to meet regional transit needs. They can also be used to identify gaps in service and needs. During the course of this study, three surveys were conducted which include the following: Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) Transit Provider Survey directly targeted to transit providers in the region; Transportation Consumer Survey targeted to the public; and a previously completed survey through GCRPC targeted to transit providers and social service agencies.

The Transit Provider Survey was created and collected by TTI under contract with TxDOT for all the planning regions conducting these coordination studies. The information covered areas of vehicle inventory, fare structure, hours of operation, funding and service contracts. The survey was tailored for the Golden Crescent Region and additional coordination questions were added. The survey was in an electronic format and distributed to the region's social service and transit providers from the comprehensive list compiled by the committee.

Another survey that was done individually by the GCRPC early on in the study process for this coordination effort was sent by mail and email to transit providers and social services in the region. This survey focused on current coordination efforts of the agency, potential resources they had to offer and barriers and constraints to coordination.

One tool to gain insight into transit gaps and needs from a consumer perspective is by disseminating a public transportation survey. A transportation consumer survey was developed and conducted through a web-based survey and hard copy availability when needed. The survey was distributed to the committee to advertise in their regions. The Texas Workforce Solutions in Victoria did an excellent job of advertising the survey whose clients and made up a large portion of the respondents. There were a total of 211 surveys completed, most of which were hard copies mailed to TGC and entered into electronic format.

Due to the surveys' focus on transit providers with an inventory and not necessarily social services who have transit needs but no vehicles, various phone interviews were conducted by TGC of social service agencies throughout the region on the stakeholder list and asked various transit-related questions. These questions focused on how client transportation needs were currently being met and if coordination is a part of this arrangement.

An overview of the results of these various surveys and phone interviews is presented next.

## TTI Survey

### *Respondents*

All of the local contributors to transit services in the region responded to the survey. Unfortunately, the TTI survey catered to transit providers only and this was the primary response. Two additional agencies, Community Health Centers of South Central Texas and Shady Oak Nursing & Rehab, submitted responses. Shady Oak Nursing operates one minivan and carries approximately 270 annual passengers. Community Health Centers of South Central Texas operate one van for their clients.

### *Observations*

- 90 percent of the transit providers in the survey serve elderly individuals and those with disabilities, 80 percent serve the general public.
- 90 percent of the destinations in the survey for transit were social service agencies.
- Other trips that were served by transit outside of the region included San Antonio, Houston, New Braunfels, Galveston, and Luling.
- One restriction in the area served by transit included limited trips to Houston, Galveston and San Antonio.
- A majority of the respondents were demand-response providers with one or more days advanced scheduling required.
- 90 percent of respondents utilize cellular phones for their driver's two-way communication.
- Of the four respondents who use technologies to plan and deliver services, two respondents use computer-assisted dispatching and two use automated vehicle routing/scheduling.
- Of all the respondents, none plan to remove any vehicles from service, buy vehicles, or lease vehicles in the next year.
- Of the services offered by providers in the region who responded, several felt they could offer services to others in a coordination effort and even more needed services. *Table 2.24* presents a survey response summary.

| ***Table 2.24 – Functional Needs and Opportunities to Coordinate*** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***Already have this service*** | ***Could provide this service to others*** | ***Already provide this service to others*** | ***Need this service from others*** |
| Routing/Scheduling | 89% (8) | 22% (2) | 22% (2) | 11% (1) |
| Dispatching | 88% (7) | 25% (2) | 12% (1) | 0% (0) |
| Routing/Dispatch Training | 67% (4) | 33% (2) | 17% (1) | 17% (1) |
| Driver Training | 50% (4) | 12% (1) | 12% (1) | 38% (3) |
| Preventive Maintenance | 62% (5) | 12% (1) | 12% (1) | 38% (3) |
| Routine Repairs | 25% (2) | 0% (0) | 12% (1) | 62% (5) |
| Major Repair/Component Rebuild | 17% (1) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 83% (5) |
| Parts Purchasing | 17% (1) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 67% (4) |
| Inventory Management | 50% (3) | 17% (1) | 0% (0) | 50% (3) |
| Customer/Information/Referral Services | 43% (3) | 14% (1) | 14% (1) | 29% (2) |
| Information Technology Support | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 100% (4) |
| Billing | 60% (3) | 20% (1) | 0% (0) | 20% (1) |
| Marketing | 20% (1) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 60% (3) |
| Planning/Programming | 60% (3) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 60% (3) |

- Two respondents currently participate in coordinated services. The GCRPC coordinates insurance and purchasing and participates in other coordinated activities. Shady Oak Nursing & Rehab offers joint insurance purchase and joint transportation of nursing home residents.
- Of the five respondents who commented on the biggest constraints to coordination, three cited funding constraints, one cited insurance constraints, and one cited that vehicle sharing was limited because they shared peak travel times with other agencies in the area.
- Approximate annual operating costs for respondents ranged from as little as $7,000 to as much as $957,837. The total approximate annual operating costs for respondents was $1,915,410.
- No respondents use volunteer drivers for service.
- Benefits cited for using private-for-hire vehicles as part of the service mix include the following:
  - Help transport clients from the northern part of the county and the southern part of the county at the same time; and
  - There is no worrying about maintenance of vehicles and there is a cost benefit of utilizing taxi service verses a bus for one or two passenger trips.
- Challenges cited for using private-for-hire vehicles as part of the service mix include the following:
  - No insurance to cover it.
  - Unsure if they are willing to make long distance trips between rural destinations.
  - Unsure if service will be timely and satisfactory to standards for transit providers.
  - Unsure if they will comply with public transportation rules and regulations.

  - Locating a reasonably priced dealer in smaller counties.
  - Coordination of services and communication.

### Previous Victoria Transit Survey

#### *Respondents*

There were 11 respondents to this survey. Five of these respondents also responded to the TTI survey. New respondents included Bluebonnet Trails Community MHMR Center, Texas Workforce Solutions, TxDOT, Gonzales Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture, Victoria College Adult Education Services, and Victoria ISD (Even Start).

#### *Observations*

- No respondents could readily identify available resources their agency had to assist coordination efforts. The desire is there but the resources are not.
- The Victoria ISD Even Start family literacy program lacks proper funding to transport participants and is always looking for coordination opportunities. The program transports participants to school and to Victoria College for testing. VISD currently does not offer its school buses for the program and it must rely on two-passenger mini-vans and one small bus donated by the Victoria Adult Literacy Council. If the vans break down or become unavailable, it will be in a crisis mode with no back up in place.
- Victoria College Adult Education Services offer basic skills leading to a GED for participants, post-secondary education, and employment classes for non-English speakers. It offers classes in Refugio, Hallettsville, Port Lavaca, Yorktown, and Yoakum. The Adult Education Program is based in Victoria. No transportation is provided for the program, even though a large number of participants need transportation. The main constraint to providing transit to clients is limitation of funds. Although the timing of satellite locations varies for classes, the Victoria location offers the widest range of day and night class times. Participants who work during the day and desire night courses have little transit options in Victoria.
- Texas Workforce Solutions does not provide direct transportation to clients, but it does offer monthly local and rural transit passes for Victoria Transit and utilizes gas tokens for Food Stamps, TANF, and WIA Adult recipients. Client needs include the following:
  - Transportation to and from rural job locations;
  - Weekend job transportation;
  - Early morning and late night job transportation;
  - Easy drop-off of children to daycare before work (the hourly schedule of Victoria Transit does not allow for this service);
  - Additional stops (clients must walk long distances from Victoria Transit stops to work);
  - Bus stop covers at stop locations (this deters clients traveling to and from work on rainy days); and
  - Rural transit is too heavily focused on medical trips which delays clients getting to work on time.

- Bluebonnet Trails Community MHMR Center offers limited transportation when nothing else is available to MR patients. It offers transit to and from services at the center in Gonzales and to medical appointments and work. No service is provided to MH patients. It coordinates with CARTS for Medicaid clients only. Funding is a major limitation and has resulted in major cutbacks to routine transit service. There is a lack of staff time and funding for vehicles and drivers.
- Goliad County RTransit identified the far eastern side of the county as a potential area for coordinated services. Funding has been identified as a constraint to coordination.
- Community Health Centers of South Central Texas offers free transportation to any patient that resides in Gonzales County. It has a Memorandum of Understanding with Gonzales County Senior Citizen Association for transit services. It feels that if the senior citizen vans of DeWitt, Lavaca, and Gonzales counties united, there would be more available services.
- Gonzales County Senior Citizen Association offers trips to San Antonio, Victoria, Seguin, Luling, and New Braunfels at a regularly scheduled time every month. It coordinates transit for four agencies/programs including doctor visits. It has coordinated with the Welfare-to-Work Program in the past, but has had difficulties getting the program to commit. Some health centers refer patients with long trip times to the association to transport patients from Gonzales to Smiley, Nixon, and Waelder, which is very expensive and funding is becoming very critical. Its Section 5310 program has been cut over the last few years and it cannot afford repairs or to serve all who need transit, much less offer its resources to other entities. Local agencies need to coordinate out of town trips and be more reliable and trustworthy.
- Lavaca County Senior Citizen Program currently coordinates with Medicaid, Heritage Health Services, Gulf Bend, Head Start, Workforce Solutions and area nursing facilities.

### *Other Issues Identified*

- Transportation to and from work from rural areas
- Early morning, late evening, and weekend service are lacking in both urban and rural systems
- Transportation to school/job training/daycare
- More covers on bus stops
- Need additional services between cities and counties in region
- Not enough money to meet current transportation needs
- Not enough vehicles
- Customers confused about service providers and service in general

## Phone Interviews with Social Services

### *Respondents*

A total of 25 organizations were reached for comment regarding their client needs for transportation, services offered, and existing coordination efforts.

### *Observations*

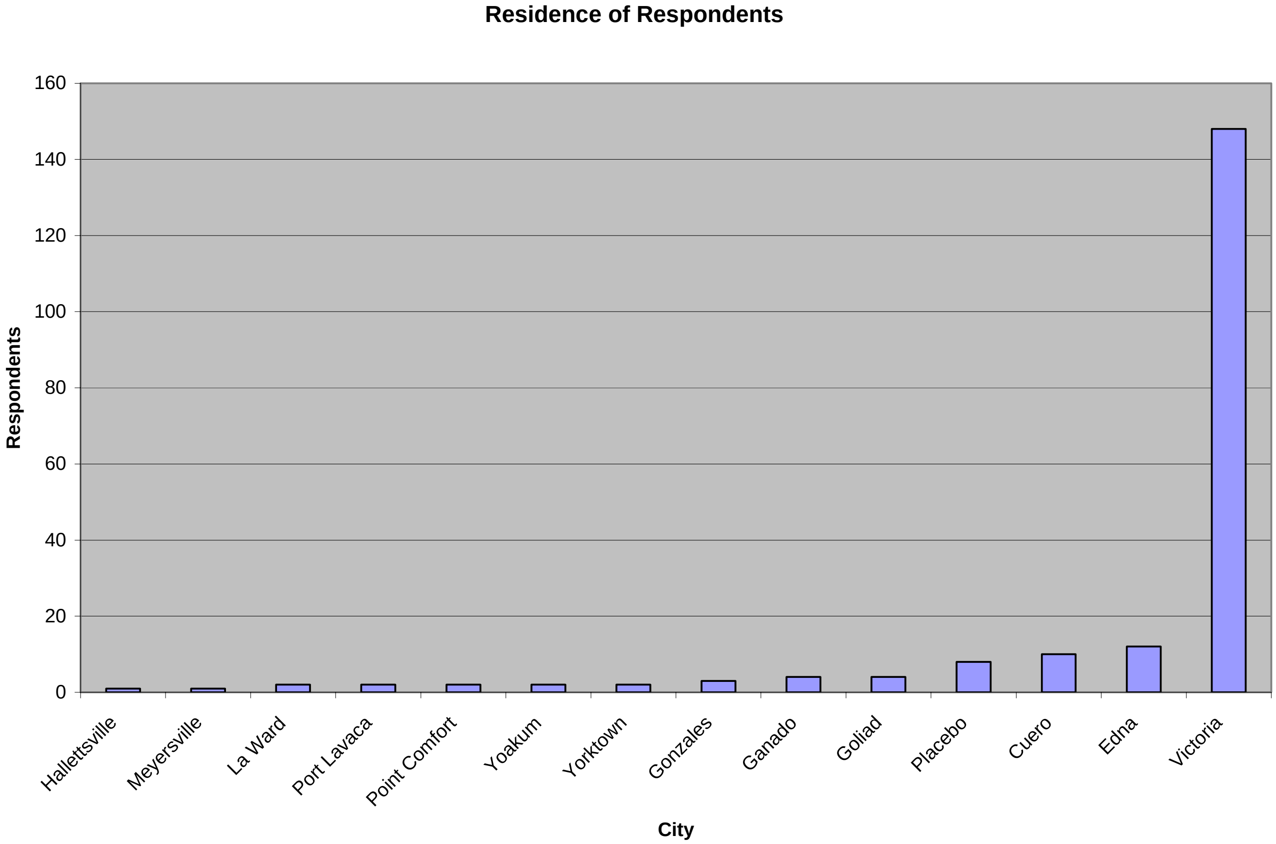
- Only five out of the 25 organizations who responded do not own their own vehicles
- Most organizations with vehicles own vans and three organizations have buses or sedans in addition to vans
- Only one organization said “Transportation is not a priority”
- Six organizations offer to pay for clients’ travel with bus passes
- Four organizations have some kind of coordination with other agencies
- Only three organizations feel that current transportation services are not adequate for their clients’ needs
- Most agencies in the Victoria area (only fixed-route service in region) feel fixed route is not adequate for their client’s needs
- Barriers for transportation – cost to agency and liability to organization
- Most organizations make ten or less trips a day
- At least two organizations use volunteers to transport clients
- Only two organizations do not focus services on elderly or persons with disabilities
- At least three organizations have client bases over 1,000 people
- One agency (Whispering Oaks Manor) actually utilizes ambulances when its van is unavailable

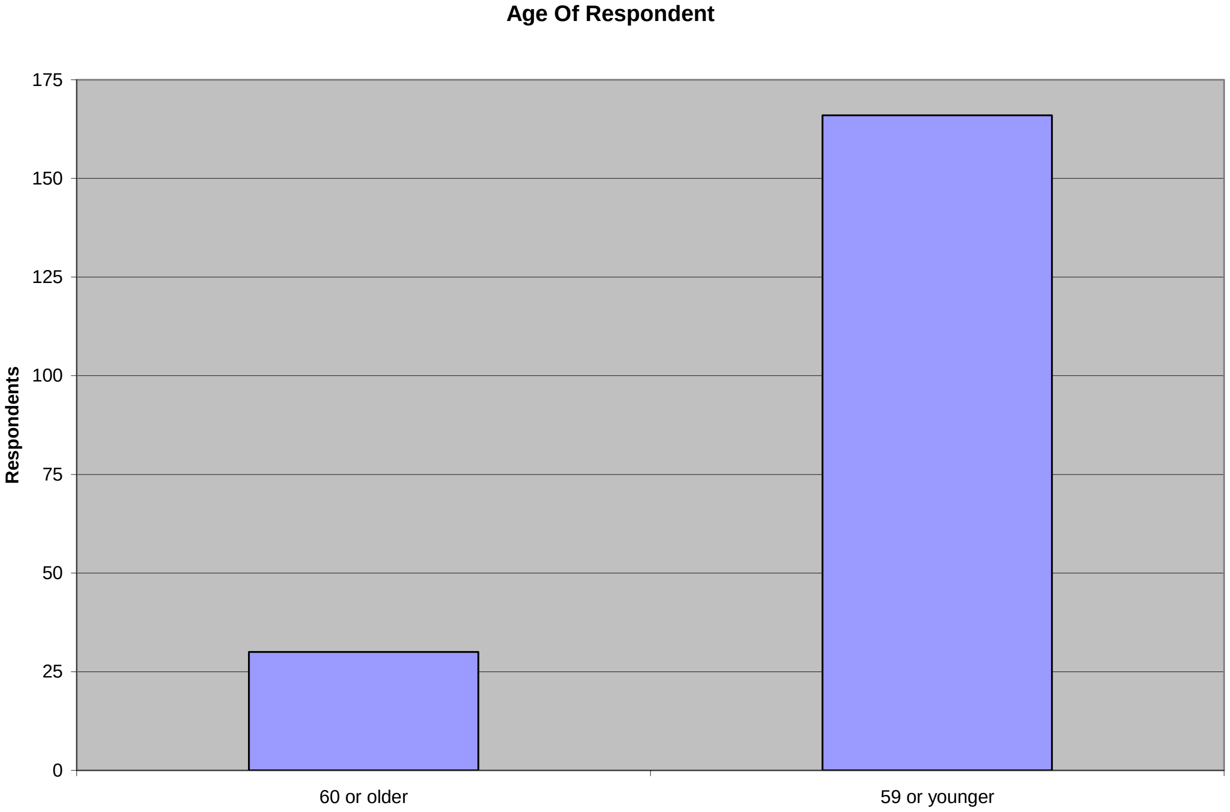
## Transportation Consumer Survey

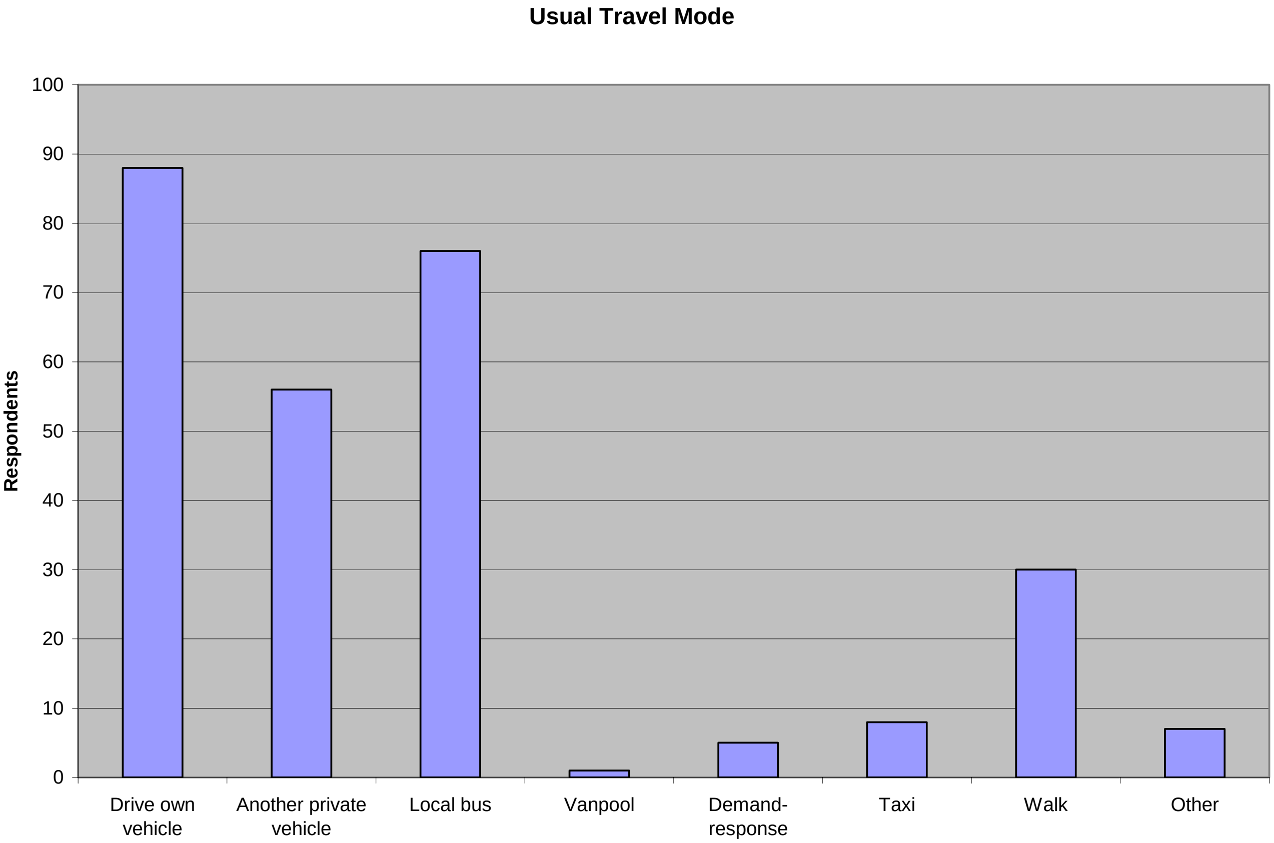
### *Respondents*

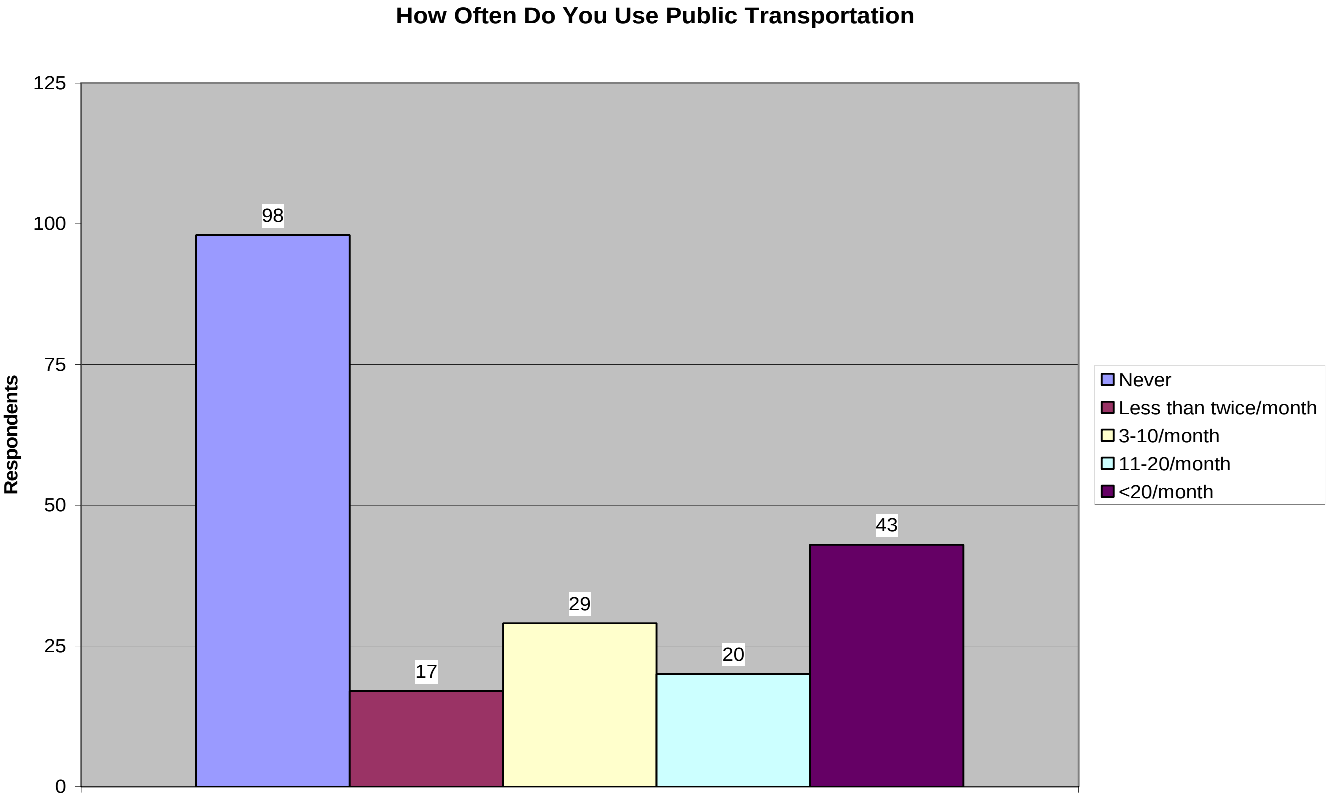
There were 211 respondents to this survey. This data sheds light on service gaps and current services. The following charts highlight the responses to the survey. Recurring comments taken from the survey were consolidated and recorded following the chart data.

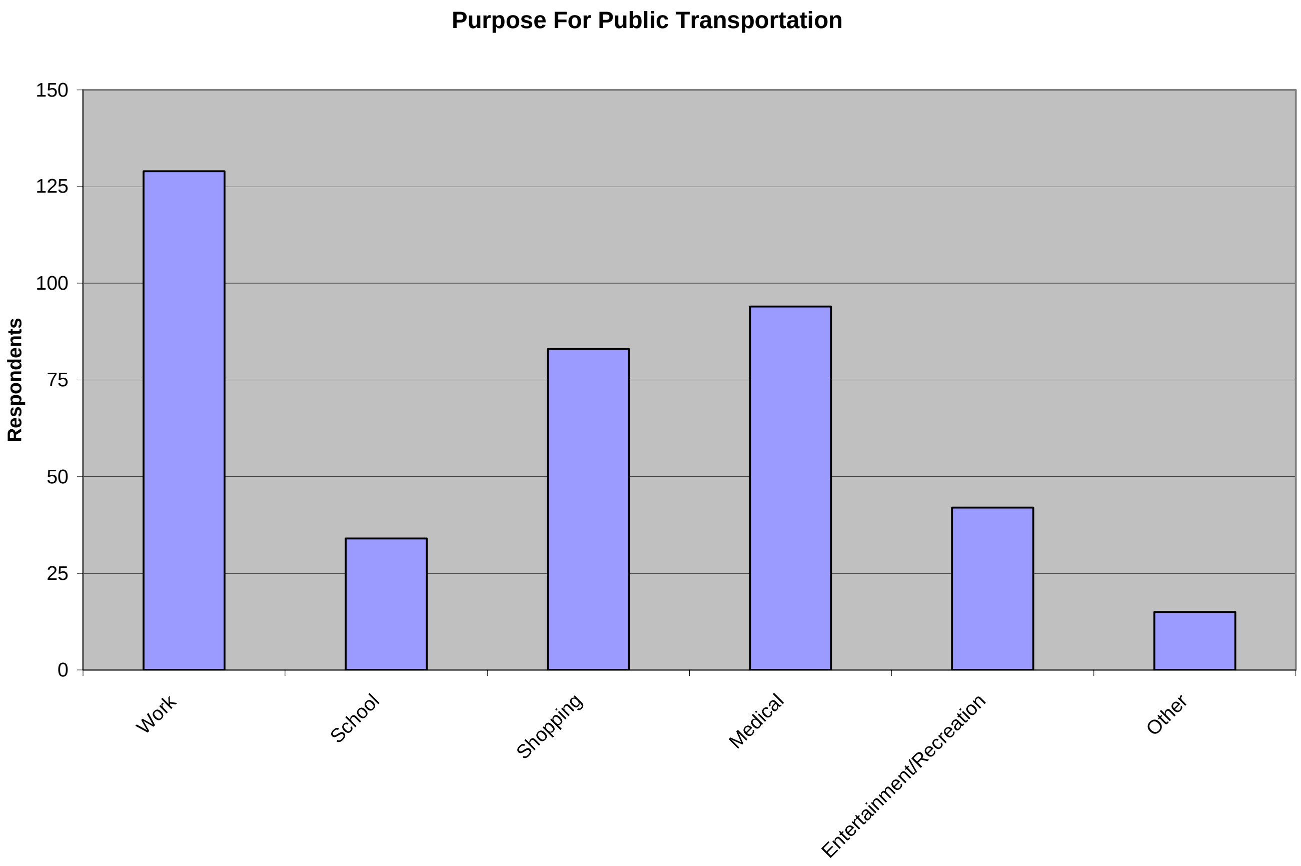
A number of the questions had an option to fill in a response other than the options listed. One of these questions asked for factors that inhibit using public transit. Responses to this question included long waits at Victoria Transit bus stops;, more stops needed to get to desired locations; and not knowing who to contact for service. The most common answer to this question was no weekend and evening hours of Victoria Transit service. Common destinations people were unable to reach by public transit were shopping, work, doctor or medical-related appointments, job searching, and church/weekend activities. Many of these responses are likely due to a lack of weekend and evening hours and a limited service area. Some cities that respondents repeatedly answered they were unable to reach included Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Houston, and Port Lavaca. An overwhelming response to this question was Victoria. Due to the large number of respondents residing in Victoria, this would likely point to service gaps within Victoria and not necessarily outside the region, although that is also an issue.

