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Disclaimer

The contents of this plan reflect the view of the authors who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view or policies of the Federal Transit Administration, the State of Texas or the Texas Department of Transportation.

Mission Statement

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

Preface

The purpose of the Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan is to cooperatively and collectively develop an action plan for a seamless transportation system that addresses the public transit needs of the region. Central to these goals will be the emphasis on cooperation and coordination among transportation providers, regional transportation districts, and eligible clients. The plan will incorporate the development of inter-local agreements among transportation providers and across service boundaries both to eliminate overlapping service and to fill gaps where service is lacking. A comprehensive plan will include transportation for:

- Clients needing medical service
- Elderly and Disabled Transportation
- Clients of Human Services agencies
- Transportation to jobs or job training
- Emergency or Disaster Response

Goals for the Regional Service plan include but are not limited to:

- Regional Approach
 - (Encourage innovation in planning and delivery of transportation services; provide information to the public regarding available transportation choices)
- Effective Partnerships
 - (Maximize connectivity between various transportation agencies, public service agencies, and stakeholders; Maximize the use of the resources available from existing service providers; Develop a regional vehicle maintenance program)
- System Efficiency
 - (Expand the public transit system utilizing both fixed route and demand-response services, Maximize network efficiency through the use of intelligent transportation systems and travel demand management strategies)
- Environmental Quality
 - (Utilize fuel, vehicle systems, and operating practices to reduce emissions; Eliminate duplication of services; Encourage the use of public transportation over automobiles)

The Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Committee has been meeting bi-monthly since December 2005 in order to develop a regional service plan that will fit the needs of the people noted above. We will continue meeting through the end of the year 2006 at which time a new transportation service will be presented to the

public. The Committee will continue to meet at least quarterly to be sure the service plan is meeting its goals and review the potential problem areas. At least yearly, the service plan will be re-evaluated and updated as needed.

The final version of the Heart of Texas Regional Service Plan will be submitted to the Texas Department of Transportation on December 1, 2006, where it will be reviewed and presented to the Texas Transportation Commission for final approval. This service plan will determine how state and federal public transportation dollars are used beginning with the 2007 grant programs.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Section 1.1 – Purpose and Need

Public funding is provided to numerous agencies within the Heart of Texas region for the purpose of providing transportation to people with some form of limitation in their ability to be mobile. The agencies are as diverse as Waco Transit, an agency providing fixed route and demand response service in the Waco Urbanized Area, to the Heart of Texas Region MHMR Center, which provides client transportation to medical appointments, skills training and jobs. Additionally, several non-profit agencies and for-profit corporations within the region provide transportation for various purposes without the assistance of public funds. One of the overriding concerns of state policymakers has been the perceived lack of coordination between these services leading to inefficient practices and an underserved population in need of transportation. Since both state and federal funds are limited, the interest of state policymakers is to increase the efficiency of existing services thus providing more and better service without the need to increase revenues. In order to address the concerns of policymakers and to identify the long term regional public transportation needs, the public transportation stakeholders within the Heart of Texas region have developed this plan.

Section 1.2 – Review of HB 3588 and SAFETEA-LU

Section 1.2.1 - H.B. No. 3588 Chapter 461, Article 13 - Statewide Coordination of Public Transportation

Public transportation services are provided in this state by many different entities, both public and private. The multiplicity of public transportation providers and services, coupled with a lack of coordination between state oversight agencies, has generated inefficiencies, overlaps in service, and confusion for customers.

It is the intent of this program:

- (1) To eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation services;
- (2) To generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service; and
- (3) To further the state's efforts to reduce air pollution.

Section 1.2.2 - SAFETEA-LU: Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users.

This act, signed by President Bush August 10, 2005, authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

SAFETEA-LU addresses the many challenges facing our transportation system today – challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing inter-modal connectivity, and protecting the environment – as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving State and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities.

Section 1.3 – Regional Goals and Objectives

Goal #1 – Regional Approach

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

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

Objective C: Identify transportation investments requiring further study and other potential revenue sources.

Objective D: Encourage innovation in the planning and delivery of transportation services.

Objective E: Identify and utilize more effective public awareness and marketing strategies for public transit.

Goal #2 – Effective Partnerships

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

Objective B: Maximize the use of resources available from existing service providers.

Objective C: Develop a regional vehicle maintenance and group procurement program.

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

Goal #3 – System Efficiency

Objective A: Expand the public transportation system as funds and resources become available.

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

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

Objective D: Increase vehicle occupancy rates.

Goal #4 – Environmental Quality

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

Objective B: Eliminate the duplication of services.

Objective C: Promote the environmental and public health benefits of public transportation.

Objective D: Coordinate with local agencies to ensure contingency plans for energy shortages, natural or manmade disasters and other emergencies are in place to decrease a negative impact on the transportation system.

Chapter 2 - Background

Section 2.1 – Regional Description

The “Heart of Texas” region comprises six counties in the approximate center of Texas. Of these counties, Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, and Limestone, are generally rural in nature and are dominated by agricultural land uses. McLennan County contains the Waco Urbanized Area and serves as the hub for much of the economic activity within the region. Despite this, nearly 70% of the land within McLennan County is used for agricultural purposes.

The Heart of Texas region covers approximately 5,620 square miles. This makes the region slightly smaller than the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Table 2.1 provides a comparison between the Heart of Texas Region and the combined States of Connecticut & Rhode Island.

Table 2.1 – Heart of Texas Region

Geography	Area (square miles)	Population*	Population Density**
Heart of Texas	5,620	321,536	57.18
Connecticut & Rhode Island	5,890	4,453,884	756.18

*Population in 2000

**Persons per square mile

The region’s size and relatively low population density create significant challenges in the provision of public transportation. Resources are stretched because many trips must cover great distances to provide transportation for essential services, with some trips leaving the region for destinations such as Temple, Dallas or Fort Worth. One-way travel times of 60 to 90 minutes are not uncommon. This is further exacerbated by the dispersed nature of persons needing public transportation.