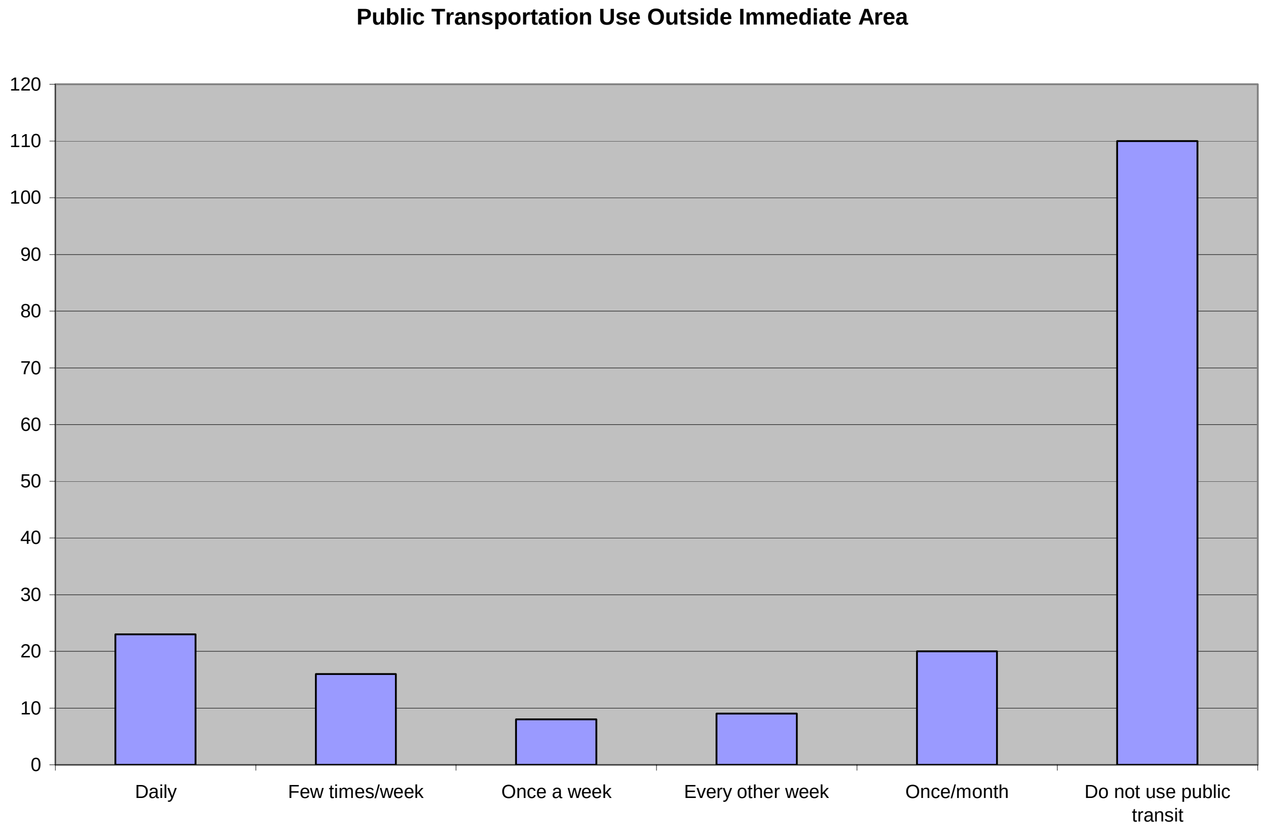

Residence of Respondents
Respondents
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Hallettsville
Meyersville
La Ward
Port Lavaca
Point Comfort
Yoakum
Yorktown
Gonzales
Ganado
Goliad
Placebo
Cuero
Edna
Victoria
City


Age Of Respondent
Respondents
175
150
125
100
75
50
25
0
60 or older
59 or younger

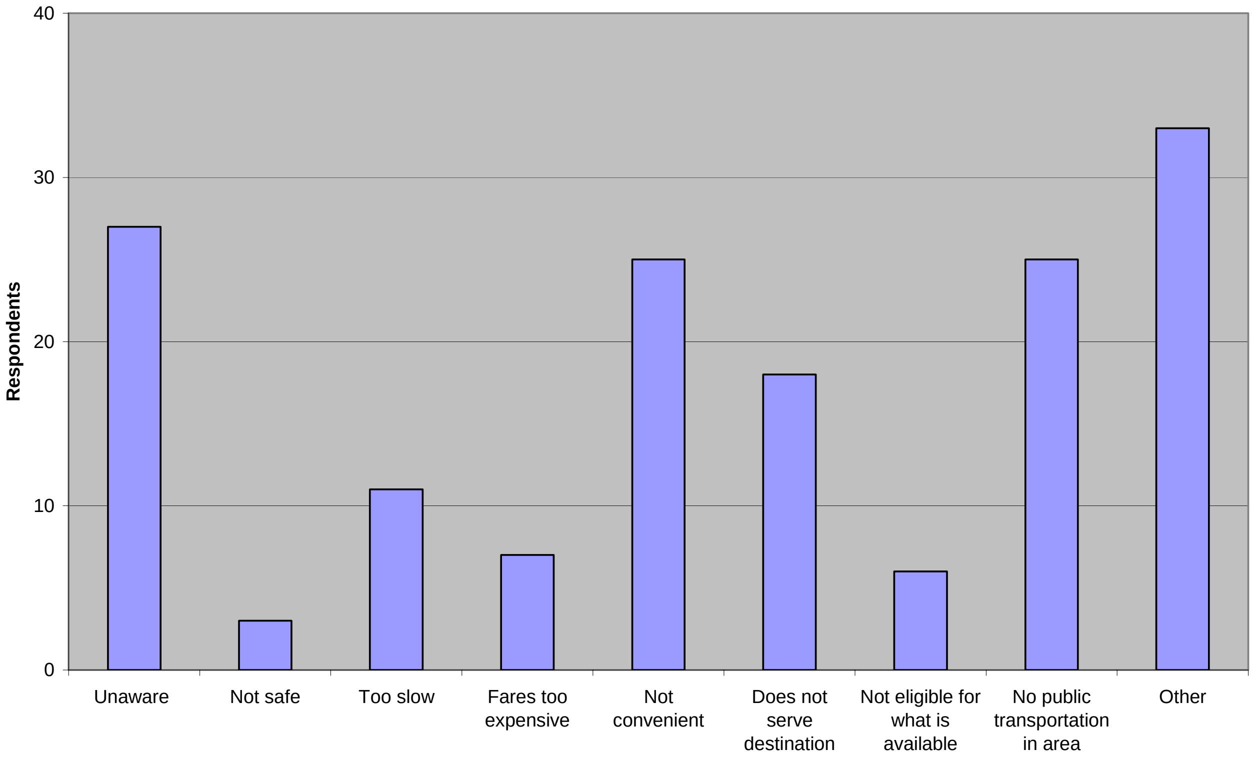

Usual Travel Mode
Respondents
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Drive own vehicle
Another private vehicle
Local bus
Vanpool
Demand-response
Taxi
Walk
Other


How Often Do You Use Public Transportation
Respondents
125
100
75
50
25
0
98
17
29
20
43
Never
Less than twice/month
3-10/month
11-20/month
<20/month

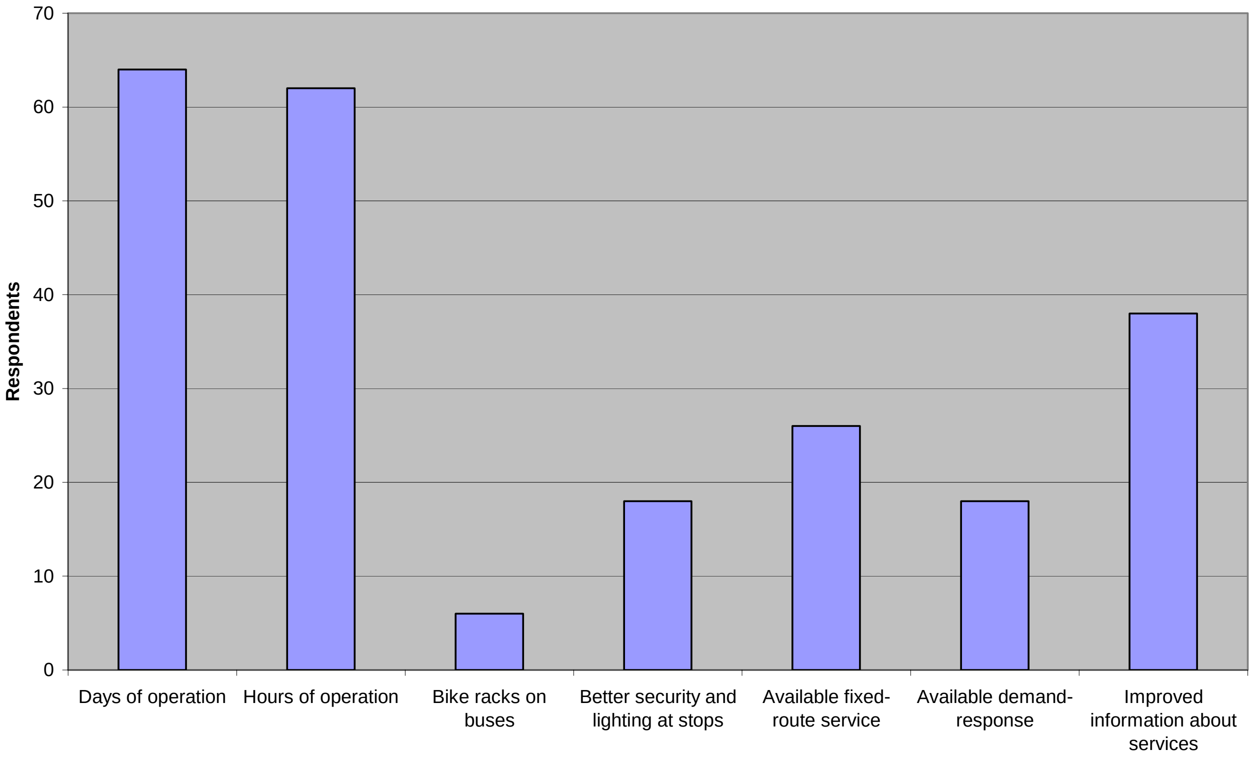

Purpose For Public Transportation
Respondents
150
125
100
75
50
25
0
Work
School
Shopping
Medical
Entertainment/Recreation
Other


Public Transportation Use Outside Immediate Area
120
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Daily
Few times/week
Once a week
Every other week
Once/month
Do not use public transit

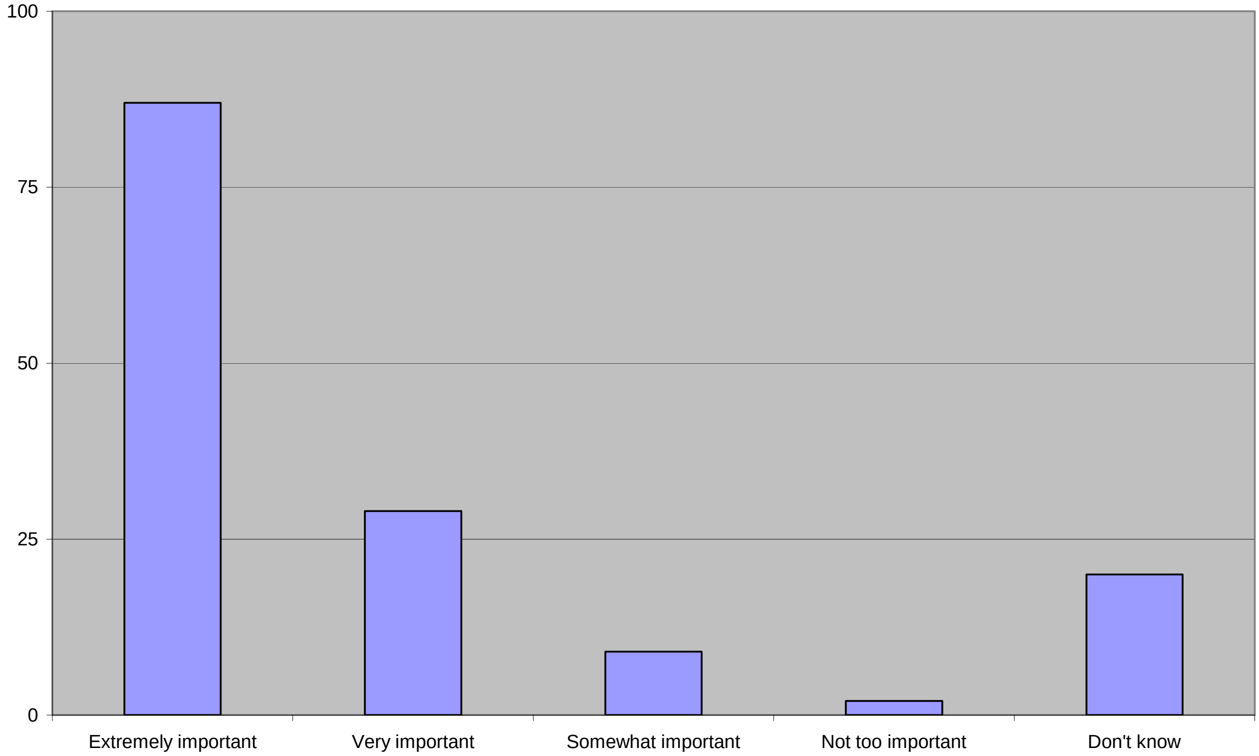
**Reasons For Not Using Public Transportation**



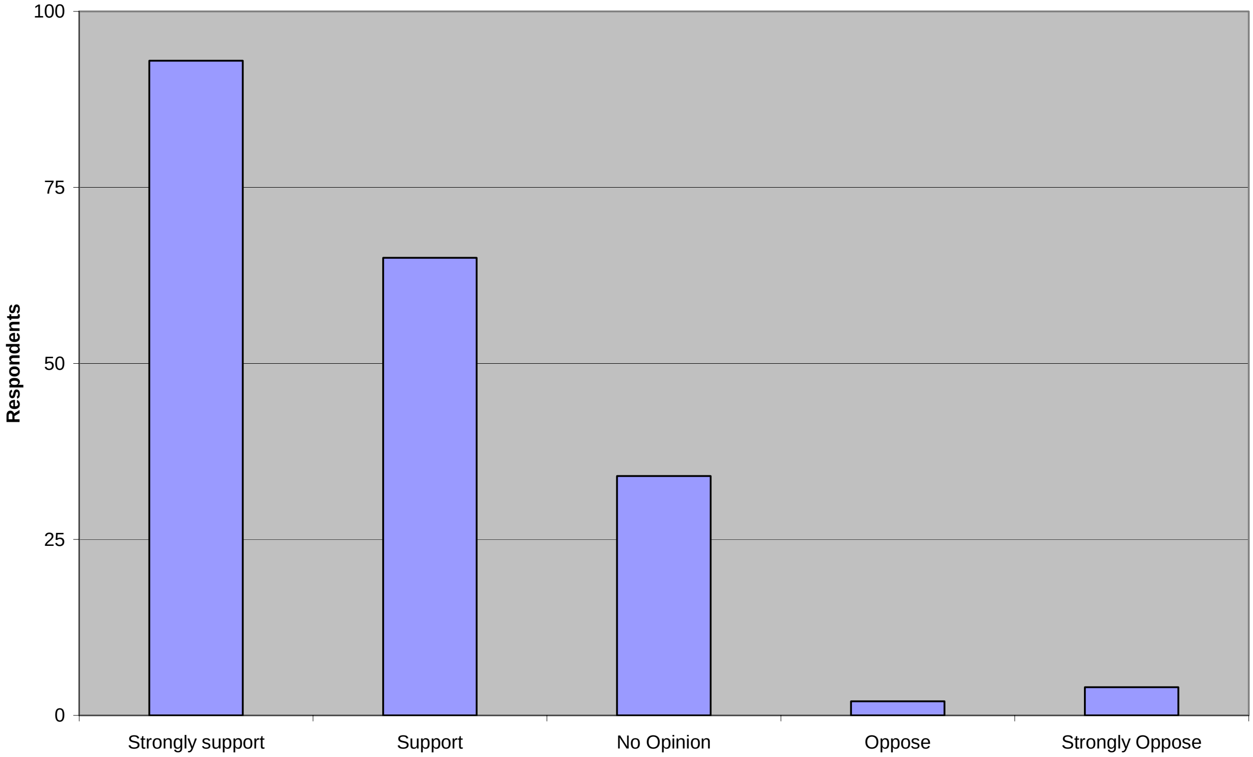
**If Transit Is Used - What Improvements Are Needed**



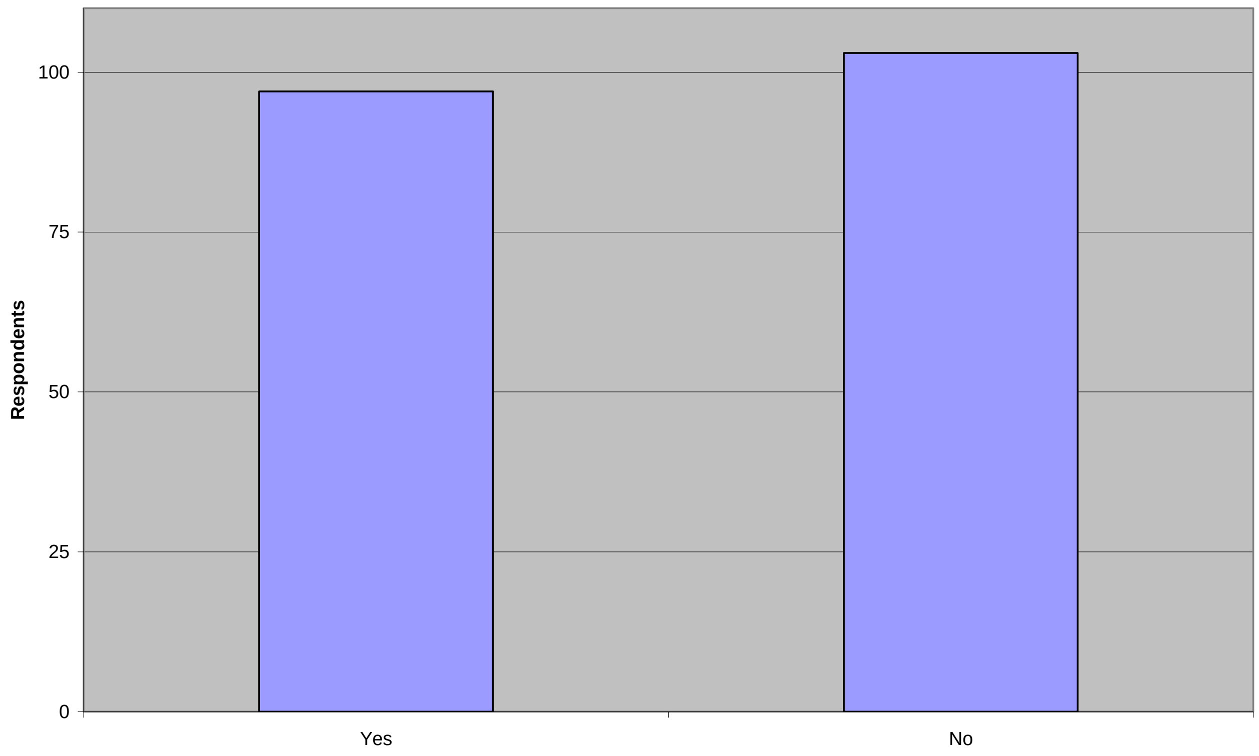
## If There Is No Transit In The Area - Would It Be Important To Establish Service



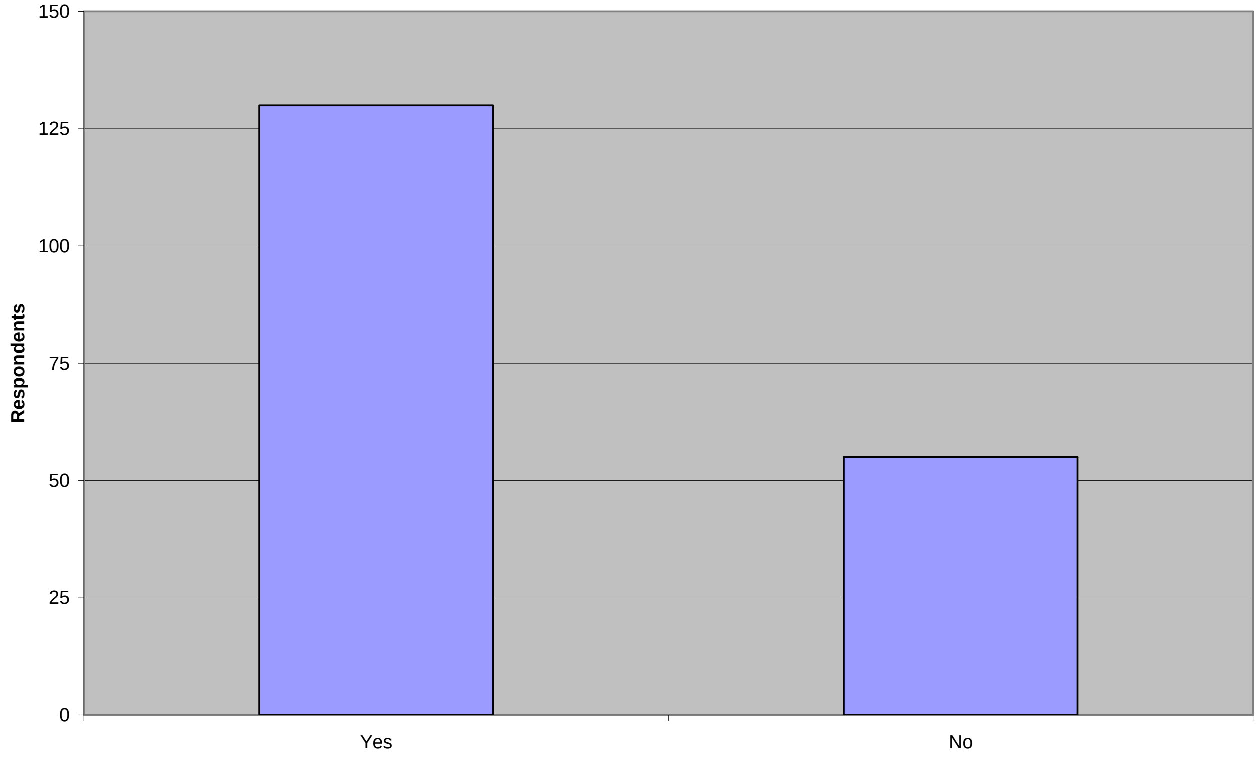
## Would You Be Willing To Pay A Fare For Transportation

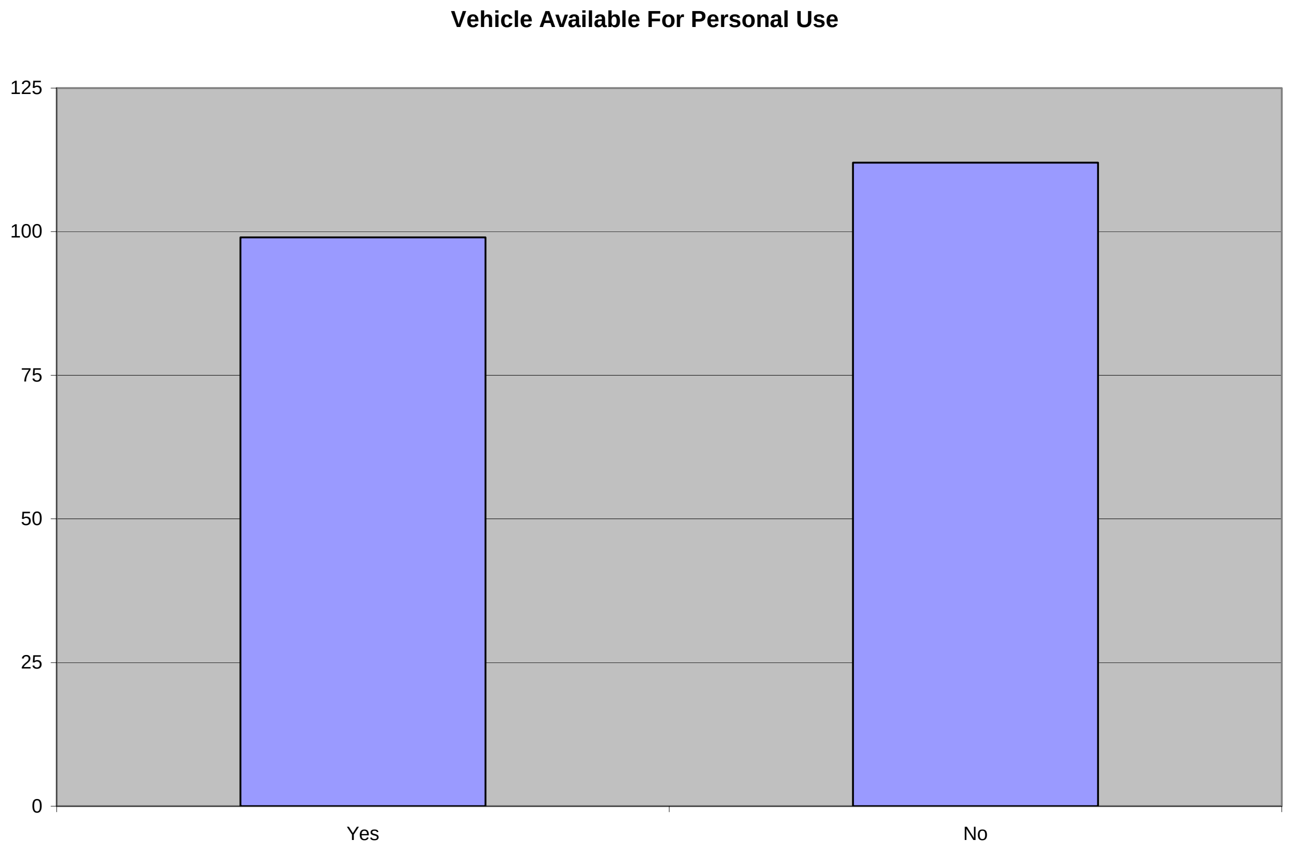


In The Last Six Months Were You Unable To Get Somehwere Due To Lack Of Transportation



Would You Be Willing To Participate In A Van Pool Program




Vehicle Available For Personal Use
125
100
75
50
25
0
Yes
No

# Chapter 3 – PEER REVIEW

A peer review allows agencies with similar characteristics and similar constituencies, and those that are engaged in the same or similar activities, to examine each other's practices in order to learn from each other. Purposes of the peer review include exploring coordination projects in other regions to learn about their experiences and providing examples for the coordination efforts and pilot projects proposed for the Golden Crescent Region. This task benefits the project by providing context for the seven-county region by sharing "best practices."

Coordination can mean many things: providing a website with consolidated information for multiple service providers; providing a single fare medium for multiple service providers; coordinating service delivery, or co-mingling trips from different agencies.

A peer review of other agencies' efforts at transportation coordination may assist the Golden Crescent Region as it prepares for the future of coordinated transportation services. To accomplish this peer review, the demographics of the region must be understood. The Golden Crescent Region is largely rural in character as reflected in the lower population of the region; however, the region does have a number of smaller urban areas including Victoria, the largest city in the region.

*Table 3.1* presents characteristics what could be regarded as indicators of relative transit dependency of the area's citizens. The main areas worth highlighting are areas with higher percentages of elderly, disabled and low-income households that do not have an automobile. The region's transit needs and gaps were identified in the Chapter 2.

*Table 3.1 – Golden Crescent Demographic Profile*

| *DATA* | Calhoun | DeWitt | Goliad | Gonzales | Jackson | Lavaca | Victoria |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **POPULATION** | | | | | | | |
| 1990 Population | 19,053 | 18840 | 5,980 | 17,205 | 13,039 | 18,690 | 74,361 |
| 2000 Population | 20,647 | 20,013 | 6,928 | 18,628 | 14,391 | 19,210 | 84,088 |
| 2005 Population | 20,606 | 20,507 | 7,102 | 19,587 | 14,339 | 18,925 | 85,648 |
| 1990-2000 Change | 8.4% | 6.2% | 15.9% | 8.3% | 10.4% | 2.8% | 13.0% |
| 2000-2005 Change | -0.2% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 5.1% | -0.4% | -1.5% | 1.9% |
| % Persons over 65 | 13% | 19% | 18% | 17% | 16% | 22% | 12% |
| | | | | | | | |
| **DISABLED** | | | | | | | |
| % Persons with Disability Status 5+ yrs | 20% | 25% | 19% | 23% | 24% | 24% | 19% |
| | | | | | | | |
| **LANGUAGE** | | | | | | | |
| % Language other than English Spoken at Home 5+ yrs | 33% | 23% | 29% | 34% | 19% | 14% | 27% |
| | | | | | | | |
| **HOUSEHOLD AND INCOME** | | | | | | | |
| Households | 7,442 | 7,207 | 2,644 | 6,782 | 5,336 | 7,669 | 30,071 |
| Median Household Income (1999) | $35,849 | $28,714 | $34,201 | $28,368 | $35,254 | $29,132 | $38,732 |
| Persons Below Poverty Line (1999) | 16% | 20% | 16% | 19% | 15% | 13% | 13% |
| % Households Without an Automobile | 7% | 9% | 6% | 11% | 7% | 8% | 7% |
| | | | | | | | |
| **EMPLOYMENT** | | | | | | | |
| % Population in Labor Force (16+ yrs) | 58% | 53% | 57% | 59% | 58% | 59% | 65% |
| | | | | | | | |
| **COMMUTE TO WORK** | | | | | | | |
| % Drive Alone | 78.5% | 77.2% | 74.9% | 71.1% | 77.1% | 74.4% | 77.8% |
| % Carpooled | 15.4% | 14.4% | 14.3% | 19.4% | 15.5% | 16.6% | 17.6% |
| % Public Transit | 0.2% | 0.1% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| % Walked | 2.2% | 2.3% | 3.3% | 4.3% | 2.7% | 2.8% | 1.3% |
| % Other Means | 1.8% | 1.5% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 1.9% | 1.1% | 1.1% |
| % Work from Home | 1.9% | 4.5% | 6.1% | 3.7% | 2.8% | 4.9% | 2.1% |
| Mean Travel Time to Work (min) | 19.6 | 26.3 | 30.9 | 24 | 23.6 | 22 | 21.4 |

## *Vanpools*

This section outlines the general findings related to the establishment of vanpool services that may affect the establishment of a vanpool service in the Golden Crescent Region; provides a discussion of special operating concerns for rural areas; and presents three short case studies. Vanpooling and carpooling are now an integral part of the services offered or sponsored by many public transit organizations, Transportation Management Organizations (TMO), and individual employers. Vanpooling occurs when a group of 7 to 15 people commute together on a regular basis. A vanpool typically serves employees who work at the same destination (either one employer or a cluster of employers). The popularity of vanpooling is derived from the benefits to the driver, the riders (employees), the employers, and the community at-large.

### Vanpool Employer Benefits

- **Improves Arrival Times –** Vanpools typically depart at the same time each day. Peer pressure keeps those riders with tendencies to be late from holding up the vanpool.
- **Reduces Employee Turnover –** Maintaining an affordable and convenient travel option is an important consideration in making a job change. For employers who may rely on a workforce that may have unreliable personal transportation, a vanpool is a strategy to increase attendance, decrease absences, and reduce turnover.
- **Raises Employee Morale –** Employees in vanpools often view vanpooling as a company-offered benefit, much like health care or paid vacation. Greater benefits combine with reduced employee stress to raise employee morale.
- **Reduces Parking Costs –** Employers reduce their costs for parking associated with construction and maintenance of parking spaces, leasing parking spaces, or leasing office space with access to parking spaces through vanpooling. Each vanpool removes approximately seven cars from the parking lot.
- **Reduces Stress –** Employers may experience savings in the costs of health-related absences for employees who experience less stress while vanpooling than while driving alone.
- **Provides Tax Advantages –** Employers can take up to $100 per month in deductions for employee vanpool benefits without these benefits being taxable to the employee.
- **Expands Labor Pool –** People are willing to work farther from home if they know they will not have to drive every day and that their costs of commuting will not be too high. The availability of vanpools enables companies to recruit and retain employees from a wider geographical area.