Rivers and streams that flow from the northwest to the southeast generally characterize the hydrology within the Heart of Texas region. The most significant rivers are the Brazos, North Bosque, Navasota and Trinity. The Brazos River creates the most significant transportation barrier for the region as it roughly divides the region in half, but has only 13 highway crossings within the region. Eight of these crossings (61.5%) are in Waco. Outside of Waco this results in an average of one crossing every 29 miles. There are 4 significant lakes that are at least partly in the region, each creating a localized

transportation barrier: Lake Whitney (Bosque/Hill Counties), Lake Limestone (Limestone County), Lake Waco (McLennan County) and a portion of the Richland Chambers Reservoir (Freestone County). Lake Waco, due to its location within the Waco Urbanized Area, is perhaps the most significant barrier. Lake Whitney is the next most significant barrier and is formed by the Brazos River (see discussion above).

Topography within the Heart of Texas region is relatively flat and without much change in relief. The highest elevation is approximately 1,200 feet above sea level in Bosque County northwest of the town of Cranfills Gap. The lowest point is approximately 80 feet above sea level along the Brazos River at the Falls / Milam County Line. These two points are approximately 90 miles apart. Elevation does not create significant transportation barriers within the region (See Map 2.1).

Section 2.2 – Demographic Analysis

Section 2.2.1 – Current and Future Population

According to estimates from the Texas Data Center, the Heart of Texas region in 2004 had a population of 331,449, a 16.1% increase since 1990. This increase is well below the state growth rate of 22.8%. According to these estimates, regional population growth has slowed to less than 1.0% per year since 2000. McLennan County dominates the population of the region with over 66% of the regional population. Similarly, two out of every three new residents to the region were located in McLennan County. In terms of percent growth, however, Hill County leads the region with over 25% growth since 1990. Table 2.2 shows the population trends by county for the region.

Table 2.2 – Population Change since 1990 by County

County	1990 Population	2000 Population	2004 Population*	Change since 1990	Percent Change	Percent of Regional Growth
Bosque	15,125	17,204	17,914	+2,789	+18.4%	6.1%
Falls	17,712	18,576	18,311	+599	+3.4%	1.3%
Freestone	15,518	17,867	18,841	+3,323	+21.4%	7.2%
Hill	27,146	32,321	34,147	+7,001	+25.8%	15.3%
Limestone	20,946	22,051	22,473	+1,527	+7.3%	3.3%
McLennan	189,123	213,517	219,763	+30,640	+16.2%	66.8%
HOTCOG Region	285,570	321,536	331,449	+45,879	+16.1%	N/A

*Estimated by the Texas Data Center – UT San Antonio

The Heart of Texas region has 55 incorporated cities containing a population of 231,199 (71.9% of total). Most of this population (76.2%) is within McLennan County. As a result, population within the 5 remaining counties is widely dispersed with only about half of the total population residing within incorporated cities. This dispersion of population creates significant challenges in scheduling demand response service and also makes fixed route services unfeasible.

Nationally, the percent of the population living in unincorporated areas has increased. This trend has been most pronounced outside of large urban areas, but has been observed in rural counties as well. Since 1990, the percent of population living within cities in the Heart of Texas Region has decreased by almost 2%. Without exception, every county within the region observed a decrease in the population residing within incorporated cities. This trend is most pronounced in Hill and Bosque Counties where significant population increases have been observed within the vicinity of Lake Whitney. McLennan County has seen the largest numerical increase in rural population primarily due to urban sprawl outside of the Waco Urbanized Area. This trend further disperses an already small population and makes the provision of public transportation to the region even more of a challenge (See Table 2.3; See Map 2.2).

Table 2.3 – City vs. Rural Population in 2004

County	Persons in Incorporated Cities	Rural Population	Percent in Cities	Percent Change in City Percentage since 1990
Bosque	8,091	9,113	47.0%	-2.2%
Falls	9,268	9,308	49.9%	-1.7%
Freestone	9,058	8,809	50.7%	-0.1%
Hill	15,575	16,746	48.2%	-3.6%
Limestone	13,031	9,020	59.1%	-0.7%
McLennan	176,176	37,341	82.5%	-2.1%
5 rural counties	55,023	52,996	50.9%	-1.7%
HOTCOG Region	231,199	90,337	71.9%	-1.9%

According to estimates by the Texas Data Center, if a modest growth rate is assumed, the Heart of Texas Region should add more than 77,000 new residents by the year 2030. Most of the additional growth would again be concentrated within McLennan County (63.6%) due to the influence of the Waco Urbanized Area. In terms of percentage

growth, Hill County is projected to be the fastest growing county with nearly a 40% increase in population by 2030 (See Table 2.4).

The trend of increasing rural population is projected to continue. According to figures from the Waco Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the number of persons living in unincorporated areas within McLennan County should increase by over 50 percent by 2030. Although no estimates are currently available for the remaining counties, with increased legislative restrictions on annexations and few land-use controls on development outside of cities, increased development outside of cities should continue.

Table 2.4 – Projected 2030 Population by County

County	2004 Population	2030 Population	Change	Percent Change
Bosque	17,914	22,048	4,134	23.1%
Falls	18,311	21,680	3,369	18.4%
Freestone	18,841	21,107	2,266	12.0%
Hill	34,147	47,701	13,554	39.7%
Limestone	22,473	27,297	4,824	21.5%
McLennan	219,763	268,886	49,123	22.4%
HOTCOG Region	331,449	408,719	77,270	23.3%

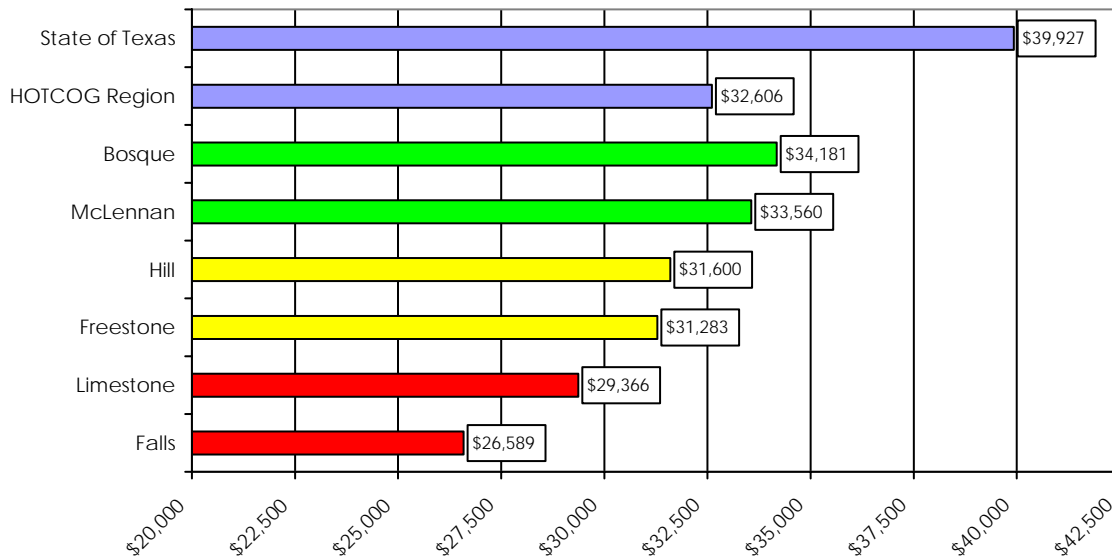
Section 2.2.2 – Income and Poverty

Income within the Heart of Texas Region generally lags behind the State of Texas with regional incomes, on average, being about 20% less than the State. Without exception, all counties within the region had lower household incomes than the State as a whole. Approximately 15% of regional households had incomes less than \$10,000 per year (25% of the state average) and nearly one in three households earned less than \$20,000 per year (50% of the state average). Correspondingly, poverty rates are generally higher for the region than the State. Two counties, Bosque and Freestone, each had poverty rates less than the State average; the remaining four counties had poverty rates greater than that of the State.

Income is not equally distributed within the Heart of Texas region. Bosque County leads the region with a median household income nearly 30% greater than Falls County, which has the lowest household income in the region. The lowest incomes are concentrated in the Waco Urbanized Area with several census block groups having

median household incomes at less than \$10,000 annually. A portion of the City of Marlin (Falls County) also has a median household income less than \$10,000 annually. Every county has some block groups where household income is less than \$20,000 annually, usually within the larger cities or towns. The highest incomes within the region are found in rural sections of Bosque County and Suburban Waco. The highest median household income is found in the City of Woodway at \$92,000 annually, almost 16 times greater than the annual household income for the block group with the lowest income found in South Waco (See Chart 2.1; See Map 2.3).

Chart 2.1 – Median Household Income in 1999 by County



Within the Heart of Texas Region, high poverty rates tend to be strongly correlated with low income. Therefore the same block groups with low household incomes also have high percentages of persons living below the census-defined poverty level. Similarly, the lowest poverty percentages are found in the block groups with the highest household incomes (See Table 2.5; See Map 2.4).

Table 2.5 – Percent of Persons Below Poverty Level by County

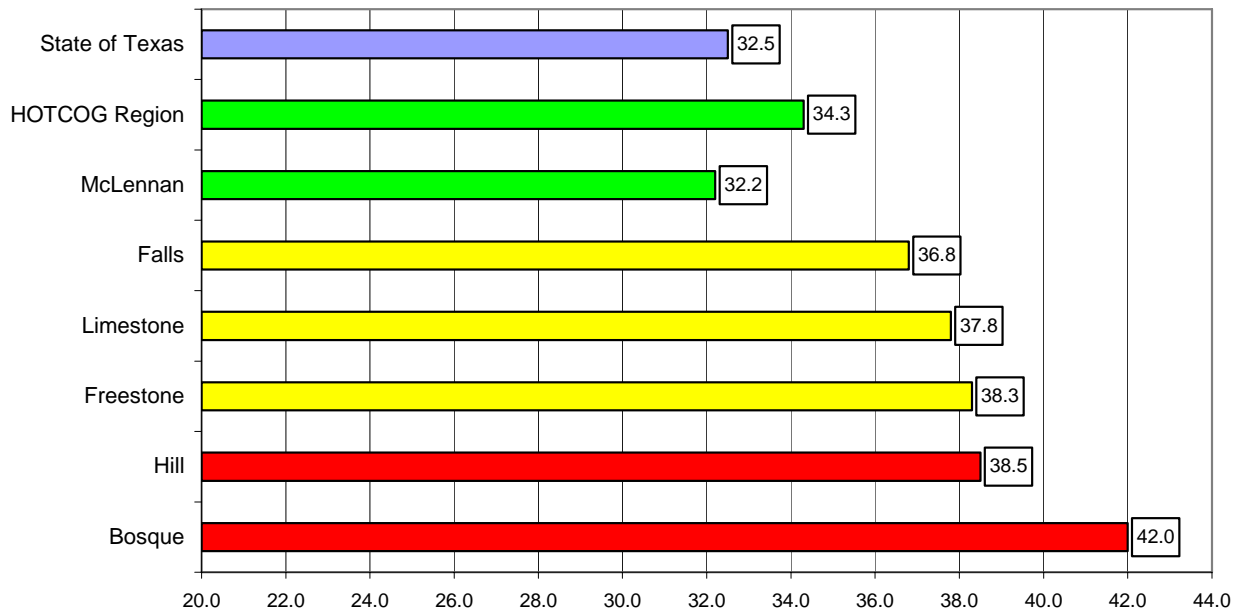
County	Percent of Persons below Census Poverty Level
Bosque	12.3%
Falls	20.0%
Freestone	13.0%
Hill	15.3%
Limestone	16.2%
McLennan	16.8%
HOTCOG Region	16.4%
State of Texas	15.0%

Low income and poverty are perhaps the two most important factors determining whether a person uses public transportation. Automobiles are expensive to own and operate and can be a burden to those on limited or fixed incomes. Given that incomes and poverty within the Heart of Texas region are significantly worse than for the remainder of the state, the need for public transportation within the region is greater in order for residents to have reasonable access to employment or other necessary activities of life. As will be seen in Section 2.2.4, however, despite the low incomes and high poverty rates, regional automobile availability is not significantly different from the rest of the state.

Section 2.2.3 – Elderly and Disabled

The Heart of Texas Region is generally older than the State of Texas and has a significantly greater percentage of persons over the age of 65. Each of the five rural counties within the region had median ages in excess of 35 and at least 50% higher percentages of persons over the age of 65 than the State. McLennan County, the lone exception, was younger primarily due to the influence of 3 institutions of higher education (Baylor University, Texas State Technical College and McLennan Community College). Despite this, the percent of persons over age 65 was significantly higher in McLennan County than the State of Texas (See Chart 2.2).