### Vanpool Employee Benefits

- **Saves Money –** Typical vanpoolers save from several hundred to a few thousand dollars per year on gas, car maintenance, and wear and tear. Additional savings on insurance, parking, and tolls benefit many vanpoolers.
- **Reduces Stress –** Vanpool riders avoid the stress of driving in peak-hour traffic, enabling them to arrive at work more relaxed and ready to start work. In turn, they arrive home after work more relaxed and ready to enjoy home life.
- **Increases Productivity –** Vanpool riders may make use of their commute time to and from work to accomplish other tasks. Vanpools allow individuals the flexibility to use this time in the way that they choose, including reading, resting, working, and socializing.
- **Increases Convenience –** Vanpool vehicles are often given preferential parking and pick-up/drop-off accommodations.

### Vanpool Community Benefits

- **Increases Economic Vitality –** Communities that reduce demand for transportation infrastructure through vanpools enable continued economic growth with less expenditure for infrastructure, construction, and maintenance. Controlling these costs offers the added benefit of reduced taxation to employers and employees.
- **Improves Environmental Quality –** Communities that reduce single-occupant vehicle trip miles through vanpools help to maintain better air quality through reduced vehicle trip miles and reduced traffic congestion.
- **Enhances Quality of Life –** Communities that reduce traffic congestion and air pollution through vanpools help to maintain a better quality of life for their residents.

*Table 3.2* outlines 17 components that must be addressed in developing and operating a vanpool program. Responsibilities for these items vary with the five different optional frameworks. For example, the owner of the van could be the Transit Agency, a third party, an employer, or a driver depending on which framework is considered.

| ***Table 3.2 – Vanpool Components*** | |
|---|---|
| Administration | Employee Access |
| Matching | Employee Promotion |
| Vehicle | Employee Subsidies |
| Insurance | Timeliness |
| Maintenance | Log Book and Recordkeeping |
| Collect Money | Reports |
| Check Driver | Contract |
| Emergency Ride | Rules of the Road |
| Pay Fee | |

### Vanpool Operational Frameworks

Vanpools can be organized using five basic frameworks that differ by the number of parties involved, the risk to each party, areas of assigned responsibility, and benefits/drawbacks. No matter who operates the vanpool or vanpool program, employers are *key* to the program's implementation and success. Should an agency wish to pursue a vanpool program, a list of targeted employers or groups of employers to be the initial focus of a vanpool program will need to be developed. Employers may be selected because of size or circumstances (some have evening shifts that operate when transit service is unavailable), those located in areas that have no regular transit service, or those that have expressed an interest in vanpooling. The following list presents the framework of each approach and a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages.

- **Transit Agency, Third Party, Employer, Driver, Rider –** Transit Agency would provide some administration and marketing; the vanpool operator would be responsible for all other aspects of operations.
- **Transit Agency, Employer, Driver, Rider –** Transit Agency develops, establishes, and operates its own vanpool program.

- **Employer, Driver, Rider –** Transit Agency assists employers in establishing their own company vanpools, solicits interest, and provides matching and administrative services.
- **Third Party, Driver, Rider –** Transit Agency enters into a partnership with others to establish and operate a vanpool program for a group of employers. This arrangement could be managed through a Transportation Management Organization (TMO).
- **Driver, Rider –** Transit Agency assists individuals in establishing their own vanpool, solicits interest, and provides matching and administrative services.

### OPTION 1: Transit Agency Contracts with Vanpool Operator

If a Transit Agency opts to contract for service with a Vanpool Operator, it lessens its responsibility for the execution of the program. Vanpool operators can be either a private firm, such as Vanpool Services Incorporated (VPSI), or a public, non-profit TMO, established under the auspices of the Transit Agency. The Transit Agency initially would be responsible for issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified vanpool operators.

The vanpool operator, once selected, typically assumes many of the responsibilities for implementation and administration of the program. In addition to administration, its duties usually include matching riders with one another, procuring vehicles and insurance, checking a prospective driver's background, and providing alternative means of transport in the event of an emergency. The employer shares responsibility for ensuring employee access to the program, promoting its use, and administering a tax-deductible incentive to employees. (Under federal law, the first $100 provided to an employee each month for vanpooling is not considered taxable income.)

In some arrangements, a vanpool operator has less of a role than what is commonly practiced and the employer assumes much more of the responsibility. For example, the employer may be responsible for providing such things as insurance, vehicle maintenance, or the vehicle itself. The assignment of responsibilities depends upon the capacity of the vanpool operator and should be clearly defined in the contract.

Drivers and riders in this scenario have the fewest responsibilities. Commonly, drivers collect fees from other riders, although the vanpool operator or employer can perform this function. Drivers also are responsible for cleaning and fueling the van, maintaining the vehicle log, creating reports, and, of course, being punctual. Riders simply must pay their fees and obey the contracts delineating their participation.

### *Advantages/Disadvantages*

By contracting with a third-party vanpool operator, a Transit Agency greatly minimizes its risks associated with the operation of a vanpool. The Transit Agency will have little to do with the establishment of vanpool operations and nothing to do with its day-to-day administration. Moreover, if the vanpool is not successful, the Transit Agency will not be held directly responsible. This operational framework is beneficial in smaller markets, such as Amarillo, where it is difficult to market enough pools to take advantage of efficiencies that occur with larger numbers.

The downside of this approach is the lack of control that the Transit Agency will be able to exercise over the program. If the vanpool operator is not capable of performing credibly, the contracting party may be unable to intervene in its operations unless remedies are specified in the pre-contract with the operator. Otherwise, the Transit Agency must wait until the end of the contract to re-solicit proposals for a new operator.

### OPTION 2: Transit Agency Establishes and Operates its Own Vanpool Program

In this scenario, the Transit Agency assumes most of the responsibility for the vanpool program. It is charged with administering the program, matching riders with drivers, purchasing vehicles and insurance, ensuring vehicles are maintained, collecting money, and performing background checks. Individual employers may perform or assist with some of these major functions, including providing the standard $100 non-taxable subsidy to employees, and promoting and facilitating access to the vanpool program. The obligations of drivers and riders would remain entirely unchanged in this instance.

#### *Advantages/Disadvantages*

By developing and operating its own vanpool, the Transit Agency can control the quality and consistency of service. If the program were successful, positive public relations would be generated for the Transit Agency.

Alternatively, with this option the Transit Agency places itself in the highest risk situation possible among all five scenarios. The agency would be singularly responsible for all legal, financial, and political risks involved in such an enterprise. Therefore, any successes and conversely any failures would be readily attributable to the agency. Furthermore, higher administration costs associated with operating a vanpool program could tax the Transit Agency’s ability to perform its primary function, providing basic transit services.

### OPTION 3: Transit Agency Assists Employers in Establishing Company Vanpools

With Option 3, the Transit Agency again possesses a limited role in the development and implementation of a vanpool program. The Transit Agency might be involved in the provision of matching riders with drivers and promotional materials for employers and employees, but neither is likely. Each employer that chooses to participate in a vanpool program would handle its own day-to-day administration.

In addition to daily administration, the employer also provides all of the critical functions previously discussed, e.g. procuring a vehicle and insurance, checking the background of potential drivers, promoting and providing adequate access to a program, etc. Duties pertaining to drivers and riders remain unchanged in this case.

#### *Advantages/Disadvantages*

The primary advantage for the agency in such a relationship is that if the program fails, it incurs little financial, legal, or political risk. Additionally, because there are fewer stakeholders involved, coordination and implementation for the Transit Agency is simpler.

Because each vanpool program would be individualized to each employer instead of comprehensive program for a group of employers, matching the available pool of drivers and riders may be hampered. This option might also severely limit the market of interested employers, as many will not want to implement a program themselves but would prefer to participate in a larger program administered from the outside.

### OPTION 4: Transit Agency Enters into a Partnership to Establish and Operate a Vanpool Program

Upon entering into a partnership with a third party, possibly a private firm but more likely a TMO, the Transit Agency's involvement in a vanpool program will probably be somewhat limited. The Transit Agency would solicit RFPs from qualified operators and may provide support for matching drivers and riders, but otherwise would allow its partner to handle the bulk of daily operations. However, the agency would likely assist in the development of and even participate in a TMO. The TMO, if selected over a private operator, along with participating employers, is responsible for all of the tasks critical to the successful operation of a vanpool program. Drivers and riders are responsible for their usual, ascribed tasks.

#### *Advantages/Disadvantages*

Forming a partnership with a third party, either a private operator or a TMO, allows the Transit Agency to limit its liabilities. In this scenario, the Transit Agency provides only administrative support and allows the operating entity to assume most of the financial, legal, and political risks.

The primary disadvantage of this arrangement is that if a TMO were created with a Transit Agency's involvement, it would be duplicating some of its effort to provide public transportation. Moreover, even though the Transit Agency would not be directly responsible for operations, it would be seen as more closely associated with the program than if it contracted with a third-party operator to administer a program (Option 1). This could be problematic for the Transit Agency if the program does not perform as expected.

### OPTION 5: Transit Agency Assists Individuals in Establishing Their Own Vanpools

Option 5 requires the least amount of involvement by a Transit Agency. The Transit Agency would provide individuals interested in vanpooling with lists of other potential drivers and riders, similar to carpools. The agency might also furnish promotional materials, develop a "do it yourself" kit, and even provide example controls and forms. Drivers on the other hand will be responsible for nearly every facet of the service. Administration, matching, collecting money, providing a van, and insurance would all be the sole responsibility of drivers. Riders in this scenario would be liable only for paying fees and adhering to whatever contract they enter into with the driver.

#### *Advantages/Disadvantages*

The risks for a Transit Agency adopting this approach to the provision of vanpool services are very low; the success or failure is almost completely dependent upon drivers and riders. However, this approach is not advised because of low probability of success. Because no agency is involved, participants are not eligible for any federal subsidies. To summarize, *Table 3.3* outlines the risk exposure in the management of a vanpool.

| ***Table 3.3 – Vanpool Risk Assessment*** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Option*** | ***Transit Agency (TA) Risks*** | ***Financial Risk Agency*** | ***Legal Risk Agency*** | ***Exposure Risk Agency*** |
| **1** | TA, Third Party, Employer, Driver, Rider | Low | Low | Low |
| **2** | TA, Employer, Driver, Rider | High | High | High |
| **3** | Employer, Driver, Rider | Low | Low | Low |
| **4** | Third Party, Driver, Rider | Low | Low | Low |
| **5** | Driver, Rider | Low | Low | Low |

*Table 3.4* outlines the likelihood and ease of implementing a typical vanpool program.

| ***Table 3.4 – Vanpool Rate of Success*** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Option*** | ***Success*** | ***Longevity Program*** | ***Ease to Implement Program*** | ***Success Rate Program*** |
| **1** | TA, Third Party, Employer, Driver, Rider | High | Easy | High |
| **2** | TA, Employer, Driver, Rider | Moderate | Difficult | Moderate |
| **3** | Employer, Driver, Rider | Low | Difficult (1)<br>Easy | Low |
| **4** | Third Party, Driver, Rider | Moderate | Difficult (1)<br>Easy | Moderate |
| **5** | Driver, Rider | Low | Difficult (1)<br>Easy | Low |
| (1) Depends upon extent of TA involvement. | | | | |

## Special Operating Circumstances for Rural Areas

Vanpool service in rural areas is costly and difficult to manage because of the long distances between destinations. Long distances make scheduling a challenge because it is more cost efficient to have more riders per trip. However, more riders equal a greater increase in commute time leading to an ineffective program.

After purchasing the vehicles, additional costs will include gas, insurance, maintenance, and overhead. Perhaps the most expensive is the insurance. Many organizations are deterred from providing vanpool services because of the exorbitant costs of insuring vehicles. Determining factors include mileage, type of vehicle, driver experience, destination type, set schedule versus dial-a-ride, type of passenger, and radius of the area. Since vanpools in rural areas drive extensively without set schedules carrying senior citizens or persons with disabilities, the insurance rate could double that of regular vanpool.

## Coordination Peer Reviews

The following descriptions outline successful coordination practices that have occurred around the country and may be useful best practices for Golden Crescent's future coordination efforts.

***MISSOURI***
***Oats Incorporated***

| | |
|---|---|
| Program | Oats Incorporated |
| Service Type | Demand response, door to door |
| Service Area | 87 of 114 counties in Missouri |
| Major Funding Sources | Special Billings, FTA Grants, Medicaid, Area Agencies |

***Background:*** Oats Incorporated is a not-for-profit transportation provider for over 75 percent of the counties in Missouri. They have been in business since 1971, serving senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and the general public in rural areas with inadequate public transportation. With over 600 vans and a $19 million annual budget, the company is well able to provide door-to-door passenger assisted service for over 1.5 million one-way trips a year.

There are at least three practices that have enabled Oats Inc. to experience continued growth and success despite the challenges of operating in a predominantly rural state: enthused citizens, broad base of funding sources, and coordinated efforts.

***Volunteers****:* With such a large area to cover, Oats Inc. relies heavily on volunteers for many of their day-to-day operations, such as dispatching, coordinating, scheduling, and fund-raising activities. In FY2005, nearly 1,200 volunteers reported over 70,000 hours, saving the company nearly $1 million worth of work.[1] So many volunteers are eager to lend a hand because they have seen the value of this service and the importance to the community. Many senior citizens or people with disabilities are isolated and immobile in their rural towns, so having a door-to-door service not only fulfills their health-related needs, but also introduces them to an invigorating social network of compatible individuals. The care and wellness they receive lead many to volunteer, giving back to help extend to more members of the community.

***Funding****:* Oats Inc. applies a diversified strategy, looking for sources from all levels of the public sector, other not-for-profits, and grants from private foundations. Some of the grants include Section 5311, Section 5309, Section 3037, city, and county funding. Not only is funding difficult to secure, but the amounts are changing all the time. In order to deal with these changes, funds must be managed effectively with an eye on the future to stay viable in an unpredictable environment.[2]

***Coordination****:* There are many organizations and entities in need of transportation, and a strategy to effectively serve all the clients is to coordinate with each other. Oats Inc. works with a wide arrangement of organizations, such as the Missouri Department of Transportation, the Missouri Department of Mental Health, dialysis clinics, and various hospitals. In rural areas requiring long commutes, it is especially important to maximize the number of riders per van. However, more riders mean longer wait time for each individual, which could diminish the effectiveness of the program. Having a coordinated clientele allows Oats Inc. to have a more balanced approach so the services can be both efficient and effective.

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[1] Oats Incorporated Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Report. 2005. Accessed 6/5/06 at http://www.oatstransit.org/2005%20Annual%20Report.pdf

[2] Oats Incorporated Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Report. 2005. Accessed 6/5/06 at http://www.oatstransit.org/2005%20Annual%20Report.pdf

### *MARYLAND*
### *Charles County VanGo Specialized Service*

| | |
|---|---|
| Program | Charles County VanGo |
| Service Type | Demand response, door to door |
| Service Area | Charles County, Maryland |
| Major Funding Sources | Federal and State grants, County match |

***Background**:* VanGo began operations in 1997 as the public transportation system in Charles County, Maryland. In an effort to accommodate senior citizens and other community members with difficulty accessing public transportation, VanGo also began a Specialized Service for "persons unable to access or utilize the fixed-route public bus system."[3] Only senior citizens and persons with disabilities may qualify for this service, and riders must submit an application prior to being approved. In order to serve as many as possible, riders are limited to only 12 one-way trips per month and must schedule pickup at least 24 hours in advance. VanGo currently has a contract with a private company to provide operations and services, carry the insurance, and maintain the vehicles. The contract is for 7 years and expires in 2007. VanGo is contracted with an outside firm to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to see whether they should continue to contract the service or to do it themselves.

***Funding and Coordination**:* VanGo receives funding mainly from Federal and State grants, with Charles County agreeing to match 25 percent. Resources also come from other agencies. For example, the Health Department contributes money for medical assistance and the Department of Social Services contributes for evening service. VanGo is able to secure funding from different agencies because there is a coordinated system between agencies. Many agencies are in need of transportation services, and have agreed to work together in a coordinated effort to best serve the community. There are also subscription services with not-for-profits and other organizations such as dialysis centers and medical centers.

### *FLORIDA*
### *Space Coast Area Transit*

| | |
|---|---|
| Program | Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) |
| Service Type | Demand response, door to door |
| Service Area | Brevard County, Florida |
| Major Funding Sources | Local funding |

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[3] Specialized Services. Charles County's Public Transportation Service. Accessed 6/8/06 at http://www.charlescounty.org/cs/vango/demandresponse.htm

***Background***: SCAT offers four types of public transportation services for Brevard County, Florida: fixed route buses, beach trolleys, specialized curb-to-curb service, and vanpools. The specialized and vanpool services began in 1985 and has been growing steadily ever since. There is a lot of focus on transportation services due to the large population of senior citizens in the county, resulting in a lot of funding on the local level. Currently, SCAT owns 109 vans, shuttling 7-15 passengers on an average trip.

When the program begun, Brevard County tried running the services on their own, but was not very cost-effective in their approach. Shortly after, they decided to contract with VPSI (a private vanpool company), and have experienced tremendous success ever since. There is a very unique relationship between Brevard County, VPSI, and other agencies and organizations.

***County, VPSI, and Agencies***: The County owns the vehicles and leases them to VPSI. VPSI will assume all the costs and lease them to other agencies and organizations. VPSI also provides the insurance, maintains the vehicles, and hires the drivers, so there is no cost at all to the county. Obviously, the County benefits because they do not have any additional costs besides the vehicles. Despite assuming all the costs, VPSI still benefits because they did not need to purchase any vehicles. The agencies are attracted to the program as well because leasing from VPSI is definitely more cost-effective than providing the services themselves.

### *GALVESTON*

***Background***: The City of Galveston/Island Transit is the designated public transportation provider within the urbanized area on Galveston Island. The City of Galveston is home to approximately 60,000 individuals. Within the city, Island Transit offers a wide variety of services. The core of these services is the City’s fixed-route bus system, which features 7 routes that operate 7 days per week. In addition to the fixed-route buses, Island Transit also operates a rail trolley system. The Galveston rail trolley circulates between downtown and the beach and downtown and the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) campus. Island Transit also operates complementary ADA Para transit services to fulfill its ADA requirements, as well as a Port of Galveston shuttle bus route that serves the Port on days that cruise ships embark and disembark from the Port.

The Gulf Coast Center/Connect Transportation, another transit provider headquartered on the island, offers rural services on the Galveston County mainland and in Brazoria County. Connect Transportation primarily offers ADA and Para transit services, but is in the process of planning new services, like a park and ride that will transport riders from the Galveston County mainland to the island. Also, as the designated service provider for the cities of Lake Jackson and Texas City, Connect Transportation may implement fixed-route services if local demand and funding are ever sufficient in those locations. As a regional MHMR center, Connect Transportation used to provide Medicaid trips within the Galveston/Brazoria County region, but was recently relieved of those duties when TX DOT took over the administration of the Medical Transportation Program from the Texas Department of Health.

Over the course of the past five to ten years, Island Transit has entered into several cooperative arrangements with Connect Transportation and other public entities, in order to provide enhanced public transportation services to the residents of Galveston Island and the mainland. Two of these partnerships directly enabled enhanced transit services to transit dependent riders. One partnership was for bus maintenance activities. The other partnerships were with important social service and healthcare providers on Galveston Island for important capital infrastructure developments, which improved the functionality of the overall Island Transit system.

### *Island Transit/Connect Transportation*

Island Transit and Connect Transportation have collaborated on two different initiatives in the past. In 1999, Island Transit and Connect Transportation jointly pursued Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funding in order to provide better and more comprehensive transit services to Galveston area residents. After the initial two years of JARC service in which Connect Transportation offered a new route and extended hours of service and Island Transit extended evening operations on all routes, began offering Sunday service, and created a new route, the grant partnership ceased due to lack of funding for Connect Transportation's part of the program.

The second collaborative effort jointly undertaken by Island Transit and Connect Transportation was for preventative maintenance of Connect Transportation's vehicles at the Island Transit maintenance facility. Connect Transportation had always contracted all maintenance activities out to a private sector provider. However, in 2003 they decided to contract with Island Transit to perform preventative maintenance activities on their fleet. This arrangement lasted only one year and Connect Transportation pulled out of the arrangement for unspecified reasons.

Recently, there has been some very preliminary discussion of consolidating Island Transit and Connect Transportation, which would make a certain amount of sense. Consolidation is the merging of two agencies into one. Under consolidation, the administrative, operations, and planning functions of one agency can assume the responsibility and services of another agency or both agencies can dissolve and reorganize into a new agency. Consolidation can make sense where there are limited resources (financial, capital equipment, and personnel) to accomplish transit goals, a shared desire on behalf of both agencies to join forces, and an acceptance for a loss of autonomy and control.

From an administrative perspective for the Galveston region, the work of both agencies could be conducted from the same building, as both entities are currently located a few blocks from one another. Both have the necessary expertise and policies in place to deal with FTA and TxDOT rules and regulations. Merging the two entities would create one designated transit provider for all of Galveston County. Both agencies have scheduling software, and either one's could be utilized more efficiently through cooperative scheduling. Also, Island Transit is in the midst of enhancing and enlarging its maintenance space and therefore its capacity to handle more vehicles. Of course, despite all these advantages, a merger of the two agencies is far from certain as the legal and political ramifications have yet to be fully considered.

### *Island Transit/Heron's Walk*

During the planning for the second application for JARC program funding, Island Transit worked with the Galveston Housing Authority to identify communities that were relatively poor socio-economically and also underserved by transit. This effort led to consultations with the management of the Heron's Walk Apartment. Heron's Walk apartments are relatively new, federally subsidized housing on 102nd Street, at the far western edge of the heart of the city. With guidance from Island Transit, the management at Heron's Walk conducted a survey of residents to determine how many residents would utilize Island Transit's services, if a route were extended to their community. The result of the survey caused Island Transit officials to create an entirely new route to serve the Heron's Walk community. Furthermore, Island Transit officials utilized that same opportunity to create a cross-town route on the western side of the city, which greatly enhanced the overall transit system.

### *Lessons Learned*

To date, Island Transit has been most successful when it partners with others to build capital infrastructure that will enhance overall the transit system. By coordinating efforts with UTMB and the Galveston Housing Authority, Island Transit was able to construct a multi-million dollar rail extension between two major employment centers and increase ridership by routing the extension through a transit dependent community. Most importantly, these improvements were made with almost no local investment. This type of coordination between public transportation providers and social or health service providers can be seen as a model for completing important infrastructure enhancements (e.g., streetscape amenities, terminals, shelters).

The second most important lesson gleaned from the experiences of Galveston can be seen in targeted service coordination activities. Island Transit's service coordination efforts with Connect Transportation enabled them to secure valuable JARC funds the first year the program was available. The success of Island Transit's JARC program helped the City to procure additional JARC funds over the next several years. The extended hours of operation and Sunday services are now a permanent part of the overall transit system.

In conjunction with Island Transit's second submittal for JARC program funding, the City discovered that a large transit dependent community's mobility needs were not being met. By creatively applying some additional resources, Island Transit officials were not only better able to meet the needs of the Heron's Walk community, but they were able also resolve one of the problems associated with a hub and spoke transit system. Now an important community is directly served and people on the west side of town can transfer to other routes without having to travel to the downtown transfer center first, which results in significant time savings and increased ridership.

The one area that Galveston continues to struggle with is continued transit operations coordination. While Island Transit and Connect Transportation jointly pursued JARC funding in the first year, the reality was that their level of coordination was limited to the grant application. There was no real service coordination involved. Consequently, Island Transit and Connect Transportation eventually parted ways when the City's congressional delegation began to secure JARC funding on the City's behalf and not the County's behalf. In addition to this example, the short-lived experiment involving preventative maintenance activities performed for Connect Transportation by Island Transit mechanics is also illustrative. Accordingly, one can see the depth of challenges (if not the substance) that may confront Island Transit and Connect Transportation as they slowly explore the concept of consolidation. The same is likely true for other transportation providers in other areas as they consider consolidating as a way to coordinate.

Eastern Washington/North Central Idaho: COAST

***Background**:* The Council on Aging & Human Services (COA&HS) is a nonprofit, public benefit, social service agency, with its administrative office in Colfax, Washington, the county seat for Whitman County, located in rural eastern Washington along the Washington-Idaho border. The COA & HS provides a broad range of programs, including transportation, social services, nutrition, and nursing home care. The transportation program, COAST, delivers specialized public transportation services to the residents who live in four Washington and five Idaho counties, covering a huge service area of 23,000 miles. The population density of the service area is very low, averaging about five persons per square mile.

COAST started off as a very small transportation program with only one van and one staff person in the early 1980s. In 1983, COAST submitted an application for Federal (16(b)2) funds for a new lift-equipped vehicle. At the same time, the county's primary disabled transportation service provider was also applying for capital assistance for a bus. WSDOT decided that a lead agency should be appointed to oversee vehicle purchasing in the region. COAST became the lead agency and this led to the coordination effort and formation of a coalition of regional transportation providers.

Throughout its 20-year history as a regional transportation provider and broker, COAST is the primary contractor for every available Washington, Idaho states, and Federal funding source. COAST also receives direct property tax funding from 3 counties and 3 of the 4 largest communities in the service area. COAST holds multiple contracts with individual agencies and programs. In addition to being a direct service provider, COAST is also a service broker, the operator of a 32-vehicle insurance pool, a vanpool operator, a carpool supporter, a training service coordinator, the operator of a drug consortium and the operator of a nine-county information, referral and dispatch services center. In addition, COAST services as a technical assistance and grant writing consultant, a community development agent, a legislative advocate, and a regulatory agency intervention agent. COAST runs three different volunteer transportation programs and contracts with several others.

### *Coordination Activities*

*Direct Service Provider and Broker* **–** COAST is a direct service provider in six of the nine counties in its service area. COAST's direct services range from regular weekly and biweekly routes linking small communities with area service centers, demand response, and volunteer escort services. In the 3 other counties, COAST serves as a pure broker (e.g. secures funding resources, take trip requests, assigns the trips to subcontractors and reimburses the providers for the assigned trips).

*Regional Information and Dispatch Center* – In December 2001, COAST was one of the first rural systems to purchase and install Mobilitat's Easy Rides dispatching, billing and record keeping software. The software has been customized by Mobilitat so that is the Nation's first comprehensive "full brokerage" software. COAST operates a regional information and dispatch center for the entire service area. Three full-time dispatchers receive trip requests and assign the trips to available service providers including COAST.

*Volunteer Program* **–** COAST oversees two types of volunteer programs. The first is a traditional service called **Volunteer Escort**. COAST recruits, screens, trains, reimburses, and supports a pool of one hundred volunteer drivers who operate their own automobiles. The second type of volunteer program is **Vehicle Loans and Leases**. Under this program, several churches and denominational nursing homes rent lift-equipped vehicles from COAST to serve special weekly needs. Each participant is required to send its volunteer drivers through a 16-hour Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) certification process.

*Insurance Pool* – COAST now holds the master policy that the total amount if one-half to one-third lower than what similar coverage would cost the agencies. Six agencies and 32 vehicles are now currently covered by the master policy. COAST charges the participating agencies $60 per vehicle, per year, to administer the program.

*Joint Vehicle Acquisition* – COAST is the lead agency in the service area for vehicle acquisition. COAST assists smaller rural providers in acquiring vehicles to meet their service needs.

*Training Broker* – COAST has two driver trainers on staff who regularly conduct nationally certified course through CTAA for a wider variety of community agencies with volunteer and paid drivers, at no charge.

*School District Contracts* – COAST has been successful in getting rural school districts involved in the provision of public transportation to fill the gaps that some rural transit providers do not have the capacity to do.

*Mail-Passenger Contracts* – For four years COAST had a private nonprofit contract with a private transportation provider/mail contractor, and paid an additional fee each month to make bulk mail deliveries and pickups.

***Lessons Learned***

***Take issues beyond the local or state level:*** COAST's executive director attributes COAST's many successes to the fact that COAST was not willing to stop when it encountered roadblocks. In fact, several of its coordination efforts have met policy hurdles at the state level, forcing them to lobby federally for approval to move forward.

***Building trust and a knowledge base among coalition members is crucial:*** COAST and the regional coalition worked diligently to get to know the other agencies and transportation providers in their area early on in their coordination process. Developing a strong base of knowledge among providers has allowed them to work together creatively and effectively for more than 20 years.

***Volunteer driver programs work, but standards are not well developed:*** COAST's executive director is currently working with the state of Washington to develop better volunteer driver standards. COAST has operated volunteer services for a number of years and is well aware of the many state and Federal regulatory issues that challenge volunteer programs.

Peer Reviews allow agencies that have similar characteristics, similar constituencies, and are engaged in the same or similar activities to examine each other's practices in order to learn from each other. These lessons can form the foundation for a "Best Practices" guide. Indeed, learning from others' experiences can be just as effective and efficient, and certainly cheaper, than learning lessons first-hand.

# Chapter 4 – BARRIERS & CONSTRAINTS TO COORDINATION

## *Identifying Barriers and Constraints in Golden Crescent Region*

A variety of barriers and constraints were identified to coordinated regional transportation service in the Golden Crescent Region. Some of the identified obstructions and limitations are directly related to the Texas Department of Transportation definition of barriers and constraints developed for this regional coordination effort, and some are simply perceived as limitations by local stakeholders when they were asked to voice their view on why coordination has not fully been implemented by agencies that provide transportation services.

Throughout this study process of identifying gaps and inefficiencies in service and need for transportation in the region, various barriers and constraints have arisen by stakeholders and have been recorded. Through a variety of methods these barriers and constraints have been identified by the public and those involved in the study process. Discussions to identify these hindrances to coordinated regional service took place at two public meetings in the region, Coordination Advisory Committee meetings, discussions with specific stakeholders including social services/transit providers and surveys. Most of the responses derived from community outreach were consumer-oriented and much of their focus is related to the delivery and experience of transportation services.