Chart 2.2 – Median Age by County



High concentrations of elderly population are generally located in three areas: the first are locations with at least one nursing home or assisted living facility, the second are primarily rural in close proximity to recreational areas such as Lake Whitney or Lake Limestone and the third are older residential areas where the resident population has aged. Many nursing homes or assisted living facilities are located in reasonably close proximity to medical facilities and other important services for the elderly. The recreational areas generally cater to retirees; most of who have higher incomes than the region average and have access to multiple automobiles. As persons in these areas age, however, their physical ability to use an automobile will deteriorate and the need for public transportation to access essential services will increase. These areas are also generally a considerable distance from essential services, sometimes 20 miles or more. Existing demand response services are likely to be inadequate to respond to the future demand within these areas.

For purposes of this plan, analysis was performed for persons with either a self-care or go outside home disability (See Table 2.6; See Map 2.5; See Map 2.6). These types of disabilities were the two most likely to physically prevent a person from operating an automobile or being able to walk to their destination. Persons with these types of disabilities also nearly always require door-to-door demand response service, which is significantly more expensive to operate than fixed route services.

The percent of population with these disabilities was slightly higher for the Heart of Texas Region than for the state as a whole. As with other population characteristics, this

creates a somewhat greater need for public transportation in the region than in other parts of the State. The presence of two Veterans Administration hospitals within the region (Waco and Marlin) creates a concentration of persons with disabilities in those two areas.

Table 2.6 – Persons Age 65 or older and Persons with Self-Care or Go Outside Home Disability

County	Percent Age 65 or Older	Percent with a Self-Care or Go Outside Home Disability
Bosque	20.7%	9.6%
Falls	16.8%	12.3%
Freestone	16.4%	11.4%
Hill	17.1%	11.1%
Limestone	16.4%	11.3%
McLennan	13.0%	9.7%
HOTCOG Region	14.5%	10.2%
State of Texas	9.9%	8.7%

Section 2.2.4 – Automobile Availability

Despite the generally lower incomes, automobile availability within the Heart of Texas region is comparable to the rest of the State. With a relatively dispersed population and significant distances to essential services, even with existing public transportation automobile ownership is important for residents (See Table 2.7; See Map 2.7).

Outside of the Waco Urbanized Area, public transportation is generally a demand response service, which must be reserved in advance, making spontaneous trips impossible without an automobile. Although some people rely on family members for basic transportation, many others use their own vehicle. Data for the five rural counties show that the average household has access to more vehicles than the typical household in the remainder of the state and the percent of households without an automobile is less than the state. The result is that many residents must spend significant portions of limited incomes on transportation simply to access employment, shop or perform other important activities of life.

Within the Waco Urbanized Area, Waco Transit operates a scheduled fixed route service that provides reasonable access to most of the important destinations in McLennan County (See section 4.1.2). As a result, automobile ownership in McLennan

County is not as critical, however many residents on limited incomes choose to use an automobile due to limitations in the fixed route schedule (See section 4.1.3). In addition, pedestrian facilities are limited to non-existing in the vicinity of many important destinations, further limiting the usefulness of public transportation.

Table 2.7 – Automobile Available by County

County	Average Vehicles per Occupied Housing Unit	Occupied Housing Units with no Automobiles
Bosque	1.86	4.6%
Falls	1.65	12.2%
Freestone	1.82	6.2%
Hill	1.78	5.9%
Limestone	1.76	7.8%
McLennan	1.68	8.3%
HOTCOG Region	1.71	7.9%
State of Texas	1.70	7.4%

Section 2.3 – Current Services

This section describes the public transportation services currently provided within the Heart of Texas Region.

Section 2.3.1 – Urban Services

Waco Transit provides fixed route bus service within the City of Waco, the Baylor University Shuttle (BUS), and ADA/Para-transit services to individuals with special transportation needs. Waco Transit currently operates nine full-time bus routes beginning at 5:15 AM and ending at 7:15 PM on weekdays, and from 6:15 AM until 8:15 PM on Saturday. The routes are designed to service as much of the city as possible in an efficient manner as each of the nine routes makes a complete loop in one hour.

Currently the fixed route service permits transportation to all major medical centers, grocery stores, and shopping centers (See Map 2.8). Bus fare is \$1.00 per trip including transfers, and various day passes are available. Waco Transit also has discounted rates for seniors, students, children, and the disabled. All Waco Transit vehicles are ADA accessible and are equipped with either a wheelchair lift or ramp. The Baylor University Shuttle (BUS) consists of four fixed bus routes that run Monday thru Friday beginning at

7:30 AM and ending at 5:30 PM. Each route makes a complete loop in 15 minutes and together service the entire Baylor campus. Baylor is a fare free zone and all passengers ride for free.

Waco Transit provides complimentary ADA/Para-transit service to qualified individuals; the door-to-door service is available on all days the regular bus service operates in Waco. Drivers are trained and available to assist passengers in boarding and exiting the vehicle. Funding comes from a variety of different sources including the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), state grant 5307, fare box income, and the Baylor contract. In addition to this service provided by Waco Transit, Central Texas Senior Ministry (CTSM) provides an urban, demand response transportation service to the elderly and disabled population. This service provides an average of 1200 trips per month to this group of citizens through private donations and through the 5310 federal grant program administered by the Heart of Texas Rural Transit District.

Section 2.3.2 – FTA Sections 5310 & 5311 Services (Elderly & Disabled)

Funding under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) section 5310 and 5311 provides capital grants to the state of Texas to help make available mass transportation service to meet the special needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. Funds are available to private non-profit organizations and other public for-profit entities that certify to the governor that there are no existing non-profit corporations or associations in their area that already provide transportation service. Local stakeholder forums or committees plan and design the service for their local community and existing rural and/or urban transit service providers operate the service as designed by the committees. These funds are awarded directly to the transit operator who may use the funds for eligible capital expenses. They may also use the funds to contract with other transportation providers in the local area. Eligible capital expenses include but are not limited to buses, vans, or other paratransit vehicles, radios and communication equipment, vehicle shelters, and wheelchair lifts and restraints. Other options, with the approval of TxDOT-PTN, are lease of equipment, the acquisition of transportation services under a contract lease, and preventive maintenance service or parts associated with preventive maintenance service.

The Heart of Texas Rural Transit District (HOTRTD) coordinates demand-response rural transportation services through the use of subcontractors. Central Texas Senior Ministry (CTSM) provides transportation services in rural McLennan, Falls, and Hill counties. Bosque, Freestone, and Limestone County Senior Services provide transportation in their respective areas. CTSM also provides a demand response transportation system in the city of Waco for the elderly and disabled. Each county provides dispatch and scheduling and reports data to the Heart of Texas Council of Governments, the grant recipient for 5310 and 5311 federal funds in the Heart of Texas region.

Section 2.3.3 – Medicaid Transportation

Waco Transit oversees a regional contract with rural transportation providers to provide non-emergency medical transportation through the Medicaid Title XIX program. Medicaid transportation is provided for trips originating in the six-county area Monday thru Saturday 8 AM to 6 PM, with after hour service available for return trips.

Section 2.3.4 – Intercity Transportation

Transportation to other regions in the state is available through 3 modes: aviation, intercity bus and passenger rail (See Map 2.9; See Map 2.10).

Commercial aviation service within the region is available only through Waco Regional Airport. Two airlines, American Eagle and Continental Express provide non-stop service to the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and George Bush/Houston Intercontinental Airport respectively. Connections to other cities may be made at these two airports. The next closest airport with commercial service is the Killeen/Fort Hood Regional Airport, which is 47 miles from the closest community in the region. Each county has at least one airport in which air charter or general aviation services are available.

Greyhound or one of its affiliates provides intercity bus transportation to the region. The Waco Intermodal Center in Downtown Waco has the most service within the region with 14 buses heading primarily to Dallas, Temple, Austin or Houston. The Waco station also serves as a transfer point for certain destinations. The Hillsboro station has one northbound and one southbound bus stopping daily with the destinations of Dallas and Waco respectively. Greyhound will drop-off passengers in Fairfield, but will not pick up passengers at that location. Only three miles outside of the region, Buffalo has service from 11 buses stopping daily with the primary destinations of Dallas and Houston. In addition to service provided by Greyhound, service to the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport is also provided by the Waco Streak. The Waco Streak makes three round trips daily from the Waco Urbanized Area with curb-to-curb service.

Amtrak provides passenger rail service through the train named the Texas Eagle. The only stop made by the Texas Eagle within the region is at the Santa Fe Depot in McGregor. From McGregor, Amtrak provides one daily southbound train with the destination of San Antonio and one daily northbound train with the destination of Fort Worth. Northbound, passengers may continue on the Texas Eagle to Chicago, IL.

Several of the demand response services within the region provide limited service to cities outside of the region, primarily for medical appointments. These services are generally provided only once or twice a week. Section 4.1.2 provides a description of the primary destination points outside of the region provided by these services.

Section 2.4 – History of Coordination

Past and Current Implemented Projects or Services

Prior to the implementation of the Regional Service Project in June 2005, public transportation providers in the Heart of Texas Region saw the benefits of cooperation and collaboration and began developing meaningful relationships to encourage, improve and expand ridership throughout the rural counties. Many of these relationships will continue and expand as part of the Regional Transportation Plan. The following are examples of proactive and successful projects.

Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) and the McLennan County Youth Collaboration (MCYC)

An agreement was established in September 2006 between MCYC and HOTCOG to provide transportation services for young adults who are participating in activities and/or attending orientations/workshops as part of MCYC. Transportation providers and MCYC staff work together to develop a referral system for eligible or potentially eligible participants that will eliminate barriers to employment or to accessing opportunities for employment skills training.

Central Texas Senior Ministries (CTSM), Hill County Transit (HCT) and Scott and White (S&W) Medical Facilities

For the past six years, CTSM and HCT have provided coordinated transportation to and from the many S&W medical facilities in the Heart of Texas Region. In order to assure that elderly and disabled patients had easy access to any facility, S&W approached these transit providers (both managed by CTSM) to establish services routes. In return, S&W grants vouchers to their patients that pay for the transportation.

Falls County Transit (FCT) and Marlin ISD

For the past four years, FCT provides transportation for Marlin elementary and high school children to and from schools in the Westphalia school district. Parents are responsible for the expense of bussing their children to the more desired schools.

Rural Transportation Providers and the Heart of Texas Workforce

All rural transit providers give transportation to people seeking to apply for employment, receive work skills training, or receive employment counseling at the various county Workforce Centers through collaboration with the Heart of Texas Workforce Board. This is a popular demand response program with door-to-door service. The Heart of Texas Workforce provides vouchers to these passengers which will pay for their transportation.

Central Texas Senior Ministries (CTSM), Limestone County Transit (LCT), Freestone County Transit (FCT) and the Heart of Texas Region MHMR Center (HOTRMHMR)

These rural transportation providers contract with HOTRMHMR to provide transportation for their consumers to and from work, various HOTRMHMR facilities, physician and dentist appointments. The heaviest ridership through this contract is in both the Hillsboro and Mexia areas.

Limestone County Transit (LCT) and Mexia State School (MSS)

LCT has a two-year contract with MSS to provide transportation for older volunteers (foster grandparents) to and from the school. This contract also provides for transportation to and from work for approximately 30 school residents. These two programs help to expand rural services and help LCT to meet local match requirements.

Chapter 3 – Plan Development

Section 3.1 – Planning Process

As a directive of House Bill 3588 and through a Best Practices Workshop held at the Texas Department of Transportation office in Austin in June 2005, the twenty-four Councils of Government regions were charged with developing Regional Transportation Plans that would best serve their respective region. The document developed by the Heart of Texas Region Council of Governments (HOTCOG), and the other Regional Transportation Plans across the state will be used during the application of all federal and state transportation grants beginning with the 2008 fiscal year.

In August 2005, the Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) and Heart of Texas Rural Transit District hosted a three-day strategic workshop to plan the process for developing a regional cooperative service plan. Mr. Jeff Arndt, facilitator from the Texas Transportation Institute, representatives from various public service agencies, chief elected officials, and the general public began the arduous task of outlining a strategy to coordinate the Heart of Texas region.