In addition, this report reflects input from the Advisory Committee formed for purposes of the Golden Crescent regional coordination study. This group was very familiar with the underlying factors contributing to barriers and constraints and whose input is more directly related to organizational hindrances to coordination.

It is important to note that successful coordination efforts are currently taking place in the Golden Crescent Region as well and may become an example of a Best Practice for other regions. Potential pilot project opportunities have arisen from identifying the barriers and constraints to coordination either to correct deficiencies or to expand upon successes and will be explored in the following chapter.

## *Barriers and Constraints*

The following are identified barriers and constraints to coordination services in the Golden Crescent Region. They are divided into categories of barriers, constraints and other concerns. The last category identifies concerns voiced by local stakeholders that do not necessarily meet the TxDOT definition of a barrier or constraint to coordination, but are hindrances to successful transit in the region.

The items listed below each category are not in order of regional importance. The top four barriers and constraints are specified at the end.

## BARRIERS

Rules and regulations that guide transportation in the region affect the basic service and passenger interaction of agencies that must adhere to these guidelines. Funding and legislative intent are often tied directly to how closely an agency follows these rules.

- Volunteer drivers at certain agencies have proven to be unreliable and it is difficult to enforce agency rules and transportation guidelines when they are not paid employees. It can be difficult and costly to find, train, and retain drivers.
- Medicaid clients have a difficult time getting reimbursed for transit tickets and the local provider is forced to find money to buy these tickets.
- There are insurance restrictions that make it difficult to coordinate transit services. An agency with vehicles may not be allowed to carry users of other agencies. It may be very costly to share vehicles with other agencies because of insurance requirements. Insurance rates often increase when multiple persons, including volunteers, are required to be covered by a single policy.
- Alternative fueled vehicle requirements made by TxDOT place a hardship on agencies and make sharing vehicles even more complicated. These vehicles are not widely available, are more costly to purchase, have a poor reliability record, and the fuels themselves may not be uniformly available throughout the region. This TxDOT rule could be changed to allow areas to purchase non-alternative fueled vehicles in areas with no air quality issues, instead of trying to make a mandate for everyone. These vehicles cost more money and are more expensive to operate (fuel, specialized mechanics, etc.).

## CONSTRAINTS

There are a variety of constraints that have come up in discussions around the region. An obvious constraint that is very real and hinders delivery of service as well as coordination efforts is the lack of funding to purchase new vehicles and extend hours of service. More funding for transportation capital and service would not remove the need for coordinated service, but would actually improve the ability to coordinate. It is very difficult to coordinate services when an agency is spread too thin for even their own clientele. Another major hindrance to coordination is the lack of similar technologies to report, schedule and dispatch services throughout the region.

- Lack of additional operating dollars and funding to replace aging vehicle fleets and funding for new vehicles to meet the demand for basic services is a top concern in the region among all stakeholders.
- Lack of service to work or other destinations based on minimal night and weekend fixed-route service availability in Victoria is a problem for placing employees in jobs and their success once hired. The need for additional services is consistent throughout the region: Early morning, late evening, weekend, and service from county to county.
- There is little initiative, and few incentives, to pool resources (vehicles, local share match, etc.) across local areas.

- There is a lack of information on how to access transit services by potential riders in the region or those involved with particular agencies. There is no centralized location for region-wide transportation service availability.
- Rural public transit providers that coordinate with some social service agencies are given only the clients with long trip distances because the cost per person is so high to the social service agency. Funding becomes a very critical issue. Not much coordination with other local agencies for out of town trips.
- Rural providers who have attempted to coordinate out of town trips with other agencies have learned they cannot trust other agencies. If the other agencies' client cancelled they would not inform the other entity of this and their client was left without a ride. Communication between coordinated agencies is an issue. Failure to report cancelled trips between agencies leads to distrust and a dissolve of coordination.
- Vehicle sharing is difficult because agencies in the area have similar peak hours.
- Vehicle downtime is not recorded by the rural transit providers or other agencies in the region to monitor the availability of vehicles that could be used for other service.
- Centralized rural transit scheduling and dispatching has proven to be very difficult in the region because regular users are comfortable with contacting their local provider for service, but if required to call into a 1-800 number outside their local area are much less willing to do so and usually will not. In the past, the Medicaid recipient for the region (no longer the recipient) attempted to centralize dispatching and scheduling for the rural providers and it was very unsuccessful.
- Lack of technology to coordinate all rural providers under Victoria Rural Transit.
- There is reluctance by many users to travel because of the need for special assistance, because of concerns for safety while traveling, or because of access limitations to transit facilities. These concerns are magnified if a second agency, transfer, or other unfamiliar circumstances are involved. Thus the comfort level of the users is a key constraint to actual usage of services, no matter how well coordinated they may be.
- Schedule and dispatching software used by GCRPC is greatly needed for all of their subcontractors who provide service in the region to improve service delivery and coordination. The software is very costly.
- Counties in the region offer varied levels of local and in-kind contributions to the rural demand-response providers for each county. This can be a hindrance to coordination because the money available for transportation service and inventory varies greatly between counties within the region.

## OTHER LOCAL CONCERNS

- A large amount of time is spent meeting state funding billing and reimbursement recording processes. Submittals for payments to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are done electronically and they usually receive their monies in the bank the next business day. They do not send FTA any paper work and their requests are reviewed during the Triennial Review every three years. However, under the Section 5311 Rural

Program which is administered through the State, the process is not electronic and consumes more staff time for the provider.

- More demand than vehicle fleet. Providers themselves have to do a lot more juggling so that they can have a vehicle available to travel out of the county.
- There is an image problem regarding rural transit service in the region as a senior service only. Efforts have been made to advertise and unify the vehicles of R Transit and their subcontractors as a service for all people in need of transit in the rural areas.
- Lack of funding to expand service hours and weekends for Victoria fixed-route and rural providers.
- Riders often want more immediate rural service and are unwilling to wait for the times vehicles are available.

### TOP FOUR BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS

- Lack of additional operating dollars and funding to replace aging vehicle fleets and funding for new vehicles to meet the demand for basic services is a top concern in the region among all stakeholders.
- Lack of service to work or other destinations based on minimal night and weekend fixed-route service availability in Victoria is a problem for placing employees in jobs and their success once hired. The need for additional services is consistent throughout the region: Early morning, late evening, weekend, and service from county to county.
- There is little initiative, and few incentives, to pool resources (vehicles, local share match, etc.) across local areas.
- There is a lack of information on how to access transit services by potential riders in the region or those involved with particular agencies. There is no centralized location for region-wide transportation service availability.

## *SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE COORDINATION*

### Information Sharing and Coordination

- Provide a communications forum using direct meetings and through the Internet.
- Encourage providers to be proactive in reaching out to social service agencies, educational facilities, major employers and medical facilities about available resources and potential partnership opportunities. Instead of regional transit having riders come to them, take on the approach of reaching out to meet the community’s needs.
- Encourage sharing of information between businesses and transportation providers.
- Provide transit schedules to a broader audience.
- Begin researching and pooling resources for scheduling software or alternative software that will increase sharing of information in the region and availability of idling vehicles.

- Establish a single point of contact in each business to address issues concerning transportation.
- Create a region wide marketing effort for transit services and resources.
- Continue and expand the web site created for this study and encourage participation of a greater group of providers and social service agencies.
- Establish an on-going advisory committee made up of local citizens to provide input to transportation providers.
- Organize region wide schedules for all providers to coordinate out of region trips to share the responsibility and resources of these time-consuming and expensive trips.
- Establish a regional mobility manager to maximize the dissemination and flow of information as well as to keep the process moving in successive months and years.

**Services**

- Establish a personnel clearinghouse for volunteer drivers all over the region. Hold a regional training that will meet the needs of all agencies. Reach out to specific groups that may have willing participants and offer an informational meeting to introduce the program.
- Apply technology such as pagers, AVL, smart card, and other hardware/software to user needs and interagency coordination.
- Establish a few central transit hubs in outlying areas of Victoria to focus services, shorten vehicle trips into the city, and increase transit’s profile and coordination where rural vehicles can connect to Victoria fixed-route service.

# Chapter 5 – IDENTIFIED PILOT PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

## *Background*

This coordination process was not only to identify and document gaps and needs in the region, but the ultimate goal is to outline possible pilot projects that demonstrate an effort to coordinate services to more efficiently meet these unmet needs. While assessing current service in the area and identifying gaps are important keys to determining potential opportunities to coordinate, the Advisory Committee and the GCRPC had a key role in identifying the realistic options for pilot projects. This group has a personal knowledge of the region's transportation problems and is comprised of those willing to directly participate in these pilot projects.

The Advisory Committee meetings were the primary opportunities to openly discuss specific regional and local situations where service was lacking. A variety of issues came up in this process, but some key areas surfaced as possible opportunities where steps could be taken to address deficiencies through a pilot project. These issues fell into the following four general categories:

- College transportation in the region (Victoria College and UH-Victoria, as well as their satellite campuses);
- Transportation to medical facilities and medical trips to cities outside the region;
- Enhanced efficiency of the already coordinated the GCRPC rural services;
- Job access in the region.

Interest was shown by the Advisory Committee and the GCRPC to explore the possibility of addressing these needs through four pilot projects for the region.

A pilot project workshop was held on Friday, October 6, 2006 in Yoakum at the TxDOT Regional Office with participants from the Advisory Committee, the GCRPC, the consultant team and other interested parties tied to the issues to be discussed (see *Appendix D for Sign-in Sheet*). The topics discussed included employer partnerships, educational partnerships, health facility partnerships and enhanced rural transit coordination. The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss and brainstorm ways to meet the needs of the four topics mentioned above, as well as map out what course of action would need to take place to make these potential projects feasible.

## *Pilot Project 1 – Employee Transit Service*

One of the identified gaps around the region included the lack of transportation to work. Due to the rural nature of the region as a whole, with a centralized hub of residents in the City of Victoria, transportation to many of the remote manufacturing and industrial plants is a major problem for those who have no personal vehicle available. Within the City of Victoria, much of the job access concern stems from the lack of evening and weekend hours on the fixed-route service. The primary solution to Victoria's job access problem would be an increase in funding to operate longer hours and to expand the service area. Victoria Transit is more than willing to provide this much-needed extension of service, but lacks the funding to do so. The other issue of service to employment centers outside the Victoria Transit service area could be addressed by commuter vehicles that pick-up and drop-off at a central location. A partnership between the GCRPC and an "interested employer" could serve as a pilot project which encourages other employers to become involved.

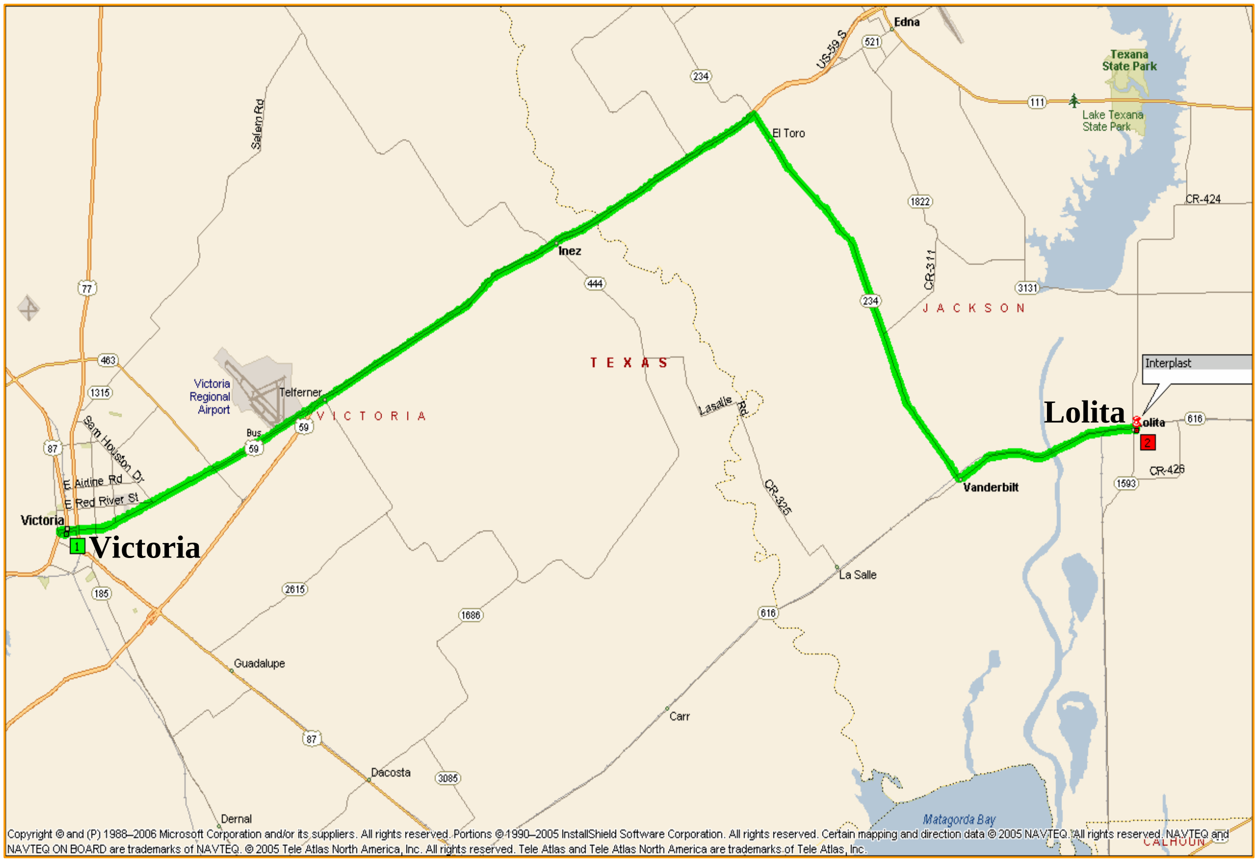
Nearly half of the region's top 28 employers are industrial and manufacturing companies. The solution proposed in this plan to meet the needs of transit to remote job locations, is to provide employee transit services to major regional employers. The Texas Workforce Solutions group which is responsible for all counties in the region, assisted the study effort in finding willing employers who had an identified problem with transportation for clients, and were interested in being a participant in the pilot project. One willing employer identified is Inteplast Group, LTD, which has a 700-acre manufacturing plant in Lolita located in Jackson County. Inteplast has had serious problems with employees quitting due to lack of transportation to their rather remote facility. At the conclusion of this study, Inteplast had purchased two used school buses to transport employees to and from Victoria. The school buses pick employees up in Victoria at 6:30 am, for their 7:30 a.m. shift, and return to Victoria with employees who have concluded their nightshift around 8:30 am. Then the vehicles sit idle in Victoria all afternoon. At 6:30 p.m. the vehicles pick up in Victoria at 6:30 p.m. for the night shift, and return to Victoria with those getting off work for the evening. Inteplast has leased a piece of land from TxDOT as the park and ride facility at Loop 175 and Highway 87 in Victoria.

Some important characteristics of Inteplast:

- Seven days/week operation
- Approximately 245 employees from Victoria (not including contract employees), 175 Edna, 66 Palacios
- 7:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. shifts
- No official transportation survey has been done of employees
- RTransit vehicles are currently not used after 5:00 p.m. and could be utilized for evening employee transit services

It was decided at the pilot project workshop that a coordination partnership between the GCRPC and Inteplast, to serve the transit needs of their employees, would be a good employee transit service pilot project. Initiation of the pilot project might encourage other employers to join and financially support a more comprehensive program. An initial route and operating schedule is delineated in *Figure 4.1* and *Table 4.1*.

## **SHUTTLE SERVICE FROM VICTORIA TO LOLITA** (37 Miles Each Way)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TEXAS
Interplast
463
Victoria Regional Airport
Telferner
Lasalle Rd
Lolita
Lolita
616
1315
Sam Houston Dr
Bus 59
59
VICTORIA
87
E Airline Rd
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Vanderbilt
CR-426
1593
CR-325
Victoria
Victoria
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La Salle
1686
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Guadalupe
Carr
87
Dacosta
3085
Dernal
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CALHOUN
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***Figure 5.1 – Shuttle Service to Lolita from Victoria***

The shuttle service works well in Victoria due to the following:

- Largest number of employees comes from Victoria
- Mileage is easily the farthest than other cities where large numbers of employees are concentrated
- Existing transit resources within the urban area may be used to distribute more passengers to their destinations

Inteplast is open to discussions for the GCRPC to utilize the two vehicles through a lease agreement while not doing their employee trips from Lolita to Victoria.

***Table 5.1 – Estimated Cost for 1-2 Employee Shuttles***

| ***Victoria to Lolita*** | ***Daily Shuttle Cost*** | ***Two-Vehicle Shuttle Cost*** |
|---|---|---|
| Estimate | **FY2007** | **FY2007** |
| Cost Per Hour | $45 | $45 |
| Miles Per Day | 146 | 292 |
| Miles Per Year | 53,290 | 106,580 |
| Service Hours Per Day | 4.50 | 9.00 |
| Service Hours Per Year | 1642.50 | 3285.00 |
| Service Days Per Year | 365 | 365 |
| Service Cost | $73,913 | $147,825 |
| ***Total Estimated Cost*** | **$73,913** | **$147,825** |
| ***Total Vehicles*** | **1** | **2** |

The Golden Crescent Workforce Commission, which is centralized in Victoria but has satellite offices in all counties of the region, offers employment services to the region. Within their Board's funding, money is allocated to transit-related services for their clients. The Workforce Commission was awarded approximately $40,000 from TxDOT in FY2005 and approximately $64,000 in FY2006 for TANF and FSE&T recipients. Almost 90 percent of these funds were used for gas vouchers for private vehicles. All transportation expenditures for other funded programs though the Workforce was approximately $119,000 in FY2005. Of this total funding, available for transit services related to employee transportation needs to look for jobs or retain jobs, $65,769 was used for mileage reimbursement (10¢ per mile) of private vehicles. With mileage reimbursement and gas vouchers being the largest expenditure, a small amount of funds were also used for vehicle repair, insurance and passes for public or private transit systems. **These same financial resources, used to reimburse mileage and fuel costs, could support a vanpool program serving major employers in the region.**

## *Pilot Project 2 – Educational Partnerships/College Transit Service*

As the college hub of the Golden Crescent region, the City of Victoria is home to both Victoria College and University of Houston-Victoria who share a campus. The UH-Victoria campus has approximately 2,600 students, of which 60 percent are online students. Victoria College has approximately 4,000 students. The colleges serve an area of eight counties (Golden Crescent Region and Refugio County) encompassing a total population of 182,000 residents. Most student traffic takes place Mon-Fri from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and students come from all areas of the region, but mostly in and around the greater Victoria area. Some students are from Calhoun and DeWitt; however, recruitment from Goliad, Gonzales, and Jackson counties has been far more challenging. Victoria College also operates Licensed Vocational “one year” programs in Hallettsville, Gonzales, and Cuero that have approximately 20-35 students each. The college hopes to add two satellite offices in the future in Gonzales and Calhoun counties.

The Advisory Committee and Victoria college representatives, involved in the coordination process, clearly have indicated that lack of adequate public transportation for student access is a constraint to their objectives. Vehicles are currently not available to efficiently and reliably take students to and from campus to their residence. Two of the three existing Victoria Transit bus routes travel along side the campus, but no service is available specifically for students. A student survey or transit needs analysis has never been targeted at students to better understand where and what type of service would be needed.

The proposed pilot would create a college-dedicated service that would be convenient and frequent enough to pick students up on campus and drop off at various centralized hubs around the region. To put this program together, it is important to identify potential sources of local funds to match federal funds, such as “new freedom” for this new service. A student survey would also be very beneficial to determine where students reside and how much interest there would be for this service. The Victoria College Board has indicated an interest to work with the GCRPC to distribute a Student Transportation Survey *(see Appendix F)* to its student body to better understand their transportation needs. At the time of this study, UH-Victoria is reviewing the survey and is very interested in assisting with this pilot project.

Another aspect of Victoria College’s curriculum is their Adult Education Centers which offer courses and training in Victoria, Cuero, Hallettsville, Port Lavaca, Woodsboro, Yoakum, and Yorktown. These centers offer 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. courses. The Victoria branch is the only location that offers daytime courses; therefore, some students may need to travel to these classes if they have a conflict with evening courses at their local facility. This is not as great a need as providing service for students to reach their own branches in the evening when the rural service is not operating.

Cooperation and input are crucial from the colleges for this pilot project to be successful. The first step is to open the line of communication between both colleges and the GCRPC which has been done during this study process. A student transportation survey, soon to be distributed, would be an excellent way to learn more about the needs of students, followed by a detailed finance and implementation strategy created to meet that demand.

This proposed pilot project would utilize survey data obtained from students who require better access to education, cooperation by the colleges, with a finance strategy that combines resources from the colleges with the GCRPC and federal resources, for a pilot project which demonstrates the utilization of public transit for access to education. Since the linkage between education and jobs is critical, Workforce Commission resources may also play a role in creating a successful pilot project.

## *Pilot Project 3 – Enhanced Rural Transit Service Through Technology*

A third potential pilot project is to enhance coordination between RTransit's Victoria headquarters and its various subcontractors throughout the region. Each provider runs their service autonomously and often times have vehicles deadheading empty back to their county or waiting for clients for hours at a destination. RTransit has attempted to consolidate aspects of operations in the past with their subcontractors, but now they each do their own call taking, scheduling and dispatching manually, while the GCRPC is able to use the software program *Route Match* for Victoria Transit and rural service in Victoria and DeWitt counties. If the subcontractors were incorporated into this software program, excess vehicle capacity might be better utilized to increase regional efficiency of service and address existing gaps. Goliad County, the existing subcontractor for rural service, has agreed to join with RTransit as a pilot project candidate.

### Challenges with Respect to Scheduling Software/Report Generation System

The GCRPC has significant challenges with respect to its current scheduling software report generation system. Provided and installed by *Route Match* Software of Atlanta, Georgia, Victoria Transit is satisfied with the quality of the scheduling provided by the software. However, the reporting functions do not work as well.

Unable to generate operating reports based on the scheduling software is a particular challenge for the GCRPC. The operating model is a coordinated model at the county level and often at the service provision level. The GCRPC contracts with several County level agencies to provide transit service within the region. In addition, regional coordinated service is provided under contract to other human service agencies. As a result, billing is complex and effective report generation software needs to provide a seamless interface between actual activity (trips, miles and hours) and reports that can effectively categorize trips does not currently exist.

The current system does not provide the appropriate reports for the GCRPC. As a result, additional staff effort is needed to manually transfer data entry from the scheduling software to Excel spreadsheets. Approximately 1 to 1.25 full-time equivalent staff positions are engaged in the manual data entry.

The GCRPC has attempted to rectify the situation with the vendor, *Route Match* Software. However, efforts to improve the functionality of the report generation software have been unsuccessful. The vendor is indicated to the GCRPC that the software cannot be improved.

Currently, the GCRPC is required under contract to pay $15,000 per year for maintenance fees on the *Route Match* Software. As a result of a renegotiated arrangement, the maintenance fee is expected to be reduced to $12,000 per year. The additional staff effort required as a result of data entry costs the GCRPC approximately $40-$50,000 per year in additional staff time. Compound that with the maintenance fee, and it costs the GCRPC $52-$62000 per year to process reports coming from the trips scheduled under *Route Match* Software.

Prior to implementation of the proposed pilot project, it would be helpful for the GCRPC to reassess its approach with respect to scheduling software. Improved functionality, especially with respect to the reporting functions, is essential for the success of the pilot project. Additionally, by improving the functionality of reporting significant cost savings can be realized by the reduction of administrative overhead, such as manual data entry of scheduling data. Some options for the GCRPC are listed below.

### OPTION 1 - IMPLEMENT PILOT PROJECT WITH GOLIAD COUNTY WITHOUT CHANGES TO SCHEDULING SOFTWARE

The benefits to Goliad County would still be realized. Since the scheduling software for *Route Match* is working well with respect to scheduling, it could generate cost savings with respect to improved routing and scheduling. However, mixing Goliad County and the GCRPC trips would require additional labor-intensive data entry by the GCRPC transit staff offsetting some of the expected cost savings. Some trips sharing would occur, especially in the city of Victoria. Reports and billing would have to reflect those changes, and without automated reports generated, increased effort would be needed to ensure accurate reporting and billing for the additional Goliad County work.

### OPTION 2 - IMPLEMENT PILOT PROJECT AFTER SCHEDULING SOFTWARE HAS FUNCTIONAL REPORTING

Rushing to implement this kind of pilot project without the appropriate software cannot be recommended. Increasing the amount of manual data entry in order to realize some savings in efficiency does not make sense. Improving the scheduling software to the point where it has report functionality can lead not only to a successful pilot project, but also to additional cost savings in the GCRPC administrative support that could allow resources to be allocated for additional transit trips.

The GCRPC has $65,000 of dedicated funds to upgrading its scheduling software. While not a huge amount of capital funding for such a project, the funds may provide some alternatives.

### OPTION 2A – NEGOTIATE WITH *ROUTE MATCH* REGARDING REPORTING SOFTWARE

While *Route Match* has not been responsive in the past, its software is currently in place. Changing vendors will require a large amount of staff effort and resources with the new system. The following steps would need to occur:

- A procurement process would need to be conducted;
- A vendor would need to be selected;
- Software implementation including some new staff training would need to occur; and
- The scheduling software would need to be stable, and it would be to be a high level of comfort level with respect to the reporting software.

The GCRPC should exercise all potential influence and leverage to attempt to have *Route Match* comply with these needs. Additional efforts such as strengthening the leverage of the GCRPC through a coordinated effort with other transit agencies that use *Route Match* software, especially in Texas is possible. If all reasonable efforts are exhausted, additional efforts may include looking for new scheduling software. However given the existing investment of the GCRPC in *Route Match* Software and logistical challenges of changing software vendors; using scheduling software should be a last resort and not a first resort.

### Advantages of Consolidated Dispatch

Consolidated dispatch would work like a brokerage system except that trips originating from the counties would remain provided by the county. The goal is to provide more trips for the counties at the same operating cost. Trips could be coordinated system-wide in a manner that would lead to increased productivity, efficiency and reduced cost. The development of a properly consolidated dispatch system, might lead to a win-win scenario. Improve productivity, more flexible scheduling of trips, better usage of vehicles could result in more trips being provided at the same cost. Among the advantages that could be realized by consolidated dispatch pilot project in the Golden Crescent region of the following:

- One number to call for mobility services within the county and within the region;
- Ability to have all trips scheduled by automated scheduling software they can maximize service efficiency and reduce operating costs;
- Increases in service productivity would allow more people to be transported with less resources;
- Vehicle usage and driver productivity can be maximized, especially when vehicles are operating within the city of Victoria;
- Trips could be shared while drivers idle in the city of Victoria waiting for passengers. County drivers who pick up trips for Victoria would be reimbursed by R transit to the county
- Local autonomy can be maintained as a service provider will remain the primary provider for service within the county.

A pilot program can be set up for a designated period of time. The agreement should be that if the pilot works to the satisfaction of the county and RTransit, the consolidated dispatch would continue. However, the county can enter into this arrangement as an experiment to see if the pilot results in a higher number of trips provided to its citizens who need public transportation. A methodology would be established to measure any gains that may occur with a consolidated dispatch system.

### Effective Implementation of the Pilot Program

Contingent upon successful enhancement of scheduling software, the GCRPC and Goliad County can begin to take steps to implement the pilot program. The pilot program goal should be to realize the benefits of coordinated software scheduling dispatch, including:

- One number to call for mobility services within the county and within the region;
- Ability to have all trips scheduled by automated scheduling software that can maximize service efficiency and reduce operating costs;

- Increases in service productivity would allow more people to be transported for the same amount of funds;
- Vehicle usage and driver productivity can be maximized, especially when vehicles operating within the City of Victoria;
- Trips could be shared while drivers idle in the City of Victoria waiting for passengers. County drivers who pick up trips for Victoria would be reimbursed by RTransit to the county;
- Local autonomy can be maintained as a service provider will remain the primary provider for service within the county.

Among the steps needed prior to implementation are the following:

- Increasing the mapping range and geo-coding to include Goliad and Bee counties;
- All relevant origins and destinations in Goliad and Bee counties will need to be geo-coded;
- A test of prior manually scheduled Goliad County trips should be conducted;
- Communication to Goliad County users of transit services to identify the toll-free number they will now need to call for service;
- Entering into the system all Goliad County users of transit service:
- Development of a means to communicate and update the client database for Goliad County users of transit service:
- Ensure that an adequate accounting system is in place for the mixing up trips among vehicles with respect to Goliad and Victoria counties.

Once implementation occurs the following steps are recommended:

- Ensure that trips originating in Goliad County are scheduled on vehicles suffered from trips originating in other counties for least one month;
- Develop a schematic of orange in the destinations based on the data from Goliad County during this month;
- Determined which vehicles would be candidates for sharing trips with R transit;
- Start consolidating trips so that Goliad and R transit vehicles are used in a way that maximizes productivity for both;
- Review after three months, six months and year improvements in scheduling productivity, service quality and other potential benefits ore costs resulting from the implementation.

## *Pilot Project 4 – Health Facility Partnerships Utilizing a Region-Wide Volunteer Driver Database/Program*

Due to the constricted availability for last minute trips and the cost of long distance for existing rural providers in the region, a comprehensive list of eligible volunteers in the region would be a positive pilot project for the GCRPC to organize to meet medical-related trips that are not being met or are costly. Medical trips often involve those who have special transportation needs and one-on-one contact with their driver. The GCRPC currently has the capability of training volunteer drivers and are a willing participant to test the success of a volunteer driver program and see how many potential drivers they could recruit. A concentrated effort to find participants at specific organizations where the people have a common interest could make a difference in recruiting. Places where the GCRPC could hold interest meetings would be regional volunteer organizations, community organizations and religious groups.