The first plan of action for the planning committee was to establish a smaller scoping group to identify the following anticipated benefits of a regional transportation service plan:

- Gaining knowledge of existing transportation services
- Increasing efficiency
- Supporting independent living
- Expanding services to accommodate shift work
- Providing access to jobs
- Promoting improved regional planning
- Providing access to all
- Demonstrating the need for additional funding
- Providing consolidated directory of service information
- Demonstrating connection between inadequate funding and driver retention
- Identifying partnering opportunities
- Focusing on key transit constituency groups
- Focusing State on funding and eliminating constraints
- Learning to maneuver around constraints
- Finding ways to share resources to serve customers efficiently

This list reflects the desires of regional stakeholders to provide greater customer service through increasing awareness and education and by strengthening and expanding the

public transit infrastructure. The scoping group presented their work plan and a framework for stakeholder input and oversight to the planning committee. The work plan calls for ongoing planning efforts to sustain and enhance progress made during the first year's planning effort.

The planning committee recognized the success of this plan would depend upon the creation of partnerships and was guided by two core values: inclusiveness and open communication. Building relationships that have now become the foundation for future coordination efforts has been a central benefit of this planning process.

During the final session of the August workshop, the planning committee unanimously chose HOTCOG as the lead agency. In this role, HOTCOG would staff and provide project management throughout the process. HOTCOG staff, interim task forces, and consultants would conduct specific work plan activities. In addition, the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) was organized to provide project oversight for the development of the Regional Service Plan as outlined by the scoping group and Article 13, the "Statewide Coordination of Public Transportation."

The RTCC is comprised of representatives of public service agencies involved in the planning and/or delivery of transportation, client organizations that provide or require transit services, and customer/client advocacy groups. The RTCC established a meeting schedule for the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. All meetings are open to the public.

During the October 2005 meeting in Austin with the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Transportation Commission, each COG region presented their strategy and a budget for creating their regional service plan. The Transportation Commission commended the regions on their "plan for a plan" and promised funding in support of this project. The regions were asked to go back and begin their task to organize a coordinated service plan.

HOTCOG began immediately to prepare for the bi-monthly RTCC meetings. The first meeting was held December 15, 2005, and was represented by many public service agencies across the six county region. John Hendrickson, General Manager for Waco Transit, was elected chairperson and Chris Evilia, the MPO director, was elected as statistician.

Section 3.2 – Outreach Efforts / Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders were involved in each task of the Work Plan. During the first month of the project, the planning group developed a detailed Stakeholder involvement plan. The preliminary list of stakeholders, identified during scoping, was expanded to include as

many interested agencies, associations, groups and individuals as possible. Stakeholders identified during the scoping process were as follows:

- Consumers/riders or their representatives
- People who are disabled, aging, economically disadvantaged
- Providers of public and private transportation
- Churches, private-for-hire (taxis, etc.), publicly funded transportation providers
- Volunteer/ non-profit/ charitable organizations
- Elected officials/ appointed boards
- Employers/schools/retail
- Adjoining regions – transportation providers
- Community Resource Coordination Groups
- Dialysis Centers/ VA health service locations, etc.

The method of direct outreach to Stakeholders varied. Outreach formats included stakeholder focus group discussions, public meetings with panel discussions and question and answer exchange with the audience, and distribution of printed information and questionnaires. The decision on format for stakeholder involvement was developed and modified as appropriate during the regional planning effort.

Throughout the planning process, additional Stakeholder involvement was included in the monthly meetings of the RTCC.

Chapter 4 – Determination of Needs

Prior to the development of this plan, no systematic methodology had been utilized to determine the overall public transportation needs of the entire Heart of Texas Region. Several studies have been conducted within the Waco Urbanized Area to identify service opportunities for the fixed route system, however this work did not extend beyond the urbanized area and it did not apply to demand response services regardless of location. This chapter provides analysis to identify the places within the Heart of Texas Region where the demand for public transportation is the greatest and to identify the locations of the primary destinations for persons needing these services.

Section 4.1 – Overlaps & Gaps

In this section, the demand for public transportation is estimated to compare to current services and identify existing gaps in coverage. Important destination points are also identified and mapped to analyze the efficiency and completeness of existing services. The results from this section will be used in Chapter 5 to identify future projects to eliminate gaps in service and to ensure adequate service to those areas with the greatest estimated demand.

Section 4.1.1 – Transit Need Index

All areas have some degree of need for public transportation. In order to estimate this demand, an index was used to quantify and locate areas of greatest need for the six county region. Transit need indices have been widely used within urbanized areas, but generally have a significant emphasis on population density for the provision of urban fixed route services. For this plan, the transit need index has been modified to estimate overall need regardless of population density.

Methodology

To estimate need, several characteristics were identified for persons for whom use of a motor vehicle is either a financial burden or a physical impossibility. Each population characteristic was identified at the US Census Block Group level, the smallest level of geography for which this data were available. The primary characteristics included the following:

- Median Household Income
- Persons in Poverty
- Persons Age 65 and Above
- Persons with a Self-Care or Stay at Home Disability

Although not a population characteristic, occupied housing units with no automobiles was also used to estimate those households that have no access to a motor vehicle. Even though high transit usage by minorities is generally related to overall lower household incomes or higher poverty rates for minorities, minority population was also utilized within the index primarily because there was not a direct relationship between minority population and low income or high poverty. Some block groups within the region had relatively high minority populations but relatively high household incomes or relatively low poverty rates and vice-versa. Minority population was not emphasized within the index, however, and was weighted accordingly.

Each population characteristic was weighted within the index to reflect its relative importance or unimportance. Table 4.1 identifies the relative weights for each characteristic.

Table 4.1 – Population Characteristics & Weights

Population Characteristic	Weight
Median Household Income	1.0
Persons in Poverty	2.0
Persons Age 65 or Over	2.0
Persons with a Self-Care or Stay at Home Disability	1.5
Occupied Housing Units with No Automobiles	1.5
Minority Population	1.0
Population Density	0.5

While the goal of the transit need index is to identify places where the population may have a greater need for transit, regardless of the size of the population, the quantity of service would be greater for areas with a high need index and high population densities. For this reason, population size classes were used within the index to provide a slightly higher score for those areas with greater population. Table 4.2 identifies the population size classes used within the index.

Table 4.2 – Population Size Classes

Population Density (Persons per Square Mile)	Size Class
0 to 500	1
500.1 to 1000	2
1000.1 to 3000	3
3000.1 to 6000	4
Over 6000	5

In constructing the transit need index, each population characteristic for each block group was compared to the averages for the entire region. The average for the Heart of Texas region was indexed at 1.0. Scores for individual block groups were based on a percentage of the regional average. For instance, the regional average for percent of persons in poverty is 16.37%. A block group with a percentage of 32.74% (double the regional average) would achieve a score of 2.0 for this population characteristic. For population density, the size class would be the score for the block group. Once a score is determined, the score is multiplied by the weight for that population characteristic to determine the final, weighted score. The weighted scores are then added together to calculate the transit need index. Table 4.3 identifies the regional averages for the Heart of Texas Region.

Table 4.3 – Regional Averages and Weighted Scores

Population Characteristic	Regional Average	Initial Score	Weighted Score
Median Household Income	\$32,606	1.0	1.0
Percent of Persons in Poverty	16.37%	1.0	2.0
Percent of Persons Age 65 or Over	14.47%	1.0	2.0
Percent of Persons with a Self-Care or Stay at Home Disability	10.16%	1.0	1.5
Percent of Occupied Housing Units with No Automobiles	7.87%	1.0	2.0
Percent Minority Population	16.2%	1.0	1.0
Population Density	0.5	1	0.5
Regional Score:			10.0

After the index scores had been determined for each block groups, the relative demand for transit was then determined based upon their score. Table 4.4 identifies the score classifications. Map 4.1 shows the final transit need classifications for the Heart of Texas Region.

Table 4.4 – Transit Need Classifications

Classification	Very High	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Low
Index Score	Over 22.50	17.50 to 22.49	12.50 to 17.49	10.00 to 12.49	7.50 to 9.99	Below 7.50

Analysis

In order to achieve an index classification of “High” or “Very High”, a block group must have high scores for each of the population characteristics used within the transit need index. Conversely, to achieve a classification of “Low”, a block group must have low scores for each population characteristic. A mix of high and low scores generally results in a classification of “Average”.

According to the transit need index, the most significant concentration of transit demand exists within the core of the Waco Urbanized Area (See Map 4.1). This area is characterized by low incomes and high poverty rates (Section 2.2.2), high percentages of persons with disabilities (Section 2.2.3) and relatively low automobile accessibility (Section 2.2.4). Other areas within the region with similar characteristics are found in the cities of Marlin, Hillsboro, Mexia, Rosebud, Groesbeck, Teague and Itasca. Above average demand can be found in virtually every incorporated city within the region with greater than 1,000 persons. Two areas within rural Freestone County scored “Above Average” for relatively high percentages of persons with a disability (Section 2.2.3). These areas would be particularly challenging to serve with their low population densities (Section 2.2.1).

Rural areas, on the other hand, were generally classified as having either “Low” or “Below Average” transit need. The lowest scores were found in suburban Waco, which had the highest incomes and the lowest poverty rates. Low scores were also found in rural portions of each county except for Falls County.

Map 4.2 compares the Waco Transit Fixed Route system to the transit need index within the Waco Urbanized Area. In general, one or more routes of the system serve the areas of highest demand. The one apparent exception is an area along Loop 340 between

Baylor University and Robinson. Population within this area, however, is concentrated in high-density apartments and duplexes on the north end of the block group. This area adjoins the southern boundary of Baylor and is served by Waco Transit Route 9 as well as the Baylor University Trolley, also operated by Waco Transit. The southern portions of these block groups fronting Loop 340 are generally unpopulated.

Transit need only measures half of the equation for determining the location and type of public transportation service. Locating primary destination points (large employers, retail shopping center, doctors offices, etc.) and how to connect these to the high demand areas is the other half of the equation. Section 4.1.2 identifies the most important destinations within the region and provides this analysis.

Section 4.1.2 – Destination Analysis

The City of Waco serves as the economic hub for the Heart of Texas region. Of the most important regional destinations identified, slightly more than half are located within McLennan County. Although not located within the Heart of Texas Region, the Cities of Temple, Corsicana, Palestine, Dallas and Fort Worth are also significant destination points for Heart of Texas residents, as many services and employment opportunities not found within the region are provided in these cities. The concentration of destination points to a certain extent simplifies the provision of public transportation. At the same time, however, the provision of public transportation becomes all the more important as those residents without automobile access in the rural counties are dependent upon it for accessing essential services.

Employment

Within the Heart of Texas Region unemployment rates are relatively low with rates generally matching state averages. Significant differences in employment location exist, however, in that residents from the rural counties are nearly six times more likely to have to leave their county of residence for employment than residents of McLennan County (see table 4.5). This rate is also significantly greater than the rest of the state. Statistics regarding large employers within the region bears this out: of those employers with more than 50 employees, 76% of the manufacturers and 64% of the significant retail establishments are located within McLennan County (See Map 4.3). Current public transportation services to the rural counties are not set up to provide consistent daily scheduled service to employment centers. The impact of this is to limit employment opportunities for those outside of the Waco Urbanized Area who can neither afford nor operate an automobile.

Table 4.5 – Percent Working outside County of Residence

County	Percent Unemployed*	Percent of Residents Employed Outside of County**
Bosque	4.9%	42.9%
Falls	6.6%	44.3%
Freestone	4.1%	35.7%
Hill	5.5%	35.6%
Limestone	4.9%	25.7%
McLennan	5.0%	6.1%
5 Rural Counties	5.1%	36.2%
State of Texas	5.1%	20.0%

*Texas Workforce Commission – August, 2006

**Of employed residents. Source: US Census Bureau – 2000.

Education

Five institutions of higher education exist within the Heart of Texas region. Baylor University in Waco is the only four-year university within the region. Texas State Technical College (TSTC) in Waco provides two-year degrees focusing on technical trades. Waco Transit serves Baylor with a shuttle service that circulates through the campus and immediate vicinity. The Waco Transit Fixed Route Service serves both schools.

Two community colleges are located within the region, McLennan Community College (MCC) in Waco and Hill College in Hillsboro. The Waco Transit Fixed Route Service also serves MCC, however Hill College is served only by the demand response services provided by Central Texas Senior Ministries. Two satellite campuses exist in the region with an MCC satellite in McGregor and a satellite of Navarro College in Mexia. Each satellite campus is served only by demand response services. Other colleges and universities in which residents of the region attend include the main campus of Navarro College in Corsicana, Temple College in Temple, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton and Central Texas College in Killeen.