There are certain things the GCRPC should do as a standard part of operating a volunteer driver program. This section provides an overview of requirements and best practices for administering this program. The following information follows the guidelines from the *Washington State Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation Volunteer Driver Guide to Best Practices (See Appendix G)*. The following offers an overview based on this report of important issues to consider when the GCRPC moves forward with organizing a volunteer program. The full publication is available online at *www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/vdg/***.**

### *Risks and Insurance*

The major concern of operating a volunteer driver program is the financial exposure and risk involved with entrusting the public to an individual's personal vehicle. The following are options for limiting the financial exposure for risks associated with volunteer driver programs:

- Purchasing Insurance
- Waivers, Releases, Agreements to Participate, and Indemnification

The following are issues to consider when deciding what type and level of insurance should be carried.

### Auto and Business Insurance

The GCRPC should maintain insurance coverage or self-insurance coverage that essentially covers the exposures addressed by the following policies:

- Comprehensive General Liability
- Business Auto Liability
- Umbrella/Excess Liability
- Volunteer/Employee Dishonesty
- Directors and Officers Liability Insurance
- Volunteers' Liability Insurance

### Medical Insurance

Vehicle insurance does not cover injuries that may happen while the volunteer is involved in activities separate from operation of the vehicle. Many volunteers are retired persons who may have inadequate or no medical insurance coverage. The risks to the volunteers can be covered by a variety of methods. Medical or accident insurance provides excess accident medical coverage directly to a volunteer when he or she is injured traveling directly to or from, or participating in, volunteer activities. If Medicare covers the volunteer, the coverage would be in addition to that coverage. If the volunteer has no other coverage, the policy would be primary.

### *Importance of Community Relations*

The drivers for the GCRPC will influence the image of the transit providers in the region because the public expects proficient and prepared drivers. Well-defined and taught policies for potential drivers can assist with public perception. Many funding agencies require a written volunteer driver policy be in place, which will also assist greatly in preparing drivers for what is expected of them.

The types of personnel policies that should be in place for this new program include ADA-compliance issues, ethics, code of conduct, drug-free workplace, harassment, confidentiality, reporting suspected abuse/neglect and drug testing if the drivers will be operating large vehicles and hold a commercial driver's license. If a grant is used to support any aspect of this program, each agency will have its own requirements of what should be included in the personnel policy.

**Other issues related to drivers include the following:**

- Volunteer reimbursement – Many agencies reimburse for mileage and other authorized expenses.
- Funding – Funding availability must be carefully reviewed to weigh contractual requirements of those sources. Many potential transportation-funding sources are currently difficult to administer in relationship to the operation of a volunteer transportation program. Potential problem areas are related to drug testing, driver certification, required training, record keeping, billing, accounting and audit procedures.

### *Important Information about Riders*

The following outlines information on policies and practices related to potential riders using the volunteer driver program.

Riders of volunteer transportation networks are typically persons with special transportation needs including their personal attendants. However, some funding agencies, due to requirements associated with the funding program, may also require that the service be available to the general public. In the case of Golden Crescent, it is recommended that they begin with health-related trips only to meet the direct need of the pilot project goals and expand to the general public once the program is established and proven successful.

Other issues related to riders of the service that must be considered:

- Registration of riders – It is recommended to register all riders and some funding sources require this. This information helps to provide emergency medical information, determine the most appropriate mode of transportation and meet the requirements of certain funding agencies that require rider data.

- Rider identification – Riders should be encouraged to have photo identification.
- Child escorts – It is recommended to require an adult escort for children under the age of 11, or the equivalent age requirement for the rural and urban systems currently.
- Rider surveys – Rider surveys should be conducted regularly to determine quality of service and inform volunteers about customer satisfaction.
- Rider Grievances – Riders may have grievances about aspects of the program, including restrictions and/or denial of services or the quality of the service they received. Procedures should be in place to handle these situations and receive feedback on the service.

### *Establishing and Managing a Volunteer Driver Pool*

Maintaining a well trained, enthusiastic driving staff is the key to the success of any volunteer transportation program. Drivers are responsible for the safety of the rider and there are important issues to address when developing or managing a volunteer driver program. It will be the GCRPC's responsibility to assure that the volunteers have the tools necessary to be successful and safe. Success depends on proper selection and management of volunteers including quality program orientation, training and evaluation.

Important things to consider when choosing volunteers for the program that have initially begun the process by filling out an application form include the following:

- Specific qualifications – To protect the safety of passengers, minimum volunteer driver qualifications should be established. These include qualifications such as age, driver's license, references and criminal history.
- Driving history

When selecting drivers, the GCRPC will need to follow a fair process that thoroughly reviews potential participants. It is especially important to screen drivers when vulnerable populations such as the sick and elderly are the primary riders. An example selection process is provided in *Appendix G*.

### *Driver Review Process*

The drivers selected for the volunteer program must be monitored and evaluated to ensure that they are following the policies set for them and accountable to the GCRPC.

The following are components of the driver review process:

- Moving violation/accident reporting
- Driver suspension/termination procedure
- Intervention program for minor offences

### *Importance of Performance Evaluations*

A volunteer program must conduct regular performance evaluations for active drivers to open the lines of communication between the driver and the GCRPC. These evaluations are helpful to both parties involved. The evaluation allows the GCRPC to reinforce their policies and expectations, while the drivers have an opportunity to voice issues they are encountering as volunteers. Suggested factors to consider in the evaluation process include the following:

- Establish a schedule for at least annual performance evaluations.
- Include a road performance evaluation.
- A GCRPC representative should ride along with the drivers while they are performing their duties, paying attention to vehicle operations, rider care and general ability to meet program standards.
- Evaluations assist to secure equitable insurance rates and identify drivers who may need intervention training or who should no longer transport riders.
- The evaluation should be documented and stored. This documentation is necessary for tracking driver development and for defense in litigation.

Following the performance evaluations, the GCRPC should meet with the volunteer to discuss the results and if needed, a plan can be developed for additional training for the drivers. As an important aspect of retaining drivers and making it a positive experience for them to serve their community in this way, the GCRPC should establish a program of regular recognition for the volunteers through thank you letters, an annual recognition banquet or holiday parties.

### *Training Volunteer Drivers*

The GCRPC should require specific training for all drivers operating vehicles or providing transportation services as part of a volunteer driver program and identify a staff person or persons to be a trainer. Trainings sessions can be organized for a targeted group that have been approached to be volunteers such as a church group or community organization, or one training session can be organized once an adequate number of people have been lined up for the program to make a training session economical. Training for all volunteers should be structured to conform to the duties in the job description.

A variety of issues must be considered during the training process and are outlined below:

- Cost of training – Typically the cost of training is provided at no cost to the prospective volunteers.
- Documentation of all training completed. Training documentation, including certificates of completion, should be maintained in driver files.

Recommended types of training for volunteer driver programs include the following:

- Orientation/Logistics – Includes organizational mission and values, job description, expectations, completion of forms, reporting requirements, vehicle operation, public relations, ethics, code of conduct, harassment policies and reimbursement procedures.
- Vehicle Operation and Road Experience
- Defensive Driving Training

- Passenger Assistance and Sensitivity Training **–** This training should emphasize sensitivity and assistance to elderly and persons with disabilities, communication with riders and blood borne pathogen exposure control.
- Car Seats and Child Securement
- CPR/First Aid/Emergency Response **–** First Aid and CPR training is optional for all drivers. Risk management professionals differ on the liability benefits and/or detriments of this training. The GCRPC should develop a policy on this issue. If the training is not required, drivers should be trained how to access available emergency services.
- Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment and Exploitation
- Drug- Free Workplace

### *Managing Private Vehicle Operations and Maintenance*

The proposed pilot project assumes that private vehicles will be utilized for the volunteer driver program. The following are issues that must be considered for private vehicle operations and maintenance:

- Pre-trip inspection guidelines.
- Trip plan procedures to follow in the event of a breakdown or accident.
- Inclement weather procedures.
- Meet minimum state requirements for passenger transportation services.
- Annual safety inspections.

### *Incidents, Accidents, and Collisions*

The GCRPC should have a detailed procedure for volunteers to follow in the event of incidents, accidents and collisions. These procedures should include auto collision procedures for the driver and GCRPC representative if present, media relations at the scene of the collision and a formal review process following the accident by the GCRPC.

### *Trip Information*

The volunteers should have a procedure for recording trip information on standard trip forms, document trip completions and late cancels/no-shows. They should also be fully aware of how they will be contacted for service and the advance notice they will be given by the GCRPC.

# Chapter 6 – FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY & OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## *Overview*

The Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC) operates public transit through a Rural and Urban Transit District which provides services in the City of Victoria and through out a 7 county area. The City of Victoria Urban Transit system, referred to as Victoria Transit under the umbrella of the GCRPC, operates both fixed-route and demand-respond services within the Victoria urbanized area. The rural service provided by GCRPC, referred to as RTransit, directly serves Victoria and DeWitt counties. Five of these counties are organized so that an operator under contract provides rural service under the oversight of RTransit.

During the course of significant public input to the regional planning process through public hearings, surveys, and individual meetings, the need for increased transportation services in the Golden Crescent area is evident. Discussion has focused on various methods through which additional funding might be derived from federal state and local resources, as well as the feasibility and practicality of creating a taxing entity that would provide an ongoing local subsidy to increase public transit services for the seven-county Golden Crescent Region.

## *Regional Transit Authority*

In 1977, the Texas State Legislature amended the existing Regional Transit Authority enabling legislative provision which, for the first time, provided the global option of an increased sales tax to support public transportation. Prior to the 1977 legislature, the only form of local user fees which could be used to support public transportation was primarily through a vehicle emissions tax, or use tax. The vehicle emission tax option seemed counter productive in light of, at that time, a trend to reduce vehicle engine displacements to increase gas mileage. In addition, many other states in the nation had already enabled the utilization of the sales tax to support public transportation. The passage of amendments to the RTA Law in 1977 created the ability for urbanized areas of 200,000 or more population to form Regional Transit Authorities with Board representation from the principle municipalities, unincorporated portions of counties, and other incorporated areas that voted to tax themselves to support public transportation. The major urban areas of Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, etc. presented referenda which resulted in the creation of their respective Regional Transit Authorities, supported largely by one half to one percent sales tax. Other amendments to the RTA Act took place in the 1981, 1985, and 1989 legislative sessions which, among other changes, enabled the principle city in certain large urbanized areas to create a Transit Authority which became a Transit Department, whose board consisted of the City Council of the principle city. El Paso and its Sun Metro Transit System is an example of this form of RTA.

In 1997 the State Legislature passed legislation enabling the creation of Rural and Small Urban Transit Districts which provided the ability of pre-existing "nonprofit" transit operations to gain the status of a political subdivision and become eligible directly for the receipt of federal and state grants of financial support for public transit capital improvements and operations. The Rural and Urban Transit District legislation, however, provided no option for local taxing authority to create a sustainable on going source of local revenue to support public transportation. Thus, Small Urban and Rural Transit Districts must rely on the discretionary contributions of the political subdivisions they represent on an annual basis which, at best, is less than adequate for long term planning for improved public transit services.

Consideration by the GCRPC of the creation of an RTA to support its seven-county area for improved public transportation services would require an amendment to the existing state RTA Act enabling an area the size of GCRPC's seven counties, within certain population limitations to hold a local election on the proposition to create an RTA. However, during the last 10-years in the state of Texas most local jurisdictions have reached their maximum ability, pursuant to state law, to increase their sales tax base. This has occurred because of previous state law which enables local jurisdictions to utilize the increase of one-half percent sales tax to reduce property tax on a permanent basis, and to initiate a one-half percent sales tax to support economic development activities. As such, without further legislation to address the existing "cap" on state sales taxes, the formation of an RTA would provide no greater organizational and/or financial capability for Golden Crescent to improve public transportation services beyond its ability through its existing Urban and Rural Transit District.

It should be noted that the up coming state legislative session will consider methods through which local governments may a generate additional tax revenue for a variety of improvements including transit and parks, as well as an amendment to the state constitution raising the current limitation on statewide sales tax which stands at eight and one quarter percent.

Another initiative being spearheaded by transit jurisdictions within the Fort Worth, Denton, and Dallas areas would request that the state Legislature exempt transit-related sales taxes from the existing state "cap" enabling local jurisdictions to vote for increased sales taxes to support transit which, in the case of Golden Crescent, might justify the creation of a new RTA.

## *Option to Increase Motor Vehicle Registration Fee*

The Texas Transit Association (TTA) has developed a legislative agenda for the up coming legislative session that would enable counties to increase existing motor vehicle registration fees by up to ten dollars to support public transportation services. Some State legislative representatives are considering an increase in the vehicle registration fee to support parks development and other urban improvements. It is noteworthy that there is considerable discussion regarding the constitutionality of utilizing vehicle registration fees to support improvements other than highway development. Representatives of The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) have indicated that preliminary discussions regarding the legal ability to utilize the motor vehicle registration fees for public transportation have raised serious doubt. Thus, a constitutional amendment may be required to enable the use of increased county motor vehicle registration fees to support public transportation. Since this source of revenue is being viewed as a potential financial resource for other urban infrastructure such as parks development, there may be a serious effort to achieve this objective even if a constitutional amendment is required.

## *Transportation Development Credits*

The U.S. Congress, within the 1997 Transportation Bill enables the utilization of Transportation Development Credits (TDC), formerly Toll Road Credits, for local match to federally funded transportation projects. Several states that have toll facilities have adopted the utilization of TDC's to match federally funded transportation projects, including the State of Texas.

The toll road "credit" is derived from the revenues deposited by users of a toll facility to support Bonds which have been issued to build the toll facility. If the facility is located along the state and federal highway system, the revenues utilized to debt service the capital improvement bonds may be used as a credit to match federally funded transportation projects.

The Texas Department of Transportation Commission has recently issued rules relating to the distribution of TDC's for Texas Transportation projects including transit. The rules generally favor those areas of the state that generate the credit such as Houston and Dallas. However, a portion of the TDC's will be available for areas of the state (25% of the total TDC value) which have no toll facilities. In the case of non-toll generating areas, TxDOT has established that other factors such as local area need, the amount of local contribution to the project, ability of the project to meet state transportation objectives, will determine the recipients of the TDC's.

## *State Public Transit Funding*

During the 1975 State legislative session, the legislature transformed the Highway Department to the Department of Highways and Public Transportation, subsequently renamed the Department of Transportation, and established a State Public Transit Trust Fund at $30 million per biennium. This amount of funding has subsequently increased to its current level of $58 million each biennium. This funding is supported by highway-related user fees deposited annually into what has become known as "Fund 6." What is noteworthy regarding Fund 6 is that a large portion of the $58 million has been dedicated through legislative initiative; however, $18 million is discretionary. There has been recent discussion by TxDOT, as evidenced through its report to the Legislative Budget Board, to shift the $18 million non-dedicated Fund 6 support for transit to the General Revenues of the State.

The Texas Transit Association is also requesting an additional $16.7 million of state funding from any source to replace the small urban and rural state transit fleets, as well as an increase in state transit funding by $18 per biennium for a total of $90 million in state funding. This additional funding is justified to support the locally required match for federal funding, and to assist local transit agencies in meeting infrastructure requirements necessary to meet state regional transit coordinating objectives.

## *State Transit Funding Distribution Formula*

The TxDOT Commission has established new formulae for the distribution of state public transit funding, to small urban and rural areas, which has injected new "accountability" within the state oversight of transit operations. The new formula relies on a combination of factors including evidence of local need (demographics, economic, etc.), actual performance of transit (passengers per hour, cost per hour, etc.), and the amount of local contribution to the overall transit budget of the operator. The implementation of the new formula has resulted in several small urban and rural operators receiving less state funding than previously experienced, and some operators receiving more state funding than previously. The implementation of the new formula has been particularly hard on some small operators who receive little or no financial support from local jurisdictions such as small cities and counties; however, the new formula has been successful in increasing the awareness at the local level that some financial participation will be necessary to sustain and increase public transit services. The factors utilized within the formula which impact the distribution will be reexamined by TxDOT to determine their relevance and fairness.

## *Intercity Bus Funding*

The existing and previous two national Transportation Bills, established that 15% of funding provided through the Rural Formula program of the Federal Transit Administration (Section 5311 (f) will be made available for improvement of Inter-City Bus Service. This funding resource which, for Texas is approximately $4 million annually, can be utilized to support a variety of planning, infrastructure, and operating needs related to the linkage of cities through inter-city bus carriers. Thus, projects such as intercity bus terminals, subsidies for new intercity bus linkages, improvements to existing intercity bus stops, etc. have, in recent years, been funded through this program. TxDOT has recently issued a “call for projects”, proposals due in January, 2007, for the distribution of ICB funds to support intercity bus objectives as delineated in a Request For Proposal (RFP) which can be accessed through the TxDOT website.

## *Other Federal Funding Sources*

There are numerous federal funding programs that can assist with transportation facility and service improvements and transit coordination activities. The following sections describe the relevant federal programs that are available.

In August 2005, President George W. Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) that provides $286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over five years, through FY2009, including $52.6 billion for federal transit programs. This reauthorization provides a 46 percent increase over the transit funding guaranteed in the previous bill, but has a much greater impact since the funding is spread over only a five-year program instead of the previous six-year program.

### FTA Section 5307 and Section 5309 Statutory Provisions

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) allocates funding on an annual basis to all urbanized and rural areas for support of the planning, operation (in some urban and rural areas), and development of transportation systems and improvements that provide a linkage between transportation infrastructure and the community. The Section 5307 program is an annual allocation to designated recipients (typically transit agencies, states, or cities) who can use their appropriated allocation for planning, engineering design, construction, and, in some cases, operations. The FTA Section 5309 program is a discretionary fund to support bus and rail improvements that, in recent history, had been earmarked directly by Congress for specific projects. It is within the Section 5309 program that many communities in the nation have pursued and achieved congressional support for transit access-related programs under the LCI umbrella.

### Federal Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program

SAFETEA-LU authorizes a category of funding known as the Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program at an annual level of $25 million for projects that meet the following objectives:

- Improve efficiency of the transportation system;
- Reduce the future need for costly public infrastructure;
- Ensure efficient access to jobs;
- Create a positive environment for development; and
- Reduce the impact of transportation on the environment.

In FY2002, Congress appropriated approximately $270 million of TCSP funding for special projects. Based on experience during the first five fiscal years, a successful applicant could anticipate, assuming congressional approval, funding in the range of $1.5 million to $2 million. Eligible applicants/recipients include a wide range of political subdivisions such as states, cities, MPOs, and transit agencies. The program is divided into a research component for recipients seeking to utilize TCSP funding to establish methodologies linked to meeting the objectives identified above, and a grant component for projects directly linked to implementation (engineering, design, and capital development). SAFETEA-LU authorizes a similar funding level, with $25 million during 2005 and $61 million each year from 2006 to 2009. TCSP funding competes with no other federal community betterment appropriation and, in most cases, requires no local share. The TCSP program research and grant components require dedication of a portion of the awarded funds toward an evaluation component for the program.

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Since 1974, the Community Development Block Grant Program has been the backbone of improvement efforts in many communities, providing a flexible source of annual grant funds, through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for local governments nationwide. With the participation of their citizens, communities can devote these funds to a wide range of activities that best serve their own particular development priorities, provided that these projects *(1)* benefit low- and moderate-income families; *(2)* prevent or eliminate slums or blight; or *(3)* meet other urgent community development needs.

As one of the nation's largest federal grant programs, the impact of CDBG-funded projects can be seen in the housing stock, the business environment, the streets, and public facilities of almost every community. Traditionally, the largest single use of CDBG funds has been the provision of public facilities. In the last few years, however, the program has played an increasingly key role in stimulating economic development activities that expand job and business opportunities for lower income families and neighborhoods.

Each state establishes its own programs and rules to govern the distribution of its CDBG funds. While states may implement policies that give priority to particular activities, such as economic development projects and wastewater treatment systems, their choices are limited by the activities that are eligible under the national program, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Acquiring real property;
- Reconstructing or rehabilitating housing;
- Building public facilities and improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, sewers, and water systems, parks and community centers, fire stations;
- Helping people prepare for and obtain employment;
- Providing public services for youths, seniors, and disabled individuals; and
- Carrying out crime reduction initiatives.

One of the biggest advantages of CDBG is its ability to be used as local match for other federal grant programs such as those referenced in this chapter. Thus, by combining grant programs, improvements can occasionally be made with virtually no expenditure of local funds.

## *State Administered Federal Funds*

Most of the federal funds from the sources listed in the previous section flow directly to the individual grantees that are mostly major agencies. However, other categories of funds are designated to each state's governor to distribute to smaller entities across the state. In Texas the governor delegates that responsibility to TxDOT to administer.

### Planning and Research Grants Program (Section 5303 and Section 5304 Funds)

Section 5303 funds are provided to the MPO through TxDOT for transit or highway planning activities. Section 5304 monies are used by TxDOT for statewide transit planning and research activities. Both Section 5303 and Section 5304 are 80 percent federal and 20 percent state match. Section 5303 funds are administered in concert with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 112 planning funds through the Transportation Planning and Programming Division. The Public Transportation Division monitors transit activities and submits required reports to FTA.

### Small Urbanized Grants Program (Section 5307)

Grants for public transportation in urbanized areas are distributed by FTA using a formula based on population and population density. In areas of over 200,000 population, grants are awarded directly to the local recipient. Grants for urbanized areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 may be made to the governor or to local recipients designated by the governor. Currently, the cities make application directly to FTA. Capital/Planning is 80 percent federal maximum and 20 percent state/local match on most projects. Elderly and Disabled projects may receive up to 95 percent federal funding. Administrative/Operating can use 50 percent of the deficit maximum federal share and 50 percent state/local match. Section 5307 is the major federal funding source for urbanized transit properties. Unobligated funds may be transferred to another Section 5307 recipient or to the Section 5311 program.

### Grants Program for Services to Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310)

Capital grants or loans for the provision of services to elderly persons and/or persons with disabilities. Eligible recipients include private nonprofit organizations or associations, public bodies that coordinate services for the elderly and/or disabled; or any public body that certifies that nonprofit organizations in the area are not readily available to carry out the services. The funding ratio is 80 percent federal maximum and 20 percent local match. TxDOT has been designated by the Governor to administer the Section 5310 program. Grants are typically used to purchase vans (many of which are lift-equipped) and ancillary equipment, such as radios. The Section 5310 program is undergoing a major redesign at present to reflect the strengthened coordination requirements for local recipients. Refinements are also necessary to ensure that federal planning requirements are met.

### Non-urbanized (Rural) Grants Program (Section 5311)

Grants for public transportation in non-urbanized areas fewer than 50,000 in population. Eligible recipients include state agencies, local public bodies, private nonprofit organizations, Indian tribes and groups, and operators of public transportation services. Unless the Governor certifies to FTA that intercity bus service needs are being met, 15 percent of the allocation must be reserved for the development and support of intercity bus transportation. The funding ratio for Capital/Planning/Administrative is 80 percent federal maximum and 20 percent state/local match on most projects. ADA projects may receive up to 90 percent federal funding. Operating costs are supported at 50 percent of the deficit maximum federal share and 50 percent state/local match. TxDOT has been designated by the Governor to administer the Section 5311 program.

### Job Access/Reverse Commute Funds

The Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funds are used for public transportation projects for access to jobs and reverse commute purposes and are described below.

A **job access** project is one that transports welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to employment. A **reverse commute** project is one that takes individuals from urbanized (cities/downtown areas) and non-urbanized areas to suburban employers. The federal statute has no reference to welfare or income status associated with reverse commute projects; therefore these projects are open to a rider of any income level. Local governmental authorities, private nonprofit organizations, operators of public transportation services and private for-profit operators of public transportation services are eligible recipients.
Job access projects include the following:

- Financing the eligible costs of projects that provide public transportation services targeted to welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals;
- Promoting public transportation use by low-income workers, including the use of public transportation by workers with nontraditional work schedules;
- Promoting the use of employer-provided transportation, including the transit pass benefit program under Section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
- Supporting mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing employment or employment-related transportation services; and
- Otherwise facilitating or providing transportation for employment or employment-related purposes by welfare recipients and low-income persons.

Reverse commute projects include the following:

- Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool, van routes, or service from urbanized areas and other than urbanized areas to suburban workplaces;
- Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a nonprofit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace;
- Supporting mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing employment or employment-related transportation services; and
- Otherwise facilitating or providing public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities.

Marketing and promotional activities to encourage use of transit by workers with non-traditional schedules and use of transit voucher program by appropriate agencies for welfare recipients and other low-income individuals are also eligible activities.

FTA-proposed JARC performance measures include the following:

- Increase in access to jobs related to geographic coverage and/or service times that impact the availability of transportation services for low income individuals as a result of the JARC projects implemented in the current reporting year; and
- Number of rides provided for low-income individuals as a result of the JARC projects implemented in the current reporting year.

Projects submitted in response to the department’s call for projects must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan. The plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers and participation by the public. The commission supports the development of regional service plans that respond to the department's charge in Transportation Code, §461.004 to identify the following:

- Overlaps and gaps in the provision of public transportation services, including services that could be more effectively provided by existing, privately funded transportation resources;
- Underused equipment owned by public transportation providers; and
- Inefficiencies in the provision of public transportation services by any public transportation provider.

The commission anticipates that the regional service planning process will be used to meet the requirements of the local coordinated planning process. Regions interested in participating in the JARC program shall develop and prioritize Section 5316 projects in response to the employment transportation deficiencies identified in the regional planning process and documented in the plan. All projects must be included in the TIP.

An example JARC project would work as follows: The local workforce board has identified 3 new businesses moving to the community that will primarily be hiring former and current welfare recipients. There is currently no transit service for the area of town where the new businesses will be locating. The transit agency meets with workforce staff and the new businesses to determine the appropriate time for a possible route or shuttle service. During the meeting it is determined that the best way to meet the needs of the targeted passengers and businesses is to set up van pools to serve the shift needs of the new businesses. JARC funding has been identified for this project.

### New Freedom Funds

The purpose of these funds is for public transportation projects that provide new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those currently required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, that assist individuals with disabilities with transportation, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. Eligible recipients include local governmental authorities, private nonprofit organizations, operators of public transportation services, and private for-profit operators of public transportation services.

Eligible activities for new public transportation service projects, beyond ADA, include the following:

- Providing paratransit services beyond minimum requirements (3/4 mile to either side of a fixed route) for a transit provider operating fixed route service;
- Making accessibility improvements to existing transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations; for example, adding an elevator or ramps, detectable warnings, improving signage;
- Building an accessible path to a bus stop that is currently inaccessible, including wheelchair ramps, sidewalks, pedestrian signals or other accessible features;
- Implementing technology improvements that enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- Implementing "same day" paratransit services; and
- Facilitating or providing transportation services beyond ADA requirements, including transportation to and from employment and employment-related destinations.

New public transportation alternatives, beyond ADA, include the following:

- Purchasing vehicles and supporting accessible taxi, ride-sharing, and vanpooling programs;
- Supporting voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers;
- Supporting volunteer driver and aide programs;
- Acquiring transportation services by a contract, lease, or other arrangement;
- Supporting mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies providing transportation;
- New feeder service (transit service that provides access) to commuter rail, commuter bus, intercity rail and intercity bus stations, for which complementary paratransit service is not required under the ADA;

- New training programs for individual users on awareness, knowledge, and skills of public and alternative transportation options available in their communities. This includes travel instruction and travel training services; and
- Facilitating or providing new transportation services for persons with disabilities, including transportation to and from employment and employment-related destinations.

FTA proposed new freedom performance measures include the following:

- Increases or enhancements related to geographic coverage, service quality and/or service times that impact availability of transportation services for individuals with disabilities as a result of the New Freedom projects implemented in the current reporting year;
- Additions or changes to environmental infrastructure (e.g., transportation facilities, sidewalks), technology, vehicles that impact availability of transportation services as a result of the New Freedom projects implemented in the current reporting year; and
- Number of rides provided for individuals with disabilities as a result of the New Freedom projects implemented in the current reporting year.

New freedom projects must be included in a coordinated regional plan as follows:

- Projects submitted in response to the department’s call for projects must be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan. The plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers and participation by the public.
- The commission supports the development of regional service plans that respond to the department's charge in Transportation Code, §461.004 to identify the following:
    - overlaps and gaps in the provision of public transportation services including services that could be more effectively provided by existing, privately funded transportation resources;
    - underused equipment owned by public transportation providers; and
    - inefficiencies in the provision of public transportation services by any public transportation provider.

The commission anticipates that the regional service planning process will be used to meet the requirements of the local coordinated planning process defined above.

Regions interested in participating in the NF program shall develop and prioritize Section 5317 projects in response to the opportunities to improve transportation for persons with disabilities uncovered in the regional planning process and documented in the plan. All projects must be included in the TIP.

New freedom project examples would include: The regional planning process during a targeted public meeting identified a need within the disability community for door-through-door service. The current transit provider currently only provides door-to-door service. The transit agency agreed to provide the door thorough door service to assist with increasing ridership of persons with disabilities. New Freedom funding has been identified for this project.

## *Useful Federal Funding Tools*

### Capital Cost of Contracting

The federal government encourages the utilization of private contractors to provide transportation services, including operations and maintenance. FTA provides funding through its Capital Cost of Contracting (CCC) program that rewards the public entity that contracts with private sector providers with bonus money representing the capitalized portion of the contract cost being provided by the private provider (e.g., depreciated value of equipment or facilities furnished in the provision of privately contracted services). This bonus money, which can reimburse 80 percent of the costs that range from 10 percent to 100 percent, can be used to support local share costs of other federal capital improvement programs.

### Joint Development Provisions

Joint development provisions enable a local government or transit entity to pursue redevelopment opportunities (with or without private sector participation) to implement mixed-use development into the transit terminal/parking facility development to maximize services linked by transit (retail, daycare, community facilities, residential, etc.). A local government or transit entity may acquire land and develop that land in a manner compatible and conducive to public transit improvements in a way that generates economic value and additional revenue to help support transit operations. The joint development approach also reflects combining transit terminal operations with a parking facility, in lieu of building just a parking garage, to maximize the funding opportunity provided by creating facilities to promote public transportation. The joint development approach can also be used to maximize private funding opportunities, using these funding opportunities to leverage future federal funding matches. Joint development benefits are provided to projects that maximize the services linked to public transportation, such as daycare, retail, restaurants, health care, and community facilities.

### Transportation Corridors

Federal transit legal provisions enable the acquisition of real property by a federally supported transit agency within a 1,500-ft. radius of any transit terminal, to support development that is compatible and conducive to public transit improvements in a way that generates economic value and additional revenue to help support transit operations. Local government funding of pedestrian infrastructure improvements and utility improvements through public works and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) resources can be used to satisfy the local share to compliment federal funding grants or appropriations, and to leverage future federal funding matches.

### Funding Partnerships

Public/private partnerships offer opportunities for the development community to donate land in fee simple interest, through a long-term lease or easement, which is used to support transit/pedestrian related improvements. The value of the land or interest donated can be used to match federal funding and/or leverage additional federal resources to fund other transit improvements.

### Parking and Farebox Revenue

Transit terminal parking facilities served by a transit system offer parking revenue streams which can be used to meet the local funding obligations for the project and which can be used to offset the operating and maintenance costs for the facility and transit system. While Federal dollars provide funding for parking and transit infrastructure, each transit terminal facility generates revenue over time. Parking revenues offer the financial means to fund the operating costs for the transit terminal facility and the transit system.

### Federal Livable Communities Initiative (LCI)

FTA has made a strong financial commitment to the improvement of communities under the federal LCI program. This commitment reinforces the importance of integrating and linking communities with the nation's transportation systems through infrastructure improvements that provide greater access to public transportation. These provisions authorize projects that enhance the effectiveness of mass transportation projects. The flexible funding provisions of SAFETEA-21 strengthen the funding opportunities for transit investments that meet community needs. The essential purpose of the federal transit laws is not simply to fund the capital and operating costs of transit systems themselves, but also to improve the quality of life in urban and rural communities through the use of transit systems, and recognizing them as the lifeblood of livable communities. Thus, the objective of the LCI program is to improve mobility and quality of services available to residents in neighborhoods by:

- Recognizing the importance of integrating and linking communities through infrastructure improvements that provide greater access to public transportation;
- Developing a transit-based mobility program, integrated with supportive land uses, that, in turn, create a more positive environment for the pedestrian;
- Providing a public transportation linkage to local and regional mobility systems;
- Implementing transit terminal parking to promote public transportation; and
- Implementing a mixed-use development concept into transit terminals to maximize services linked by transit (retail, daycare, community facilities, residential, etc.).

# Chapter 7 – REGIONAL MARKETING STRATEGY & TRANSIT TRAVELER INFORMATION SYSTEM

## *Marketing Strategy*

Marketing is about providing information to stakeholders and members of the public about the services that are planned or may be available to them. Transportation marketing is primarily about providing good information to assure users that they have made the right decision to ride. Another important emphasis of transportation marketing is to attract new riders. The GCRPC is in a very positive position to promote coordinated, region wide marketing for transit services because they are the sole entity that oversees public transit in the 7-counties. Currently, GCRPC promotes their urban and fixed route service and has made efforts to create unified image of their sub-contracted rural services through bus identification (RTransit logo) and region-wide rural information on the GCRPC website.

The advantage of marketing coordination is the potential to provide more information with fewer resources because the various agencies are working to reduce duplicative efforts. In addition, smaller agencies that were previously unable to develop informational materials or provide certain marketing resources benefit from the experience of and collaborative process with larger coordinating agencies. This coordination process can be seen as a starting point to begin joint promoting of transit services, along with the input of social service agencies and business groups.

In relation to transportation coordination, marketing and public information play various roles, from building public support for a coordination effort to attracting riders to the coordinated service. Depending on the level of coordination and the extent of the services being provided, coordination can provide several marketing-related benefits. Examples of marketing-related coordination benefits include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unifying theme and image for public information (e.g., shared vehicle design and bus stops);
- One-stop shop for informational resources about transit services (e.g., a single informational brochure, web site, customer service number);
- Shared advertising campaign (e.g., joint marketing efforts, newspaper advertisements, and radio spots); and
- Identification of resources that may have the greatest benefit for the coordinated transportation programs[1].

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[1] Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 101, *Toolkit for Rural Community Coordinated Transportation Services*

### Identify the Audience

It is essential to identify the audience for coordinated transportation marketing and public information. Different audiences may be appropriate during the transportation coordination planning process and once the process is completed (and a coordinated service is provided). Some examples of different audiences and the marketing/public information issues that arise follow:

- *Political Leaders/Decision-Makers*. What information needs to be presented to policymakers to gain support for a coordinated transportation effort? How can their support be marketed to their constituents? Elements to emphasize may include "better service for the community, maintaining local decision-making on
- important issues, and no increase in costs: transportation cost savings so funds can be used for other purposes."
- *Schools, Employers, Medical Facilities, and Social Service Agencies.* What types of resources are available for these entities? Can they become partners in the coordinated marketing effort? How do we inform their clients and employees? Elements to emphasize may include "easier to coordinate transportation services for your clients" and "transportation services have better focus on regional needs."
- *Transportation/Transit Users.* Which subgroups are the focus (e.g., seniors, youth, those with disabilities, rural residents)? How should the coordinated system be marketed? Is the focus to build ridership region-wide or to improve the rider experience and information available? Elements to emphasize may include "easier to ride the bus and make connections, better access to information, and one-stop shop for transportation needs and customer support."

### Identify Potential Market (Target Audience)

All segments of the population should be identified and invited to participate. The goal is to be as inclusive as possible. Key groups to make sure to identify and reach out to in marketing efforts include:

- Historically under-represented groups (Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians, children);
- Persons with physical and language barriers;
- Economically challenged families/households; and
- Persons with limited reading skills.

### Design General Information/Educational Materials

Establishing a clear message is critical to the success of outreach activities. Because there is no new service being marketing in Golden Crescent, but instead an image of unified region-wide transit opportunities, the message should state the goals and objectives of all transit providers in the region. Some methods to use for general information/educational materials include:

- Developing a recognized logo creates a signature for the project or service. All materials should have the logo on them. This builds quick project identification with the public.
- Creating a website identity for the project/service gives interested parties a place to go for additional information. Place important background information, downloadable flyers and brochures for distribution by Advisory Committee members and interested parties that access the website.
- Setting up a “hotline” or 800 number gives non-internet users place to call to get information and ask questions for region-wide services. If this line is staffed, it will make a human connection between the agency and the potential consumer.
- Create shared databases that everyone can use. This includes gathering contact information of the key community groups that the Advisory Committee interfaces with when doing regular business.

### Develop Outreach & Marketing Strategy for Region-Wide Transit Services

This section offers general guidelines for the planning agency and Advisory Committee to consider for public involvement and marketing transit services. These processes can be done in several phases: initial, med range and long term.

### Initial outreach

Timing: Weeks 1-8

Develop an outreach/marketing budget that GCRPC can utilize, along with funds from the sub-contractors that have been historically used for local marketing. This will ensure that project activities, printing costs and advertising expenses stay within the budget and all resources have been identified. Compiling a list of key organizations, community groups and area churches is beneficial.

Compile a contact list of daily, weekly and monthly newspapers and other publications. Submit articles via email and fax to the key newspapers that announce what the services offered in the region are and provide background information. Ensure that special language newspapers (i.e. Spanish) and special groups (seniors, disabled) are targeted. These items work well for initial outreach to the general public.

### Med range outreach

Timing: Weeks 8-24

Once the message is drafted, flyers and other materials should be distributed. Ensure that materials can easily be translated into the languages spoken in the community. Remember to have information available for hearing impaired, blind or other impairment. Make materials available at area schools and colleges. Perfect marketing opportunities occur at community gathering places, school registration, open houses and local churches. It is also a good opportunity to market region-wide information to social service agencies and groups such as The Workforce Solutions and Victoria College that have branches all over the region.

Seniors need special documents created for their needs to store in places that are convenient. For example, refrigerator magnets in large type are helpful with a number to call for demand-response service. Place these materials in places where seniors congregate such as churches, medical offices and senior citizen facilities. Also provide these materials to special senior outreach programs, i.e. Meals on Wheels.

During the stage when potential pilot projects are being developed, public hearings, community meetings, workshops and focus group meetings are good tools to obtain public comments on new services. To promote the new transit service, a meeting, open house or other kick-off activity to invite the public up close to hear and see what the service is all about is beneficial. This also builds anticipation regarding the service. See *Table 6.1* below to help determine the type of meeting/event and *Table 6.2* to assist in promoting a new service or transit image.

***Table 6.1 – Meetings Purpose and Format***

| *Format* | *Audience Size* | *Purpose* | *Duration* | *When to Use* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Public Hearing*** | large | Provides formal official & legal notice of a pending project or action | 1.5 to 3 hours | When required as part of a legal process |
| ***Community/Public Meeting*** | large or small | Provides information, solicits input & response | 1.5 to 3 hours | Public knows about project's description and purpose |
| ***Workshop*** | audience broken into small groups | Offers the opportunity for problem solving. May cover several topics | 3 to 4 hours | When solution is needed and options are open |
| ***Open House*** | large | Allows maximum opportunity for individual responses | 2 hours | When base data needs to be conveyed and individuals may comment on each item |
| ***Charrette*** | small group | Gives participants the opportunity for problem solving | 1 day or more | At the outset when setting vision or direction, when resolution is needed and options for direction are fairly open |
| ***Focus Group*** | small group | Deals with 1-2 elements/issues that need further exploration. Offers immediate feedback from participants | 2 hours | When a specific issues arises that needs resolution |

***Table 6.2 – Promoting A New Service or Image***

| ***Event*** | ***Audience*** | ***Purpose*** | ***Duration*** | ***When to Use*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Kick-off* | large | Generates excitement regarding the project or service | 1-4 hours evening or weekend | Promoting a new project or service |
| *Community event/festival* | large | Opportunity to exchange information | 1-4 hours evening or weekend | Promote new project or service/get input |
| *Community gathering place* | small to medium | Interface with targeted groups | 2 hours day time or evening | Gathering information or distributing materials/flyers |
| *Mall exhibit* | large | Meet general public to distribute information regarding project or service | weekends | Distributing information regarding new project or service |

The media plays an integral partner in the transit marketing phase. Public notices, press releases and special articles for newspapers papers should be developed and strategically placed. To keep the project/service in the forefront of the public's mind, releasing articles, ads, public service announcements every two to three weeks with television and radio stations.

During kick-off activities distribute promotional items. Magnetized refrigerator business cards and bookmarks work well with the general public (*See Appendix E*). Remember to distribute materials with key community groups, local social service agencies and at public venues.

If special participation or attention is needed from a traditionally disenfranchised or transit dependent group, walking or canvassing the areas where these individuals reside is helpful if the GCRPC staff and budget allow for this. During these activities, door hangers announcing the event or service can be left at each home *(see Appendix E for an example door hanger)*.

**Long-range/ongoing outreach** Timing: Weeks 25-ongoing

For ongoing support, develop a speaker's bureau that can go to planned events and make presentations regarding the transit services offered in the region. The bureau should consist of members from the Advisory Committee or others with extensive knowledge about the service.

Ongoing communication can also occur by submitting articles to community or agency newsletters. Usually, these groups are always looking for opportunities to inform their constituents about services available to them. Articles could also be placed on the project website. The website is also great for placing surveys, posting upcoming promotions or pilot projects and other project/service information.

Obtain support from and maintain contact with elected officials and policy makers at the federal, state, county and local level regarding the regional transit service. Generally, periodic correspondence, newsletters and occasional in-person briefings should suffice.

Likewise, transportation professionals should also be kept abreast of the latest project developments. Professionals may also want to support your efforts and invite the lead agency to discuss the project or service at an upcoming staff or professional meeting. Local major employers also may want updates regarding the services provided in the region and pilot project services. Communication efforts include mailings to major employers who could distribute information or surveys to their employees.

### Coordinated Marketing Examples

*Merced County, California,* provides an example of a consolidated system under which several different transit providers now contribute to the operation of a single system. What were once several transit system names, logos, and identities is now a single system with one county map and brochure and a uniform logo.

*Southern Illinois's RIDES system,* in its efforts to build partnerships, marketed to social service agencies, creating a brochure to encourage them to join the coordinated service rather than manage their own. RIDES also advertised through brochures, television, radio and newspaper advertisements to overcome misconceptions that the service was for seniors only.

*Kern County, California,* a single brochure developed in 1997 by the regional transit system was marketed to users of the county system, but included local contacts and service area information for the various independent operators.

### Beginnings of Coordinated Marketing Strategy

Within the timeframe of this study, the coordinated marketing effort has already taken place through the process of bringing various stakeholders together. Before a unified regional transit image can be marketed, the initial stage of compiling lists of social service agencies and conducting meetings with various entities affected by public transit has already begun. A "Golden Crescent Regional Transit" logo has been adopted by the Advisory Committee and a website (*www.goldencrescenttransit.com*) has been created to begin the joint marketing effort *(see Appendix D)*.

## *Transit Traveler Information*

The GCRPC currently provides all their transit service schedules including times and a location map (fixed-route) on their existing website. RTransit subcontractors arrange their trips autonomously. There is currently no regional traveler information website or marketing materials that emphasize both rural, urban and intercity services available to the public. GCRPC markets their services as best they can within the resources available for the RTransit and Victoria Transit systems, but there is no regional emphasis or connectivity between them and no tools available to better plan trips. There are relatively simple and cost-efficient ways to coordinate information distributed to the public about transit options in the region which are outlined below.

### Regional Transit Service Database

The first step to begin building a region-wide information network is the creation of simple database containing all route information and schedules of each service to be included in the information network. This would include all RTransit operations and contracted providers, as well as Victoria Transit fixed-route/Para Transit services and Valley Transit Intercity bus carrier (the sole intercity service in the region). The existing website for GCRPC transit services already contains this information for region-wide services, but lacks Valley Transit information.

### Region-Wide Public Transit Website

A multi-faceted regional web portal containing information on all services available within the region, including opportunities for connectivity between rural and urban areas, would serve the purpose of linking any rider in the seven-county area to information on transit services available. A website with a domain name that is easily identifiable in all areas of the region is important. GCRPC created a website (*www.goldencrescenttransit.com*) for use during the coordination study process, with the assumption that this site could be utilized in the future to provide region-wide transit information. Though an outside company could be hired to incorporate schedules, maps and ticket information on this site, another option is to make improvements to the existing GCRPC transit services site and direct this new address there. Valley Transit could be integrated into this site as well. Costs associated with these services include additional staff hours for data input, maintenance and technical support, hardware (kiosks, additional computers) and any additional phone lines necessary.

Not only would a coordinated website be a “one-stop” source of information for riders, but it would also serve to create an important image of coordination between systems to the public. If a potential rider has internet connection, they could check schedule and fare information online and effectively plan their route. An advanced trip planner could be available for input of specific traveler information (i.e. desired departure and arrival time) to link all available transit options to take them from their origin to destination. Online fare purchases for transit systems could also be available on this website and real-time purchasing updates can be monitored by an administrator. Operators scheduling trips for the various providers could also utilize this web interface and be able to effectively assist those who call by phone for regional transit options. Riders could also access this information in public places that provide free internet access (schools, libraries). In addition, computer kiosks or large displays with similar information could be placed in strategic public places. Computer kiosks vary in cost, but could run approximately $1,000 or more for a workstation with monitor, internet connection and physical unit to house the computer. Rural demand response operators currently schedule and dispatch independently, but a regional website could integrate a shared calendar or web-posted schedule viewable by administrators only.

An advanced level of transit traveler information for the region would be to utilize advanced vehicle locators (AVL) and geographic information systems (GIS) to locate vehicles to monitor schedule accuracy and provide real-time transit information to riders through the website and kiosks.

### Technology Funding Sources

Capital grant programs traditionally provide the majority of funding for technology projects. These programs are often used to purchase vehicles and other equipment. These include Section 5310 (Elderly and Persons with Disabilities) and Section 5311 (Non-Urbanized Area Formula), along with state capital grant programs. However, there are other alternative sources of funding that have successfully been used for technology projects. There are federal, state, local and private agencies which are not always transportation oriented. Most of these sources are competitive; therefore time resources are required to compete for these alternative funds. These funds are outlined below.

*Federal Transit Administration (FTA)*

Demonstration Projects – FTA offers the Advanced Public Transportation Systems (APTS) program which are competitively awarded and is part of the overall Information Technology Systems (ITS) initiative.

Access to Jobs Program – FTA program on a competitive basis to fund transit programs for job access.

*Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)*

Surface Transportation Program (STP) and National Highway System (NHS) Programs – Targeted to infrastructure improvements, but can be transferred to transit technology projects.

Section 5309 Earmarks for capital purchases could be used to provide long-term funding for technology purchases. This process can be lengthy and involves working with members of Congress who typically earmark these funds.

***Human Service Agency Programs –*** Federal and state agencies whose mission depends on transportation for their clients provide capital grant funding for transit technology. Federal agencies include The Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Commerce and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. State agency funds such as Head Start funding or Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can often match these federal programs and have administer similar state human service programs.

Other sources of funds include local governments, businesses, retailers and hospitals, as well as private foundations**.**

# Appendices

**Appendix A – GCRPC Public Transit Providers and Stakeholders**

**Appendix B – Public Meeting Press Releases**

**Appendix C – Public Meeting Sign-In Sheets**

**Appendix D – Pilot Project Workshop Sign-In Sheet**

**Appendix E – Marketing Materials**

**Appendix F – Student Transportation Survey**

**Appendix G – Volunteer Driver Guidelines**

# *Appendix A*

## GCRPC PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS

**CALHOUN**

Calhoun Co. Senior Citizens Assn.
Rural Public, E&D, Title III, Medicaid,
Taxi Service-Ship Shuttle

**DEWITT**

Rural Public, E&D, Title III, Medicaid,
No Taxi Service

**GOLIAD**

Goliad County
Rural Public, E&D, Title III, Medicaid,
No Taxi Service

**GONZALES**

Gonzales Co. Senior Citizens Assn.
Rural Public, E&D, Title III, Medicaid,
Taxi Service-No Response
Warm Springs

**JACKSON**

Friends of Elder Citizens, Inc.
Rural Public, E&D, Title III, Medicaid,
No Taxi Service

**LAVACA**

Lavaca County
Rural Public, E&D, Title III, Medicaid,
No Taxi Service

**VICTORIA**

GCRPC
Rural Public, E&D, Title III, Medicaid,
Taxi Service-Ceasar's Service, A1 Service
Victoria County Senior Citizens
Warm Springs

# CLIENT-BASED SERVICE PROVIDERS

**CALHOUN**
- Port Lavaca Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

**GOLIAD**
- La Bahia Adult Day Care
- La Bahia Healthcare

**DEWITT**
- Broadway Adult Day Care
- Heritage Program for Senior Adults
- Spring Season Nursing Home
- Whispering Oaks Manor
- Yorktown Manor Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

**GONZALES**
- Bluebonnet Trails
- Care Inn of Gonzales
- Gonzales Community Health Center of South Central Texas Inc.
- Memorial Therapy Center
- Warm Springs Specialty Hospital at Luling

**JACKSON**
- Care Inn of Edna
- Southbrooke Manor Nursing & Rehabilitation

**LAVACA**
- Shady Oaks Nursing Center
- Shiner Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
- Southern Health
- Texas Lutheran Home
- Yoakum Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

**VICTORIA**
- Affectionate Arms
- Amour Adult Day Care
- Crossroads Nursing Service
- Deveraux
- Gulf Bend
- Head Start
- Linwood Place
- Retama Manor South
- Retama West of Victoria
- Treatment Associates
- Veterans Group
- Victoria Regional Nursing & Rehabilitation

## OTHER POSSIBLE STAKEHOLDERS

Billy Cattan Outreach Program
Cities in Region
Counties in Region
Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse
Community Action
DARS-Texas Rehab Commission for Blind
Gulf Bend
Headstart
Health and Human Services
Midcoast Family
Public Health Region
Region III
Social Security Office
Texas Workforce Solutions
Veteran Services
Victoria Adult Literacy
Victoria City/County Health
VISD-Even Start
Warm Springs

# *Appendix B*

## PUBLIC MEETING PRESS RELEASES

THE CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION TRAINING AND RESEARCH

3100 Cleburne Avenue
Houston, Texas 77004
Phone: 713-313-1925
Fax: 713-313-1923

# Press Release

**Contact: Gwen Goodwin**
Phone: (713) 313-7283

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
2 PM CDT, June 12, 2006

## Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission Embarks on Transit Coordination Plan

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC), and local governments officials, non-profit agencies and residents will work together to create a regional transit coordination plan to meet the needs of the seven (7) county region. To gain the broadest possible public participation and to promote this important effort, two community meetings are scheduled from 6-8 p.m. on June 27 & June 28, 2006. Review the schedule below and attend a meeting to share your ideas about the Golden Crescent's transit needs.

| Location & address | Date |
|---|---|
| **City of Port Lavaca City Hall**<br>202 N. Virginia Port Lavaca | June 27th |
| **Gonzales County Courthouse – Commissioner's Court Room**<br>414 St. Joseph St. Gonzales | June 28th |

If you need a ride to the meeting, contact Lisa Cortinas at 361-578-1587. For additional information, visit the website at www.goldencresenttransit.com

# Press Release

GOLDEN CRESCENT
REGIONAL TRANSIT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
1 PM CDT June 21, 2006
**Contact: Gwen Goodwin**
Phone: (713) 313-7283

A Regional Transportation Coordination Planning is going on throughout Texas, and the Golden Crescent is one of 24 regions undertaking this exciting challenge. The Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC) was chosen as the lead agency to ensure that a coordinated transportation plan is created for the 7-county region (Gonzales, Lavaca, Victoria, Jackson, DeWitt, Goliad, and Calhoun). The GCRPC formed an Advisory Committee that consists of representatives from health and human service agencies, transportation providers, and county representatives. The Advisory Committee will provide oversight to the study as well as valuable insight and support into the region's needs and concerns. Working with a consultant team, the Advisory Committee will learn how transportation services are delivered within our region and identify opportunities and barriers to coordinating these services.

The Advisory Committee will host two community meetings on June 27th and 28th from 6-8 pm to get ideas regarding the transportation needs in the region.

| Location & address | Date | Time |
|---|---|---|
| **City of Port Lavaca - City Hall**<br>202 N. Virginia Port Lavaca, TX | June 27th | 6-8 pm |
| **Gonzales County Courthouse – Commissioner's Court Room**<br>414 St. Joseph St. Gonzales, TX | June 28th | 6-8 pm |

Whether you work for a social service agency, have a family member that needs transportation services, or are just a concerned citizen, we hope that you take the time to attend one of these meetings.

If you need transportation to a meeting or if you have questions regarding, please refer to our project website at www.goldencrescenttransit.com or contact Lisa Cortinas, Transportation Director at the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission, at (361) 578-1587.

# Press Release

GOLDEN CRESCENT
REGIONAL TRANSIT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
2:30 PM CDT June 22, 2006
**Contact: Gwen Goodwin**
Phone: (713) 313-7283

A Regional Transportation Coordination Planning is going on throughout Texas, and the Golden Crescent is one of 24 regions undertaking this exciting challenge. The Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC) was chosen as the lead agency to ensure that a coordinated transportation plan is created for the 7-county region (Gonzales, Lavaca, Victoria, Jackson, DeWitt, Goliad, and Calhoun). The GCRPC formed an Advisory Committee that consists of representatives from health and human service agencies, transportation providers, and county representatives. The Advisory Committee will provide oversight to the study as well as valuable insight and support into the region's needs and concerns. Working with a consultant team, the Advisory Committee will learn how transportation services are delivered within our region and identify opportunities and barriers to coordinating these services.

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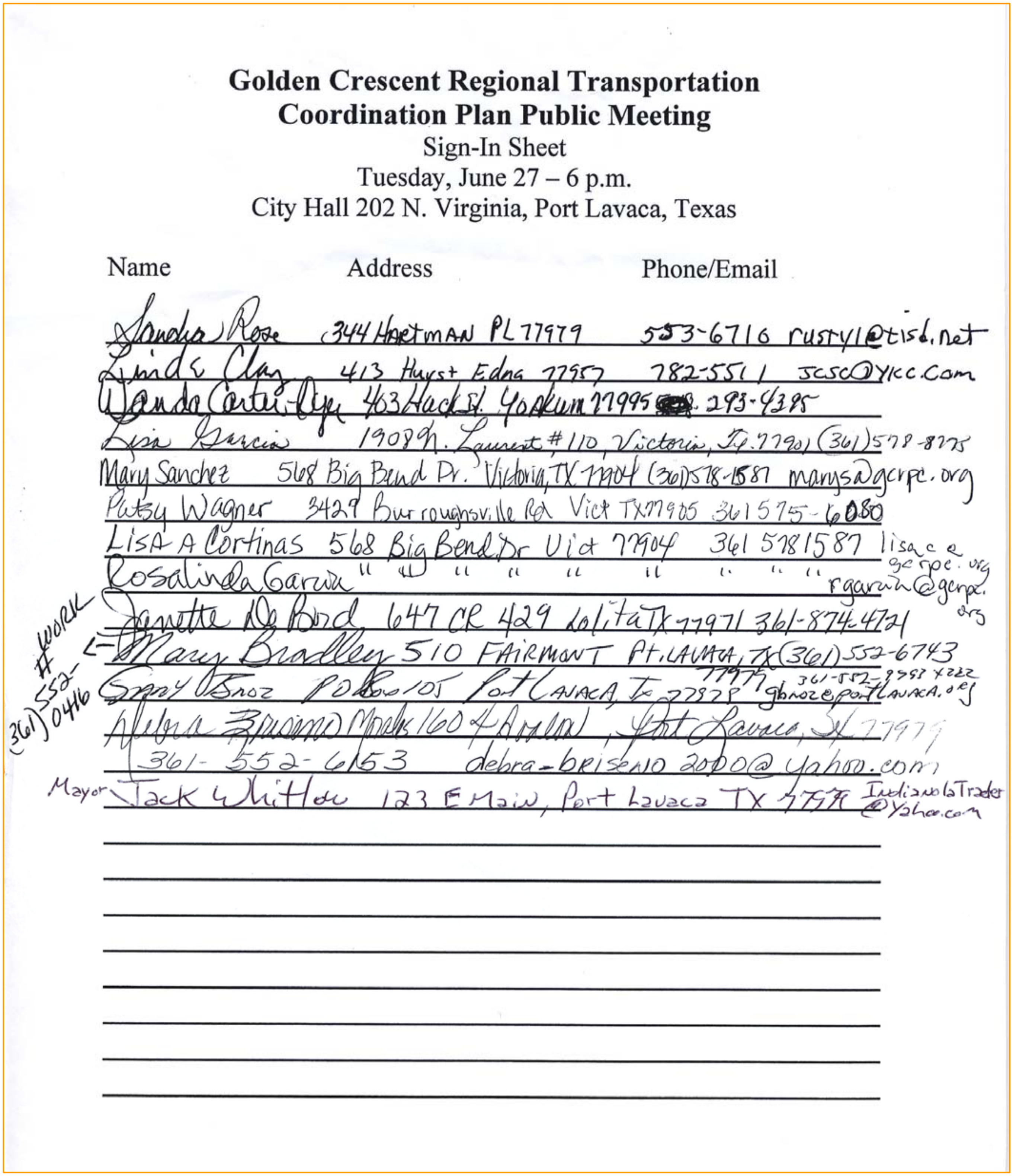
Whether you work for a social service agency, have a family member that needs transportation services, or are just a concerned citizen, we hope that you take the time to attend one of these meetings.

If you need transportation to a meeting or if you have questions regarding, please refer to our project website at www.goldencrescenttransit.com or contact Lisa Cortinas, Transportation Director at the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission, at (361) 578-1587.

# *Appendix C*

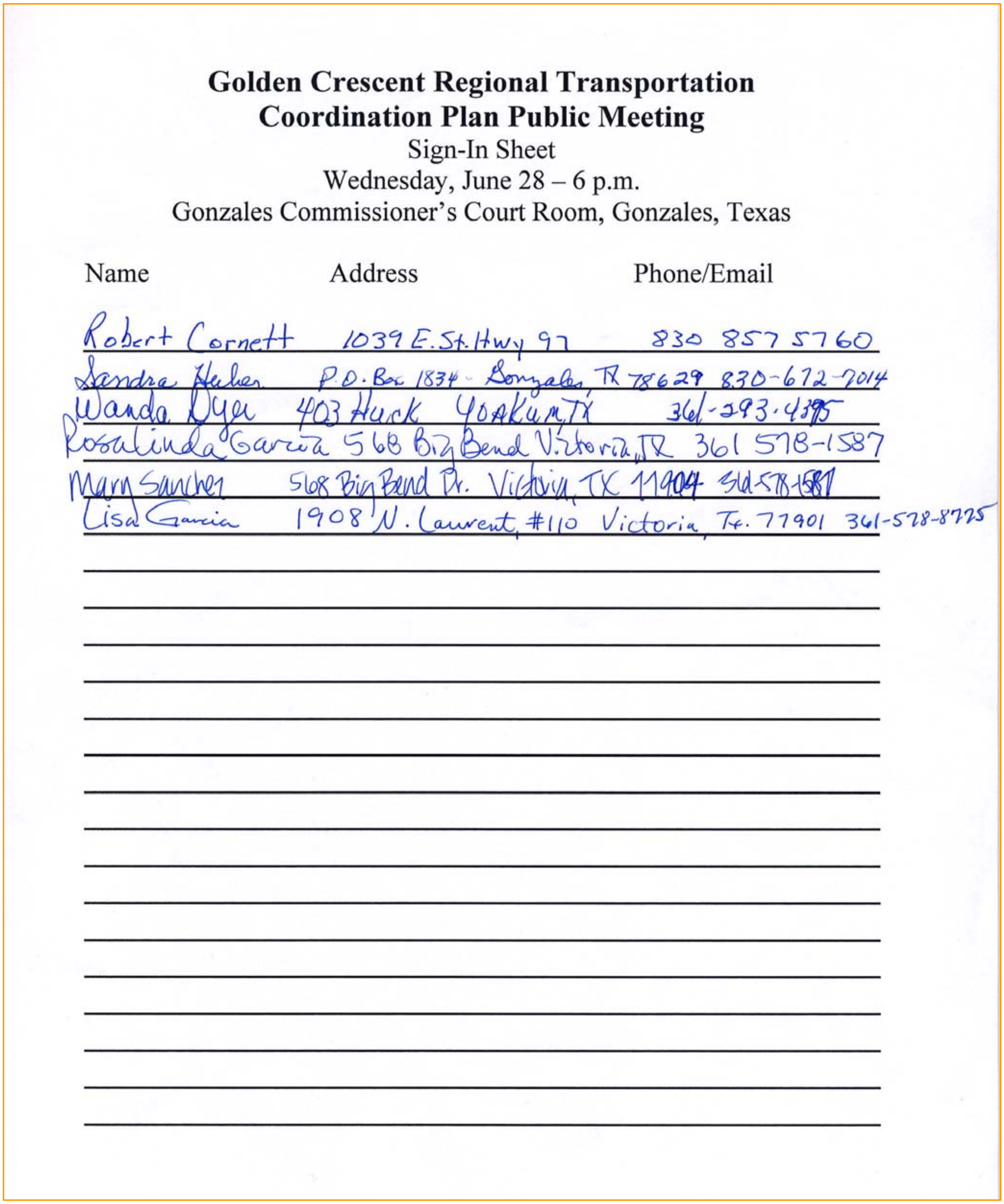
## PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEETS



### Golden Crescent Regional Transportation Coordination Plan Public Meeting

Sign-In Sheet
Tuesday, June 27 – 6 p.m.
City Hall 202 N. Virginia, Port Lavaca, Texas

| Name | Address | Phone/Email |
|---|---|---|
| Sandra Rose | 344 Hartman PL 77979 | 553-6716 rusty1@tisd.net |
| Linda Clay | 413 Hurst Edna 77957 | 782-5511 JCSC@YKC.Com |
| Wanda Cortez-[illegible] | 403 Hack St. Yoakum 77995 | 293-4385 |
| Lisa Garcia | 1908 N. Laurent #110, Victoria, Tx. 77901 | (361)578-8775 |
| Mary Sanchez | 568 Big Bend Dr. Victoria, TX 77904 | (361)578-1587 marys@gcrpc.org |
| Patsy Wagner | 3429 Burroughsville Rd Vict TX 77905 | 361 575-6080 |
| LISA A Cortinas | 568 Big Bend Dr Vict 77904 | 361 5781587 lisac@gcrpc.org |
| Rosalinda Garcia | " " " " " " | " " " rgarcia@gcrpc.org |
| Janette DeBord | 647 CR 429 Lolita Tx 77971 | 361-874-4721 |
| WORK # (361) 552-0416 ← Mary Bradley | 510 FAIRMONT Pt. LAVACA, TX 77979 | (361) 552-6743 |
| Gary Broz | PO Box 105 Port Lavaca, Tx 77979 | 361-552-9993 x222 gbroz@portlavaca.org |
| Debra Briseno Marks | 160 [illegible], Port Lavaca, Tx 77979 | 361-552-6153 debra-briseno2000@yahoo.com |
| Mayor Jack Whitlow | 123 E Main, Port Lavaca TX 77979 | IndianolaTrader@Yahoo.com |



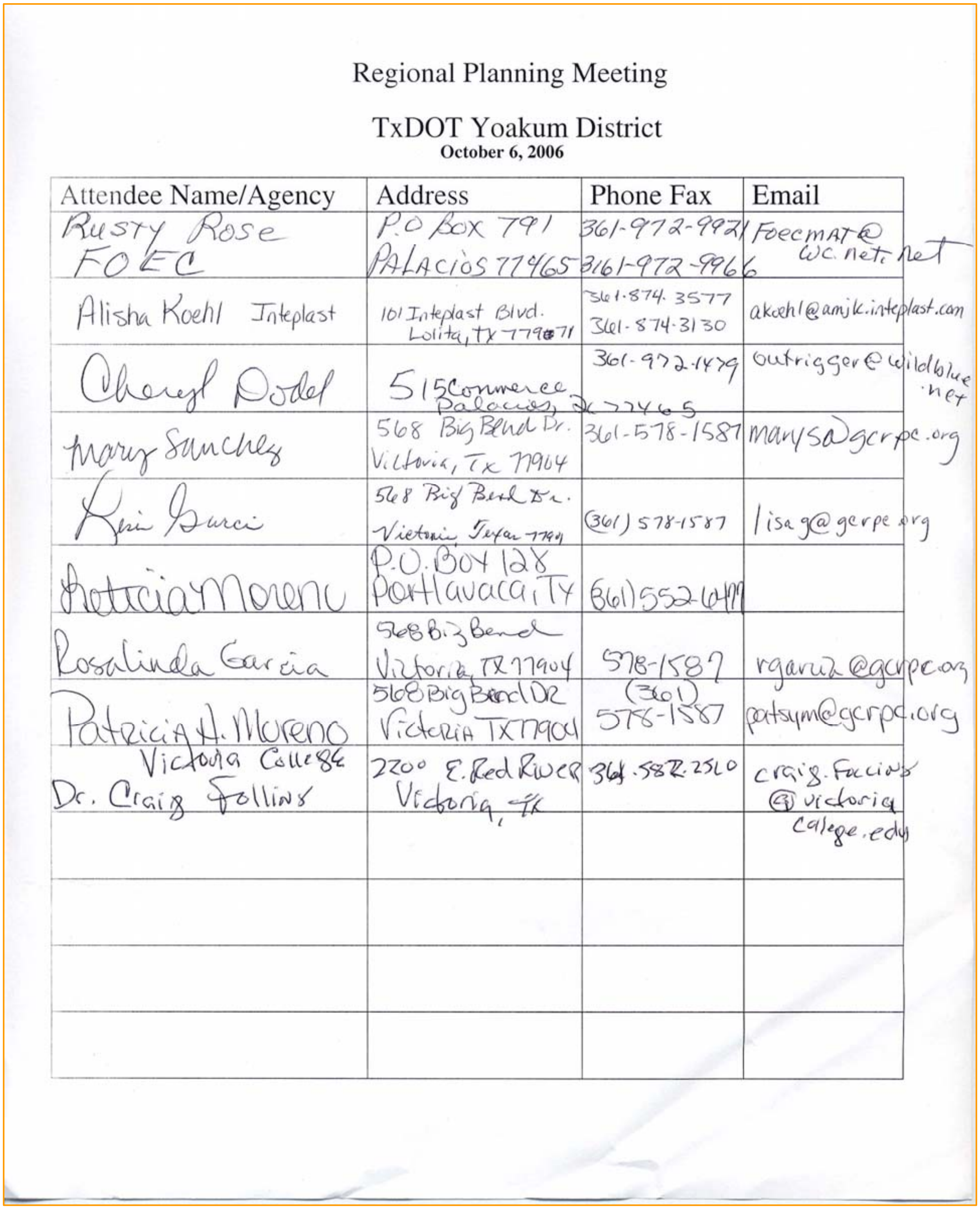
## Golden Crescent Regional Transportation Coordination Plan Public Meeting

Sign-In Sheet
Wednesday, June 28 – 6 p.m.
Gonzales Commissioner's Court Room, Gonzales, Texas

| Name | Address | Phone/Email |
|---|---|---|
| Robert Cornett | 1039 E. St. Hwy 97 | 830 857 5760 |
| Sandra Heber | P.O. Box 1834 - Gonzales, TX 78629 | 830-672-7014 |
| Wanda Dyer | 403 Huck Yoakum, TX | 361-293-4395 |
| Rosalinda Garcia | 568 Big Bend Victoria, TX | 361 578-1587 |
| Mary Sanchez | 568 Big Bend Dr. Victoria, TX 77904 | 361-578-1587 |
| Lisa Garcia | 1908 N. Laurent, #110 Victoria, Tx. 77901 | 361-578-8725 |

# *Appendix D*

## PILOT PROJECT WORKSHOP SIGN-IN SHEET



Regional Planning Meeting

TxDOT Yoakum District

**October 6, 2006**

| Attendee Name/Agency | Address | Phone Fax | Email |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rusty Rose<br>FOEC | P.O Box 791<br>Palacios 77465 | 361-972-9921<br>361-972-9966 | Foecmat@wc.net. net |
| Alisha Koehl Inteplast | 101 Inteplast Blvd.<br>Lolita, TX 77971 | 361.874.3577<br>361-874-3130 | akoehl@amjk.inteplast.com |
| Cheryl Dodd | 515 Commerce<br>Palacios, TX 77465 | 361-972-1479 | outrigger@wildblue.net |
| Mary Sanchez | 568 Big Bend Dr.<br>Victoria, Tx 77904 | 361-578-1587 | marysa@gcrpc.org |
| Lisa Garcia | 568 Big Bend Dr.<br>Victoria Texas 77904 | (361) 578-1587 | lisag@gcrpc.org |
| Leticia Moreno | P.O. Box 128<br>Port Lavaca, TX | (361) 552-6477 | |
| Rosalinda Garcia | 568 Big Bend<br>Victoria, TX 77904 | 578-1587 | rgarcia@gcrpc.org |
| Patricia H. Moreno | 568 Big Bend DR<br>Victoria TX 77904 | (361)<br>578-1587 | patsym@gcrpc.org |
| Victoria College<br>Dr. Craig Follins | 2200 E. Red River<br>Victoria, TX | 361.582.2510 | craig.follins@victoriacollege.edu |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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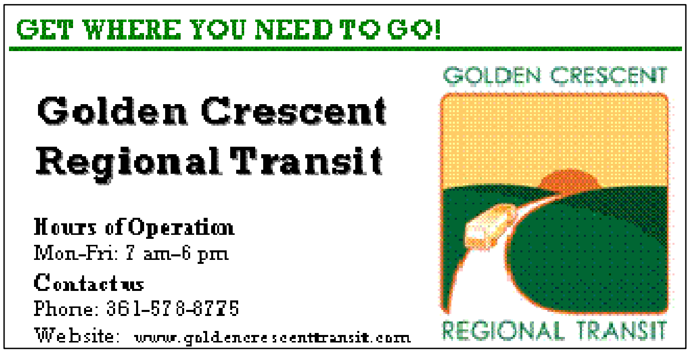
# *Appendix E*

## MARKETING MATERIALS

### *Magnet*


GOLDEN CRESCENT
REGIONAL TRANSIT

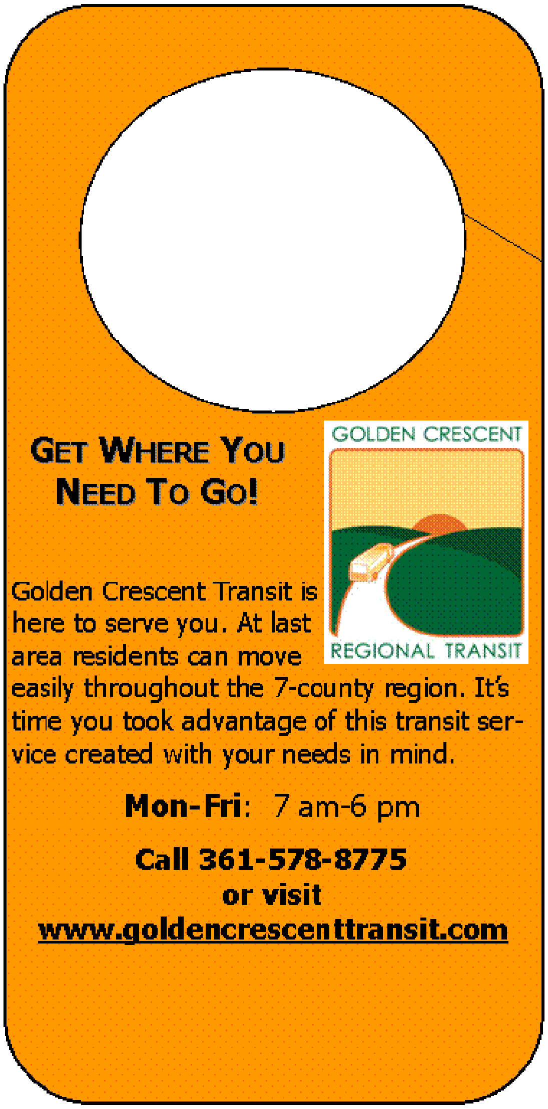
GET WHERE YOU NEED TO GO!

**Golden Crescent Regional Transit**

**Hours of Operation**
Mon-Fri: 7 am–6 pm

**Contact us**
Phone: 361-578-8775
Website: www.goldencrescenttransit.com

### *Door Hanger*


GOLDEN CRESCENT
REGIONAL TRANSIT

**Get Where You Need To Go!**

Golden Crescent Transit is here to serve you. At last area residents can move easily throughout the 7-county region. It's time you took advantage of this transit service created with your needs in mind.

**Mon-Fri**: 7 am-6 pm

**Call 361-578-8775**
**or visit**
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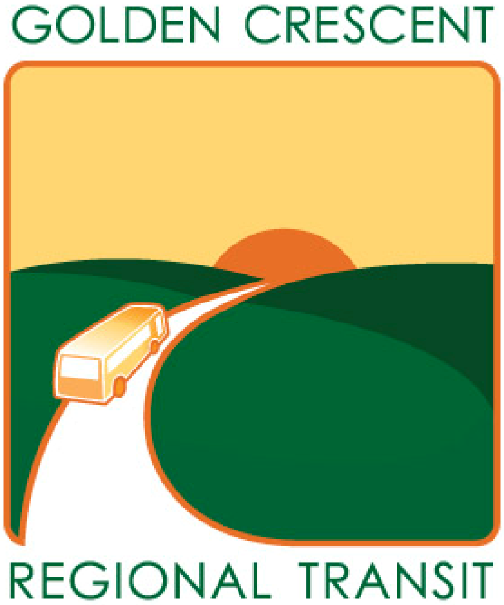
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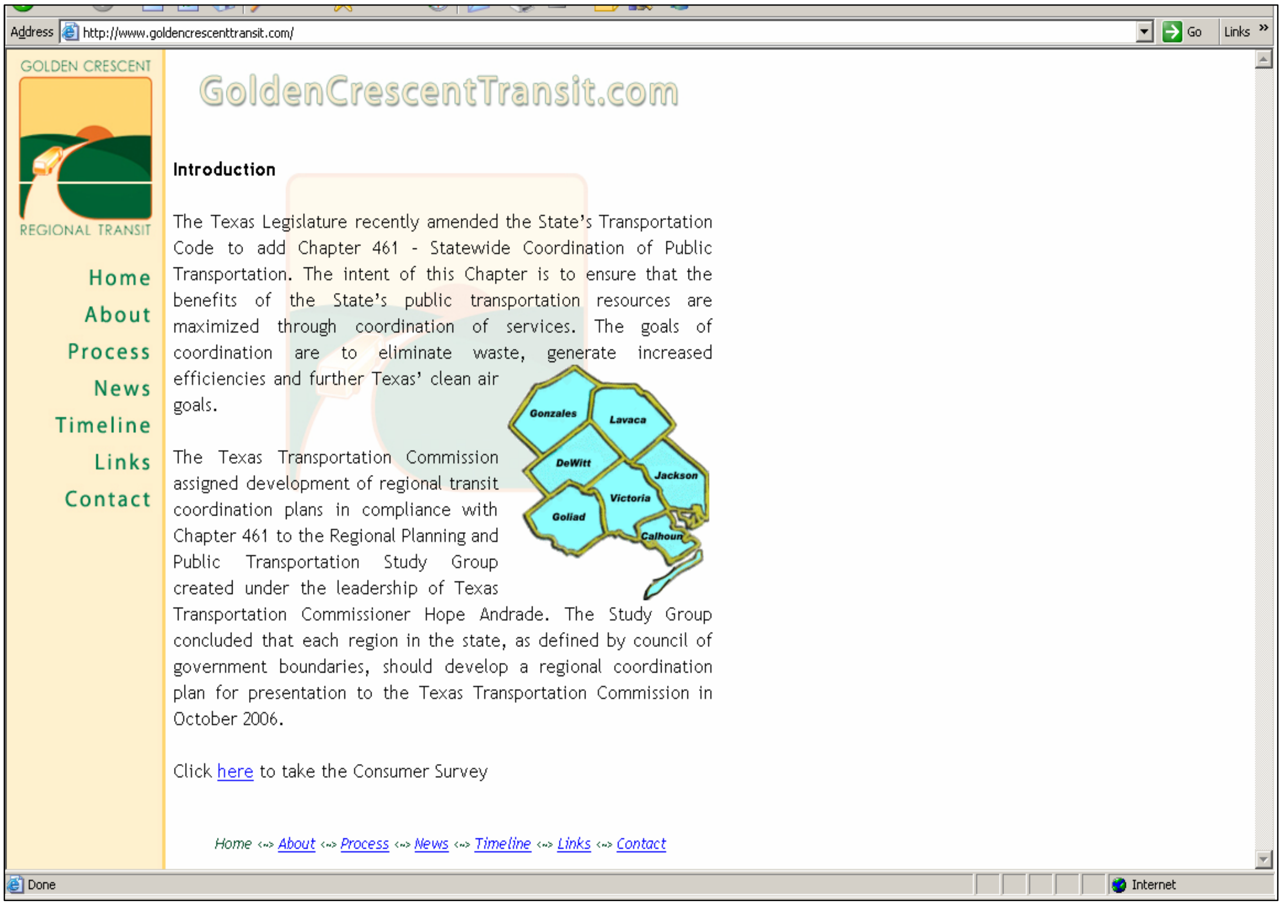
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**Introduction**

The Texas Legislature recently amended the State's Transportation Code to add Chapter 461 - Statewide Coordination of Public Transportation. The intent of this Chapter is to ensure that the benefits of the State's public transportation resources are maximized through coordination of services. The goals of coordination are to eliminate waste, generate increased efficiencies and further Texas' clean air goals.

The Texas Transportation Commission assigned development of regional transit coordination plans in compliance with Chapter 461 to the Regional Planning and Public Transportation Study Group created under the leadership of Texas Transportation Commissioner Hope Andrade. The Study Group concluded that each region in the state, as defined by council of government boundaries, should develop a regional coordination plan for presentation to the Texas Transportation Commission in October 2006.

Click here to take the Consumer Survey

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# *Appendix F*

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

### Student Transportation Survey

**Please take a few minutes to answer these questions about the transportation you use to get to and from campus.**

Your Zip Code ________

1. Approximately how far do you live from campus?

   A. Don't know
   B. I live on campus
   C. Less than 0.5 mile
   D. 0.5 - 0.9 mile
   E. 1 - 2 miles
   F. 3 - 5 miles
   G. 6 -10 miles
   H. 11 - 15 miles
   I. 16 - 20 miles
   J. 21 -30 miles
   K. 31 - 40 miles
   L. 41 - 50 miles
   M. More than 50 miles

2. Which of these best describes your current housing?

   A. Apartment
   B. House or duplex
   C. University residence hall
   D. University-owned apartment

3. What is your primary mode of transportation to campus this semester?

   A. Live on campus
   B. Drive alone
   C. Carpool (2 or more people)
   D. Motorcycle, motorized scooter, or moped
   E. Public Transportation – Bus
   F. Public Transportation – Rural Service
   G. Bicycle
   H. Walk
   I. Other non-motorized transport (Rollerskate, skateboard, scooter, etc.)
   J. Other ____________________________________________

4. If you use public transit to get to school, which of the following reasons are important to your decision? Select all that apply

   A. Less expensive than driving
   B. Disabled access
   C. Safety
   D. Lack of parking on and near campus

E. Cost of parking on and near campus
F. Shorter travel time
G. Avoid traffic
H. Better for the environment
I. Don't own a motor vehicle
J. Can read or do work during commute

5. If you changed your primary mode of transportation in the last year, what were your reasons? Select all that apply

A. Moved to new location
B. Child care changes
C. Increased parking costs
D. Lack of parking on and near campus
E. Increased traffic in Victoria or around campus
F. Change in work location
G. Change in class or work schedule
H. Change in public transit routes or service
I. Discounted public transportation tickets
J. University carpool program
K. Increases in public transit fares
L. Safety factors
M. Availability of bicycle routes or bicycle parking
N. Higher fuel prices
O. Concern for the environment
P. Acquired new vehicle
Q. Learned about public transportation opportunities

6. If you bicycle to campus, which of the following programs and amenities are important to you? Select all that apply

A. Bike racks near destination
B. Secure bicycle parking near destination
C. Showers and locker facilities
D. Designated bicycle routes on campus
E. Designated bicycle routes off campus
F. Ability to take bicycle on public transit
G. Free bicycle license and renewal

7. If you do NOT currently bicycle to campus, which programs and amenities would make you more likely to do so? Select as many as apply

A. More bike racks
B. More secure bicycle parking
C. More designated bicycle routes on campus
D. More designated bicycle routes off campus
E. Discounted safety and security items like locks, helmets, and light
F. Facilities on campus for bicycle repair and maintenance
G. Bicycle technique and safety classes

8. If you drive a car to campus, which of the following factors are important in your decision? Select all that apply

A. Shorter commute time
B. Lower commute cost
C. More flexibility in when I arrive at and depart campus
D. I can more easily make stops on the way to or from campus

E. Personal safety

9. If you drive to campus, where do you usually park?

A. Metered on-street parking
B. Unmetered on-street parking
C. University lot or structure
D. Off street, free
E. City parking garage
F. Other paid parking
G. Designated disabled parking spot (on or off campus)

10. If you ever WALK to campus, which of the following programs and amenities are important to you? Select all that apply

A. Lighting for routes on campus
B. Lighting for routes off campus
C. Traffic signals (lights) at crosswalks
D. Stop signs at crosswalks
E. Clearly painted crosswalks
F. Campus night escort service

11. What is your current schedule?

| | Hour | Min | AM/PM |
|---|---|---|---|
| MWF | ________ | ________ | ________ |
| TT | ________ | ________ | ________ |

List your other schedule needs (i.e., evening classes, labs, studios, weekends, etc.)
________________________________________________________________

12. What would make using public transportation inconvenient for you to get to school?

A. The bus stop is far from home
B. The buses do not come frequently
C. The buses do not arrive according to schedule
D. Too many transfers
E. Takes too long
F. I need the car at lunchtime
G. It's too expensive
H. I am not familiar with the schedule or pick-up/drop-off locations
I. Other reasons ____________________________________________________

*Please provide the information below (OPTIONAL)*

*Name:*

*Address:*

*Phone:*

*Gender:*

*What year in school are you:*

# *Appendix G*

## VOLUNTEER DRIVER GUIDELINES

## *Risks and Insurance*

### Characteristics of a Sponsoring Organization

The Legally Constituted Organization (Sponsoring Organization) is the key element in the development and operation of a volunteer driver program. A Sponsoring Organization:

1. Should assure that the Sponsoring Organization itself is protected and that it has sufficient organizational strength and structure to manage a volunteer driver program.
2. May choose to limit the exposure of their volunteers, their governing board, and their staff. It is possible for a Sponsoring Organization, private for-profit or non-profit, to amend its Articles of Incorporation to indemnify Directors and Officers, staff and agents (including volunteers) and to shield their personal assets from judgments in lawsuits for negligence.
3. Must carry public liability insurance in order for RCW 4.24.670 to limit liability of volunteers. Under this RCW, a volunteer of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity shall not be personally liable for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer as long as they are performing within the scope of their duties. The harm cannot have been caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights and safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer.

### Limiting Financial Exposure Related to Risk

The following are options for limiting the financial exposure of a Sponsoring Organization for risks associated with Volunteer Driver Programs.

1. Purchasing Insurance, see "Insurance" below.
2. Waivers, Releases, Agreements to Participate, and Indemnification: These are all processes that a Sponsoring Organization, public or private, can use to limit and/or share program risks with riders and referring authorities. These procedures may be used when requested transportation is deemed to have special circumstances or risks.
3. The information and forms are samples only and should be reviewed by local attorneys with experience in this area of law.

### What Type of Insurance is Needed?

As described in the previous section, insurance is an important part of limiting the financial exposure due to the risks associated with operating a passenger transportation program. Sponsoring Organizations should consider the information below when deciding what type and level of insurance they should carry.

## Auto and Business Insurance

The Sponsoring Organization should maintain insurance coverage or self-insurance coverage that essentially covers the exposures addressed by the following policies:

1. Comprehensive General Liability: Coverage shall include, but is not limited to, contractual liability, products and completed operations, property damage, and employer's liability. Names of individuals insured should include directors and officers, employees, representatives, agents, and volunteers. Properly structured, this coverage will include employment practices, errors and omissions, directors and officers, and volunteer's personal liability. Coverage should be set at a minimum $1 million for each incident.
2. Business Auto Liability: The volunteer's own automobile insurance is primary. The Sponsoring Organization's business auto liability would be secondary. The Sponsoring Organization should be sure that their policy covers non-owned and for hire vehicles. Generally this policy would be in equal million dollar limits. Business Auto Coverage for any auto no less than $1 million each accident is recommended.
3. Umbrella/Excess Liability: General liability and auto liability can be included under the umbrella. Many non-profit organizations are currently carrying $5 million of umbrella excess liability coverage.
4. Volunteer/Employee Dishonesty: This insurance covers theft of funds and/or supplies by volunteers or staff. Most organizations will already have this coverage, sometimes called "bonding." Policies should be checked to insure each volunteer even though the risk may be low.
5. Directors and Officers Liability Insurance: If not covered by General Liability Insurance, Directors and Officers (D&O) coverage or Errors and Omissions (E&O) coverage can be purchased. This coverage should include liability due to employment practices, which can involve treatment of volunteers. Included in the coverage can be all past, present and future directors and officers, employees, volunteers, trustees, committee members, and the entity itself.
6. Volunteers' Liability Insurance: As an alternative to, or in addition to other existing liability coverage, the Sponsoring Organization should consider participating in a volunteers' liability insurance program. This insurance typically provides coverage for medical treatment when the volunteer is injured during their volunteer services.

## Medical Insurance

It is important that the Sponsoring Organization recognize that vehicle insurance does not cover injuries that may happen while the volunteer is involved in activities separate from operation of the vehicle. Many volunteers are retired persons who may have inadequate or no medical insurance coverage.

The risks to the volunteers can be covered by a variety of methods. Medical or accident insurance provides excess accident medical coverage directly to a volunteer when he or she is injured traveling directly to or from, or participating in, volunteer activities. If Medicare covers the volunteer, the coverage would be in addition to that coverage. If the volunteer has no other coverage, the policy would be primary.

Consider the following information when deciding the type of medical insurance your organization should use:

1. Under the RCW 51.12.035-1, state agencies and their subsets are required to document all volunteers' hours for the purposes of reporting to the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). There is a small hourly charge (currently $.06). The hours are reported monthly on the form that an organization submits to L&I. The coverage is restricted to treatment of injuries, including therapy.
2. Some public entities and non-profit organizations can elect to extend L&I coverage to their volunteers. This may vary in different states. The reporting mechanism and coverage is the same as for state agencies. A Sponsoring Organization that elects this option must pay for coverage for all volunteer's hours donated, not just the hours spent working in a particular job, e.g., volunteer driving.
3. Excess coverage (over and above volunteer's personal coverage) can be purchased from private insurance companies that have designed policies for this market. Like the L&I coverage, most companies require all volunteers to be covered, not just those that are volunteering in one program, like transportation. Coverage is typically limited to $25,000.

### What about Operating Across State Lines?

If a program operates vans across state lines and receives funding for those operations the program must complete the Federal Registration process. Completion of this process may affect the levels of insurance that the Sponsoring Organization must carry and require other changes in the operation of the volunteer driver program.

### *Importance of Community Relations*

The drivers for the Sponsoring Organization will influence the opinion and image that people in the community have of the Sponsoring Organization. The way each volunteer driver performs his or her duties will contribute, either favorably or unfavorably, to the Sponsor's image. The reality of providing public transportation service is that the public expects proficient driving; they take good performance for granted and are quick to complain about poor performance. Well-defined and communicated policies can assist with public perception.

### What Types of Personnel Policies Should Be in Place?

Many funding agencies require Sponsoring Organizations to have specific written policies in place. These policies apply to volunteers as well as paid employees. The following policies are recommended:

1. Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA): Operation of a volunteer transportation program may trigger responsibilities for compliance of Title III of the ADA. Those responsibilities depend on the legal status of the sponsor and/or the types and modes of other transportation services that are operated. Persons with certain disabilities cannot be transported in private cars. However, those persons may need to be referred to appropriate alternate service providers. If the POV service is on a donation basis, any

costs related to the alternative services may need to be absorbed by the Sponsoring Organization.

- Ethics
- Code of Conduct
- Drug Free Workplace
- Harassment
- Confidentiality
- Reporting Suspected Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment, and Exploitation
- Drug Testing: Drivers, including volunteers, of vehicles that have been manufactured to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, must have a valid commercial driver's license (CDL) with a passenger endorsement. Note that drivers holding a CDL must be included in a drug and alcohol testing program that complies with U.S. Department of Transportation regulations.

Note: While all of the above policies are recommended, many of the policies are required by various funding sources. Sponsoring Organizations should check with their funding agencies to determine what policies are required.

### Are Volunteers Reimbursed?

Most Sponsoring Organizations reimburse volunteers for mileage and other authorized expenses. The Sponsoring Organization should have a form to be used by POV volunteers to document mileage and other expenses. The reimbursement should be based on the same current mileage rate used for paid employees. Reimbursement for other expenditures, such as meals, should be based on the actual expense the volunteer incurred or on a per-diem rate.

### What About Funding?

Sponsoring Organizations should carefully weigh the contractual requirements of available funding sources. Many potential transportation-funding sources are currently difficult to administer in relationship to the operation of a volunteer transportation program. Potential problem areas are related to drug testing, driver certification, required training, record keeping, billing, accounting and audit procedures.

## *Important Information about Riders*

This section contains information on policies and practices related specifically to persons who use the services provided by the Sponsoring Organization.

### Who Are the Riders?

Riders of volunteer transportation networks are typically persons with special transportation needs including their personal attendants. However, some funding agencies, due to requirements associated with the funding program, may also that the service be available to the general public.

### Should Riders Be Registered?

Sponsoring Organizations should register all riders they provide service to. Some funding agencies require specific information regarding riders. All riders, including escorts and children, should be registered separately. This information will be used to:

1. Determine program eligibility
2. Provide the Sponsoring Organization with emergency medical information. Including, but not limited to:
    a. Name and phone number of emergency contact person
    b. Name and phone number of personal physician
    c. Advanced Medical Directives
    d. Living Will
    e. Non-Resuscitation
    f. Organ Donation.
3. Determine the most appropriate mode of transportation
4. Provide needed data to funding agencies.

### Rider Identification

Riders should be encouraged to have photo identification, either in the form of a driver's license or state identification card that they can obtain from the Department of Licensing.

### Should Children Have Escorts?

Many Sponsoring Organizations choose to require that an adult, other than the volunteer driver, accompany riders under the age of 11. Many transit systems allow children, age of six and over, to ride unaccompanied.

### Are Rider Surveys Useful?

Riders should be surveyed on a regular basis to determine their ideas about the quality of services that they are receiving. Surveying the riders will help improve the services provided by the Sponsoring Organization.

### What About Rider Grievances?

Occasionally riders will have grievances about aspects of the program, including restrictions and/or denial of services or the quality of the service they received. Sponsoring Organizations should have both procedures and forms for handling these situations. Rider's specific complaints can be recorded them on an Incident Report. However, it is also very important that the Sponsoring Organization documents all complaints and what actions were taken as a result.

### *Establishing and Managing a Volunteer Driver Pool*

Maintaining a well trained, enthusiastic driving staff is key to the success of any volunteer transportation program. Whether a driver uses an agency-owned vehicle or their own vehicle (POV), he/she is responsible for the safety of all riders. There are two important features to remember when developing or managing a volunteer driver workforce. Those are:

1. It is important to recognize that all drivers, whether using agency vehicles or their personal vehicles, should be appropriately trained to safely carry out their responsibilities.
2. All volunteer drivers who operate agency vehicles should follow the same policies and procedures as paid drivers (if any) operating similar vehicles for the Sponsoring Organization.

Sponsoring Organizations have the responsibility of assuring that transportation volunteers and staff have the tools necessary to be successful in their positions. Success depends on proper selection and management of volunteer and paid drivers including quality program orientation, training and evaluation.

### How to Select Drivers

Sponsoring Organizations should ensure that all volunteer recruiting, screening, interviewing and selection processes are objective and free from discrimination. Potential volunteer drivers should begin the process by filling out an initial application form.

### Specific Qualifications:

To protect the safety of passengers, minimum volunteer driver qualifications should be established. These include but are not limited to:

1. The driver should be at least 21 years of age.
2. Possess a valid driver's license appropriate for the type of vehicle to be operated.
3. Provide a minimum of two excellent references.
4. Be able to operate the assigned equipment.
5. Willing to attend required training courses and to follow the Sponsoring Organization's policies.
6. Not have a history of crimes against a person.
7. Have a self-declared ability to physically carry out the essential job functions as listed in the job description. [Form 8: Statement of Medical Condition]
8. Not have an uncontrolled chronic illness such as epilepsy, diabetes, heart or respiratory problems. When indicated, a driver must be willing to provide a physician's statement qualifying him/her as physically able to drive. Suggested form is the one that goes with acquisition of a Commercial Drivers License (CDL). If the driver does not have medical insurance, the Sponsoring Organization may choose to pay for the physical exam.
9. Not abuse alcohol, drugs, and/or medication.

### Driving History Requirements

To protect the Sponsoring Organization, and the passengers they serve, minimum driving history information should be gathered. To determine the eligibility of volunteer drivers, based on driving history, the following guidelines may be used:

1. Paid or volunteer drivers are eligible to transport riders when their three-year unrestricted driving history (as recorded by the Department of Licensing) totals no more than four points on the rating scale.
2. Drivers are required to inform the sponsoring agency if they no longer meet the eligibility requirements due to moving violations and/or collisions that may make them ineligible.
3. The driving history should be re-checked annually, for cause, or because of reasonable suspicion.

### How Should Drivers Be Selected?

As a provider of services to vulnerable populations, the Sponsoring Organization is responsible for following a proper selection process. This will minimize the chance of being challenged about those processes. The driver selection process should include the following:

1. Prospective volunteer reads and becomes familiar with the job description.
2. Applicant completes a position application at the Sponsoring Organization's offices.
3. Applicant completes a Statement of Understanding.
4. Manager reviews the application.
5. Manager conducts a personal interview (or phone interview).
6. A report from the Department of Licensing is obtained.
7. A Criminal Record Check that covers the maximum time period possible. Two types of checks can be done. The first check, done under the Criminal Records Privacy Act (Chapter 10.97 RCW), and the second done under the Child and Adult Abuse Information Act (RCW 43.43.830-.845).
8. A Federal Bureau of Investigation National (FBI) Criminal Records Check should be done if the applicant has not lived in the state for three (3) years. It is suggested that local law enforcement agencies be used to properly complete the fingerprints. The FBI blue form (FD 258) is available through law enforcement authorities, but is not downloadable. The FBI will not take copies. The current charge is $24. The FBI provides information that the person has, or has not, committed disqualifying crimes.
9. If the driver will be using his or her own vehicle, the applicant's proof of insurance (Accord Form) should be checked for compliance with program standards. A copy of the Accord Form should be placed in the driver's file (when established).
10. If the prospective driver does not own an automobile then he/she must have an insurable record.
11. Once all steps have been completed, the applicant is selected and a driver file is established.

### Can Drivers Be Disqualified?

Occasionally, a new volunteer will be unable to successfully complete the required training courses, or a tenured driver will fail to maintain prescribed rider relations or safety standards. Complete, objective, written documentation is an essential part of any disqualification process.

Sponsoring Organizations must be able to objectively defend their decisions when challenged. Disqualifications that prevent hiring include but are not limited to:

1. Not in possession of a valid, appropriate, drivers license and/or insurance.
2. Physical restrictions preventing safe and proper handling of riders based on essential job functions listed in the job description.
3. Criminal history includes disqualifying crimes.
4. Inability to read/comprehend written materials, including road maps.
5. Reporting to training/work under the influence of a controlled substance, alcohol or medications that affect driving abilities.
6. Unwillingness to perform essential job functions.
7. Failure to adequately respond to instructions.

### Driver Review Process

In the event that a driver is involved in a moving violation and/or a collision the manager must be notified. The Manager should determine whether or not a review is warranted. The following process is recommended for review of moving violations and collisions:

1. The Manager will request a written explanation about the collision/s.
2. The Manager will review the driver's file and collision information and make a recommendation on the driver's continued eligibility or the need for additional training.
   a. When reviewing eligibility, the Manager considers driving-related complaints or the need for additional training. The suggested maximum is three complaints or fewer, based on the severity of complaints.
   b. The suggested method of reviewing complaints is to randomly call other riders for comments on the driver being reviewed.

### Driver Suspension or Termination

Occasionally, drivers must be suspended or terminated as a result of violations to the Sponsoring Organization's policies or complaints received by riders. Grounds for termination include but are not limited to:

1. Any time a current driver does not meet the requirements to be a new driver.
2. Theft.
3. Violence.
4. Reporting to work under the influence of a controlled substance, alcohol, or medications that affect driving abilities, based on the standards of the Drug Free Workplace Act.
5. Reporting to work under the influence of medication that has not been reported to and approved by the Sponsoring Organization.
6. Violations of the Drivers Code of Conduct.
7. Suspension or loss of driver's license or insurance.

8. Violation of program confidentiality or conflict of interest policies.
9. Repeated collisions or a single serious collision.
10. False documentation of program records.
11. Violation of Sponsoring Organization's Ethics Policy.
12. Violation of the Sponsoring Organization's Harassment Policy.

### Reasons for Intervention

A Sponsoring Organization may choose an intervention program for less serious offences than those listed above. Such offences include, but are not limited to:

1. Moving violations.
2. Acquiring three points on the evaluation scale.
3. Rider complaint about driving performance or rider relations abilities.
4. Staff or driver observation of changes in the ability to perform essential job responsibilities.
5. Improper program documentation.

### Performance Evaluations Are Important

A Sponsoring Organization must have a plan for conducting regular performance evaluations for all volunteer drivers. Evaluations serve as an important tool for both the Sponsoring Organization and volunteer. This provides an excellent opportunity for the manager to provide feedback to the volunteer about their performance; and provide the volunteer an opportunity to address issues they may be encountering. Factors to consider when establishing an evaluation process:

1. Sponsors are encouraged to establish a schedule whereby all volunteers and staff receive at least annual performance evaluations.
2. The evaluation process should include a road performance evaluation for drivers.
3. The Manager or designee should ride along with the drivers while they are performing their duties. Attention should be paid to vehicle operations, rider care and general ability to meet program standards.
4. Performance evaluations are essential in securing equitable insurance rates and identifying drivers who may need intervention training or who should no longer transport riders.
5. Following a performance evaluation, the Manager and volunteer should meet to discuss the observations.
6. The performance evaluation and discussion should be documented and signed and become a permanent part of the personnel file.
7. If needed, a plan should be developed and additional training provided. Documentation of improvement should be included in the driver's file.

8. "Objective" documentation is always written, and it refers to what was seen, heard or measured. Objective documentation is not what was "felt" or "sensed", which is "subjective". Objective documentation of performance should be an on-going and common occurrence. This documentation is necessary for tracking driver development and for defense in litigation.
9. The Sponsoring Organization should establish a program of regular recognition for the volunteers.

### What Happens When Volunteers Leave the Program?

It is unfortunate when volunteers leave a program. There are many valid reasons for this occurring: diminished health, increasing age, moving, going on to other volunteer work, etc. When a volunteer decides to leave, the Manager should schedule an Exit Interview. The interview can be done over the phone. The interview provides an opportunity to receive feedback about the volunteer's experiences.

### What Type of Identification Should the Driver Use?

Photo identification cards are recommended for all volunteer drivers. The cards should identify the volunteer as a representative of the Sponsoring Organization. The cards assure the rider that the driver is a currently registered driver for the Sponsoring Organization. I.D. cards can be easily made using an instant or digital camera to take a picture of the driver. The resulting card can then laminated or inserted into a simple convention badge blank. The I.D. card should be collected at retirement or termination.

### *Training Volunteer Drivers*

The quality of service and the Sponsoring Organization's access to insurance depend upon the driver's ability to effectively interact with the community and to safely operate specialized vehicles. Drivers who transport community members are legally held to a higher degree of care than any other driver on the road. A Sponsoring Organization should require specific training for all drivers operating vehicles or providing transportation services as part of a volunteer driver program. Training for all volunteers should be structured to conform to the duties in the job description. Programs should either identify a staff person or persons to be a trainer or can arrange for timely access to other trainers.

***Note:*** Many funding agencies require certain types of training for volunteer drivers. Sponsoring Organizations should check with their respective funding agencies for their specific requirements.

### What About the Cost of Training?

The Sponsoring Organization should provide the required training at no cost to active volunteers. To ease the burden of the cost of outside training, the Sponsoring Organization may be able to get assistance by the following:

1. Requesting technical assistance from other transportation providers.
2. Take advantage of low-cost training that is available.
3. Request scholarships through the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP).

### Documentation is Important

Sponsoring Organizations are responsible for assuring their volunteers are current with all training requirements and that driver files are properly maintained with the appropriate certificates of training completion. Training documentation, including certificates of completion, should be maintained in driver files.

### Why Use a Driver Training Checklist?

A training checklist form should be used to document the training progress of transportation volunteers. The Training Checklist should be updated each time a training course is completed. In addition, Sponsoring Organizations should require that the drivers sign a statement acknowledging the training they received. Sponsoring Organization may maintain a signature form for each training session or develop a composite form.

### Recommended Types of Training

Below are specific types of training that are recommended for all volunteer driver programs.

### Orientation/Logistics

Driver orientation training should cover all of the aspects that would usually be explained to any new employee, e.g., organizational mission and values, job description, expectations, completion of forms, reporting requirements, vehicle operation, public relations, ethics, code of conduct, harassment policies, and reimbursement procedures. [Attachment 5: Driver Orientation]

### Vehicle Operation, Lift Operation, Wheelchair Securement, and Road Experience

Upon acceptance of a volunteer, the volunteer driver should be given training on vehicle operations, lift operations and wheelchair securement. In addition, road experience observation and testing must be completed prior to transporting passengers. For drivers who only use their personal vehicles, vehicle orientation with lift operation and wheelchair securement is not required. However, road experience observation and testing is required for all drivers. All training should be documented and become a permanent part of the volunteer's personnel file.

[Note: Road testing should be repeated at least annually and for cause with all drivers. This is an opportunity to identify volunteers who may have developed undesirable driving habits or may be experiencing effects of aging that can affect driving ability.]

### Controlling Exposure to Blood borne Pathogens

Each Sponsoring Organization should provide appropriate training on transmission of Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other blood borne pathogens. Sponsoring Organizations should develop a plan to minimize exposure. The plan should be reviewed at least annually to ensure proper effectiveness in minimizing exposure. The controls contained in the plan are designed to be a guide for programs when designing their exposure control procedures. Blood borne pathogen control training should be provided to volunteers prior to transporting or assisting riders in the Sponsoring Organization's vehicles.

Sponsoring Organizations should consider the following practices in relation to Blood borne Pathogens:

1. Volunteers should sign a document verifying receipt of the instructions and their understanding of proper blood borne exposure control procedures.
2. All vehicles used to transport riders should have a Body Fluid Precaution Kit stored in a convenient location inside the vehicle. Body Fluid Precaution Kits differ from First Aid kits in that they contain products and equipment to minimize exposure to infectious body fluids. The Red Cross provides instructions on how to make the kits.
3. The driver should document any exposure to body fluids. They may do this with the Exposure Incident Report Form and report. The form and report should then be turned in to the Manager.
4. The Manager should conduct a post-exposure evaluation and document any recommendations for follow-up.

[Note: Training on Blood borne pathogens is recommended for all volunteer programs; however, many funding agencies require this training be given to volunteers.]

### Defensive Driving Training

Within 60 days following the initial driving assignment all drivers should complete an approved Defensive Driving Course (FLI/National Safety Council or Equivalent). This training is available through a variety of sources and formats and may soon be available through the Internet in a self-paced, self-scored format.

### Passenger Assistance and Sensitivity Training

Within 60 days following the initial driving assignment, all volunteer drivers should have Passenger Assistance Training (PAT), CTAA Passenger Service and Safety Certification training (PASS), or an equivalent course. This training should emphasize sensitivity and assistance to elderly and persons with disabilities, communication with riders, and blood borne pathogen exposure control.

### Car Seats and Child Securement

All drivers that are going to transport children in any vehicle should have training in current State and Federal requirements for car seats and booster chairs. In addition, they should be trained on how to properly install these devices.

Keep the following in mind when addressing the transportation of children:

1. It is recommended that vehicles owned by the Sponsoring Organization be equipped with child seats and booster chairs that can be properly fitted to the vehicle.
2. If the volunteer is using their POV, take care to ensure that the car seat or booster chair can be properly fitted to the vehicle.
3. Car seats provided by the rider's parents or personal representatives must not be used in either private automobiles or in the Sponsoring Organization's vehicles. This is because the privately owned car seat or booster chair may:

   a. Not be a currently approved design
   b. Have been in use during an accident
   c. Be more than six years of age
   d. Not be securable given the design of the car seat in comparison to the vehicle's seat belts

4. Drivers should be trained about proper seating positions related to operational airbags. Riding in a seat equipped with air bags can be dangerous even for adults with small statures.

**CPR and First Aid, and Emergency Response**

First Aid and CPR training is optional for all drivers. Risk management professionals differ on the liability benefits and/or detriments of this training. Each Sponsoring Organization should develop a policy on this issue. If the training is not required, drivers should be trained how to access available emergency services. All of the Sponsoring Organization's vehicles should be equipped with two-way radios, cell phones or other communication devices that reliably operate in the service area. Some programs have developed cell phone loan programs for their POV drivers. An excellent source of Emergency Response training is the RTAP video and workbook, Emergency Procedures for Rural Transit Drivers.

**Gatekeeper Training**

All transportation volunteers should receive Gatekeeper training to give volunteer drivers a broad orientation to the social service network in the service area. With Gatekeeper training drivers can make appropriate referrals for other services that riders may need. The training on confidentiality can be included in the Gatekeeper training curriculum.

**Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment, and Exploitation**

Certain defined professionals are required to report suspected abuse, neglect, abandonment, and exploitation of vulnerable adults and children. Social service program volunteers may be subject to these. Sponsoring Organizations should provide training on these issues and document completion of the training.

**Drug- Free Workplace**

All volunteers must have training about the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act. Sponsoring Organizations should document the driver's understanding of this training.

***Managing Vehicle Operations***

This section contains guidelines for the day-to-day management of vehicles, including private vehicles, used to provide passenger transportation services.

**Inspect the Vehicle Daily**

To ensure the safety of both the passenger and the volunteer driver and make sure that all of the vehicle equipment is in proper working order, vehicles used to provide passenger transportation should be inspected daily. This is commonly called a pre-trip inspection. This is should be done with both POVs and the Sponsoring Organization's vehicles, and should be completed prior to departing to pick up a rider. To accomplish this:

1. All drivers should be provided with information on how to properly inspect the vehicle.
2. Drivers should complete a pre-trip inspection even when using their own vehicle to provide service.
3. The Sponsoring Organization should periodically include "safety reminders" with the volunteer mileage reimbursement vouchers.

### What is a Trip Plan?

Trip plans are designed to ensure the safety all drivers, including those who use their own vehicles. Sponsoring Organizations should have procedures for volunteers to follow in the event of a breakdown or accident during normal service delivery hours. Back-up plans should also be prepared for all trips provided when vehicles are loaned to other organizations or when volunteers are traveling outside the normal service area and/or service hours.

### What Should Be Done During Inclement Weather?

Every program should have a comprehensive plan for inclement weather. As technology advances accurate information is available through a variety of media including the Internet. Use the following guide when developing an Inclement Weather Plan:

1. If the Sponsoring Organization attempts service on inclement weather days, the driver can decline service if the driveway leading to the rider's location or if assisting the rider to or from the vehicle, is dangerous due to weather conditions. Sometimes the decision is made upon arrival at the rider's location.
2. If weather and road conditions deteriorate through the day, only return trips should be attempted. The Manager can determine whether hazardous road conditions warrant ceasing services.
3. Requests for urgent medical rides and life-sustaining medical trips should not be provided in private cars in inclement weather. Appropriate referrals should be made to other modes including ambulances.
4. During inclement weather, if the trip is not urgent or life sustaining (e.g., dialysis), riders should be encouraged to reschedule.

## *Vehicle Equipment and Maintenance*

Sponsoring Organizations should set minimum standards for the vehicles used to transport their riders. This requirement includes vehicles owned by volunteer drivers. This section provides some minimum standards for equipment and maintenance. Many of the same considerations for vehicles owned by the Sponsoring Organization can be applied in setting standards for POVs. The Sponsoring Organization's vans and minibuses will usually have to meet ADA requirements.

### Personally Owned Vehicles

Under state law there are minimum requirements for POVs used to provide passenger transportation services. The requirements state that the POVs shall:

1. Have a valid state license and registration.
2. Be equipped with functional heating and ventilation systems.
3. Have functioning, clean, accessible seat belts that meet state and federal guidelines.
4. Have functional doors and handles on all doors.
5. Have an accurate speedometer and odometer.
6. Have windows free from cracks; windshield chips must be properly sealed and not hinder vision.
7. Have functioning interior lighting within the passenger compartment.
8. Have adequate sidewall padding and ceiling covering.
9. Have two exterior rear view mirrors, one for each side of the vehicle
10. Not have damaged or broken seats, protruding sharp edges, etc. that may be hazardous to riders.
11. Have fully functioning lights, turn signals, and windshield wipers.
12. Have tires with tread depth exceeding state minimums.

### Annual Safety Inspections

In addition to inspecting their own vehicles, Sponsoring Organizations should require POV safety inspections as part of their annual renewal process for volunteer drivers. The volunteer should provide the Sponsoring Organization with a copy of a receipt showing that the volunteer driver has had his/her vehicle/s inspected by a qualified mechanic.

Sponsoring Organizations are encouraged to create inspection and maintenance incentive programs or cost reduction programs with local mechanics or service stations.

## *Incidents, Accidents, and Collisions*

Sponsoring Organizations should have detailed procedures for volunteers to follow in the event of incidents, accidents, and collisions. These will help minimize claims filed against the Sponsoring Organization and will provide the driver with clear directions about what the volunteer driver should do in these types of emergency situations. This section provides guidance on the types of policies and procedures that a Sponsoring Organization should implement.

### How Are Incident Reports Used?

Volunteer drivers should use Incident Reports to document rider/driver accidents or any unusual occurrences (other than vehicle collisions).
These might include:

1. Interactions with doctors and nurses
2. Gatekeeper information
3. Rider complaints

### Auto Collisions

In the event of an automobile collision, it is especially important that a Sponsoring Organization provide volunteer drivers with clear instructions on the procedures to follow. Sponsoring Organizations are encouraged to prepare accident kits for all drivers. A kit should be kept in all vehicles owned by the Sponsoring Organization and should be provided to volunteer drivers operating POVs. Volunteers should be instructed to follow the procedures contained in the accident kit.

Typically these kits include:

1. Witnesses cards
2. Measurement tool
3. Pen or pencil
4. Chalk
5. Form to diagram accident
6. Emergency numbers and procedures

### Procedures and Record Keeping

1. Complete and accurate records of any collision or claim of collision, no matter how slight, must be kept in a permanent file. "Permanent" refers to "as long as is required by law." Drivers should not admit fault to anyone other than the manager or police.
2. Any claim of bodily injury or property damage must be reported to the manager immediately. Collision reports must be completed by the driver of the vehicle and reviewed by the Manager within 24 hours.
3. All collisions, no matter how slight, should be reported to the Sponsoring Organization, and a collision report submitted. However, in the event of a serious collision, the volunteer driver should contact the Sponsoring Organization immediately. A serious collision involves severe property damage, personal injury or the potential for media involvement.

### The Collision Scene

1. In the rare case that a serious or disabling collision occurs, ideally the Manager, or designated representative, should immediately go to the scene of the collision to provide support and information. It is the responsibility of the Manager to represent the program at the collision scene in a way that avoids any further liability. The Manager should bring a camera to the scene to assist with the review process.
2. Sponsoring Organizations may want to issue a plastic placard, to the volunteer, to hang on the rear view mirror. The card should state: "I am a volunteer driver for the Sponsoring Organization. In case of an accident notify the Sponsoring Organization by calling: (phone number)." If law enforcement authorities can access the Sponsoring Organization's two-way communication system, that information should be included on the placard.

3. Because drivers can be injured or become distraught at the scene of a collision, collision procedures and guidelines should be an important part of orientation training for new drivers.
4. It is important that the driver document who was in his/her vehicle and any vehicle that was involved in the collision. This can be done with a disposable camera which is part of the vehicle's emergency equipment.

### Procedures for Managers at the Scene of a Collision

Collisions of any type can be an upsetting situation for the driver. A distraught or injured driver can increase liability for the program by what he/she says at the collision scene. For example, when a driver tells riders or bystanders, "I'm so sorry, it's my fault," the potential for claims made against the program will dramatically increase. The program should pay claim expenses it is responsible for, but it should not pay additional expenses because of erroneous statements made at the scene of the collision. Managers should consider the following factors when called to the scene of an accident:

1. Assure that riders are accounted for and are receiving proper emergency services.
2. Separate the driver from the collision scene.
3. Speak for the program and the driver.
4. The driver should be available to answer questions from police and fire authorities.

### Media Relations at the Scene of a Collision

Poor media relations at the scene of a collision can cause additional liability. Managers and program representatives should be familiar with and follow procedures when communicating with the media. Guidelines should be in place for employees or volunteers at the scene of a collision. The guidelines may include:

1. Assume the media is present.
2. Project a professional image.
3. Maintain control of the situation.
4. Do not quote hearsay or speculation.
5. Do not accept responsibility for the collision.
6. Explain "no comment" by saying, "I don't have enough information to answer that question accurately."
7. Never speak "Off the Record".
8. When interviewed on camera or video, carefully select the background. Stand in front of a neutral background, not in front of the crash.
9. Contact the Sponsoring Organization immediately in the event of a serious collision.

### Collision Review

A Review Committee, consisting of the Manager and other program representatives, is responsible for reviewing collision reports. In the event of a collision, the committee comes together to review the details of the collision and make recommendations. All collisions must be evaluated for preventability. In each case, preventability is evaluated on the basis of the following statement: "Did the driver do everything reasonably possible to avoid the circumstances that led to this collision?"

### *Program Records*

Sponsoring Organizations are responsible for maintaining appropriate records and for being knowledgeable about legal requirements related to timelines for maintaining records. The following is a list records that should be maintained:

### What Driver Records Should Be Maintained?

The Sponsoring Organization must have a file containing all pertinent information about each driver. The Federal Privacy Act covers volunteer drivers. All personal information about the driver should be covered by a written confidentiality policy that parallels the organization's personnel policies. The following is a list of the documents, and related information, to be maintained in driver files:

1. Original volunteer/employment application
2. Interview and reference check documentation
3. Criminal history documentation
4. Department of Licensing (DOL) history report and any subsequent history reports generated
5. Copy of current drivers license
6. Copy of training certifications
7. On-going objective documentation
8. Any documentation relevant to performance
9. Copy of current personal automobile insurance card. Insurance must be at least the State of operation’s minimum coverage requirement for POV drivers. Personal auto insurance verification must be kept current.

### How About Vehicle Records?

Programs that use volunteers to drive vehicles owned by the Sponsoring Organization must have files containing records relevant to each vehicle. Vehicles and related records should be reviewed annually. A vehicle file should contain sections where the following documentation is maintained:

1. Vehicle maintenance schedule
2. Maintenance records
3. Maintenance receipts

4. Description of maintenance completed
5. Daily pre-trip inspections
6. Inventory of safety equipment
7. Maintenance records for related safety equipment (i.e., fire extinguishers)

### What Records Should Be Kept on Riders?

Sponsoring Organizations are required to maintain specific information on the riders using the services. The rider information must be collected and properly maintained using a database or an adequate system done by hand if the agency does not have access to a computer. Rider information, collected by Sponsoring Organizations, will be used primarily for reporting purposes. In the event of an emergency, this information can also be valuable. Rider records should contain the following information:

1. Rider's name
2. Address
3. Phone number
4. Age
5. Ethnicity
6. Income level
7. Medicaid and/or other specific program eligibility
8. Mobility information (i.e., uses wheelchair or cane)
9. Disability information (i.e., cerebral palsy, legally blind)
10. Height and weight of children under six years old
11. Name, address, and phone number of emergency contact

    An individual Sponsoring Organization may require additional information for specific program purposes. To assure that rider confidentiality is maintained, Rider files must be kept in a secure location.

### How To Record Trip Information

Standard forms are used for reporting trip requests and completion. All trip requests and completed trip information must be properly documented. Trip request information should be recorded when the request is received and the trip completion information when the trip is completed. If a trip requests is deemed to be "special risk," special forms and procedures may be used for the trip. Many programs use "dispatching software" to electronically record trip information.

### Trip Requests

Sponsoring Organizations are encouraged to develop a form to record information when a trip is requested.  Requests should contain the following minimum information:

1. Date the trip request was made
2. Trip date
3. Rider name, address and phone number
4. Destination address and phone number
5. Trip purpose
6. Appointment time
7. One-way or round-trip
8. Return pick-up time
9. Special rider information (e.g., uses a wheelchair, uses a cane, escort, child restraints required)
10. Emergency contact information. This information is very useful when a child or vulnerable adult is returned to a residence where no one is home as expected. Sponsoring Organizations should develop a policy requiring a personal care attendant (PCA) if there are repeated occurrences of drivers needing to use emergency contacts.

### Trip Reports

The driver must document trip completion information. This report may be combined into the reimbursement voucher and coupled with an Incident Report, if indicated. Driver reports typically contain the following information for each trip:

1. Date
2. Driver name
3. Rider name
4. Pick-up location
5. Destination location
6. Mileage at pick-up and drop-off
7. Volunteer or paid driver hours (not including down time)
8. Status of trip (no-show, late cancel, or completed)
9. "Gatekeeper" information, if indicated

### Turndowns, Late Cancels and No-shows

To properly manage a volunteer transportation program the Sponsoring Organization needs to collect accurate information on trip request status. When a rider's trip request is turned-down, the rider cancels the ride late or does not show for the ride, this information must be recorded. The following definitions apply:

1. Turndown: A trip is recorded as a turndown when the Sponsoring Organization is unable to provide the trip. A trip can be turned down for many reasons. For example, a driver

may not be available to complete the trip, the schedule for the day may be full or the van may be down for repairs. If this occurs, the trip is recorded as a turndown. If a rider requests a round-trip ride, the result is two trip turndowns. This information is valuable in determining the unmet need in the community and for the development of funding proposals.

2. Late cancel: A trip is recorded as a late cancel when the rider cancels the scheduled trip with less than 24 hours' advance notice. If the rider had requested a round-trip, the result is two late cancels.
3. No-show: A ride is recorded as a no-show when the driver arrives at the pick-up location and the rider is not there or refuses to board. If a rider was scheduled for a round-trip, the first leg of the trip is recorded as a no-show and the return trip is recorded as a late cancel. The driver log should document rider no-shows and late cancels.

### New and Unduplicated Riders

Sponsoring Organizations may be required to report data on new and unduplicated riders. Funding agencies may require this information to be reported differently. The following serves as an explanation for reporting new and unduplicated riders:

1. New riders: When a rider registers with the program and receives his/her first ride, that person is a new rider. New riders are only recorded once.
2. Unduplicated riders: Unduplicated riders are counted based on the fiscal year. Each rider is counted only once during the fiscal year, no matter how many times he/she receives service. The unduplicated rider count is the total number of people who received rides during the year.
3. When a rider is new and receives his/her first ride, that person is a new rider and an unduplicated rider.