All or portions of 63 different public school districts are located within the Heart of Texas region. Within the region are 154 public schools and 10 private schools. As a result, nearly every town has at least one elementary or secondary school (See all educational resources on Map 4.4).

Hospitals / Medical Offices / Kidney Dialysis

Each county within the region has at least one medical center to treat emergency medical conditions or provide basic health services (See Map 4.5). Specialized treatments, however, are generally found either in Waco or outside of the region. Medical treatments are generally not optional and for those older than age 65 or with serious medical conditions, regular visits to medical professionals can be a matter of life or death. For this reason, medical appointments dominate the trip purposes for public transportation with between 45 and 75 percent of all current trips being medically related. A significant percentage of these trips are related to kidney dialysis, trips that must be made on a regular basis. The following are the primary destinations for medical trips:

- Scott & White Memorial Hospital, Temple
- Olin E. Teague VA Medical Center, Temple
- VA Medical Center, Waco
- Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center, Waco
- Providence Medical Center, Waco
- Brazos Kidney Disease Center, Waco
- Palestine Dialysis Center, Palestine
- Bellmead Kidney Disease Center, Bellmead
- Falls Community Hospital – Dialysis Center, Marlin

For the rural counties, nearly all medical trips are made to destinations outside of the county. This results in all day trips specifically for medical appointments and ties up one vehicle for that day. With anticipated population increases (Section 2.2.1) and the anticipated increase in persons age 65 or older, additional resources will be necessary as the number of medically related trips would increase.

Nursing Homes/Assisted Living Centers/Senior Centers

Nearly any town of any size within the region has at least one nursing home or assisted living facility (See Map 4.6). In most cases the facility is within a short distance of a hospital or medical center providing basic health services. Several facilities, however, mostly in smaller communities, are a considerable distance from the closest medical facility. Although these facilities generally provide some transportation for their clients, demand response services often must transport persons from these facilities when scheduling conflicts arise or the vehicle is unavailable. Table 4.6 identifies the nursing homes that are more than 10 miles from the closest medical facility.

Senior centers are found in nearly every sizeable community within the region such that no portion of the region is more than a 15-minute drive from one of the centers. Each center has hours of operations that coincides with the schedule for the demand response vehicles for their respective county (see appendix D for senior centers and hours of operations).

Table 4.6 – Nursing Homes / Assisted Living Centers & Proximity to Medical Care

Facility	Location	Closest Medical Care	Distance
Oakview Healthcare Residence	Hubbard	Hillsboro	22.0 miles
Westview Manor Assisted Living Center	McGregor	Waco - Providence	16.9 miles
West Rest Haven & Nursing Home	West	Hillsboro	16.8 miles
Valley Mills Nursing & Rehabilitation Center	Valley Mills	Clifton	12.0 miles

Comparison of Destinations to the Waco Transit Fixed Route System

In 2005, the Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) analyzed the Waco Transit Fixed Route system to determine its effectiveness in reaching primary destination points within McLennan County. The MPO identified 1,355 locations that are likely attractors of riders from the system. Of these destinations, 198 (14.6%) were located outside of the Waco Urbanized Area. In their analysis the MPO determined that 73.3% of the destinations within the Waco Urbanized Area were within a reasonable walking distance of one of the fixed routes (defined as ¼ mile without significant barriers to cross).

Waco Transit is required to provide complimentary demand response service for persons residing within ¾ mile of the fixed route system and cannot use the system. In some places this area extends beyond the boundary of the Waco Urbanized Area. In further analysis by the MPO, the ADA service area contains 70.7% of all destinations identified within McLennan County (See Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 – Destination Points within Waco Transit Service Area

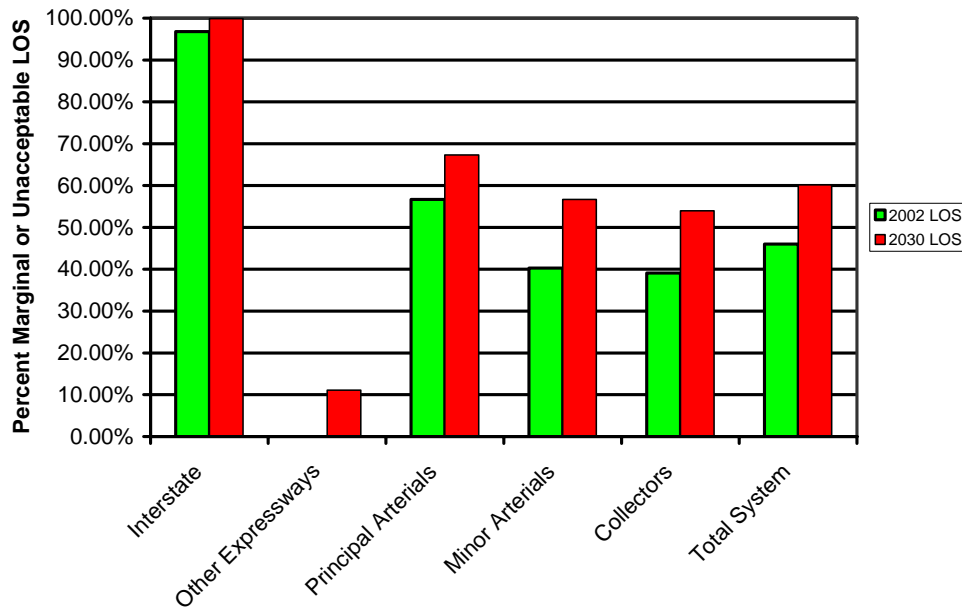
Distance to Fixed Route System	Percent of Urban Population Served	Destinations	Percent of Urban Area	Percent of McLennan County
¼ Mile	60.4%	848	73.3%	62.5%
¾ Mile	83.7%	959	100.0%	70.7%

Section 4.1.3 – Traffic Congestion and Commuting

Traffic congestion and significant commuting flows within the Heart of Texas Region are generally only found within the Waco Urbanized Area. In order to measure congestion, the Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization utilizes Level of Service (LOS). LOS ranges from A to F. LOS A is an area where traffic is allowed to flow as fast as legally allowable; LOS F is an area where significant traffic delays disrupt traffic flow, especially with any type of incident (See Chart 4.1).

As of 2002, 46.0% of the highway system in McLennan County had marginal or unacceptable levels of service according to the Waco MPO. That number is projected to increase to 60.2% marginal or unacceptable by 2030 if no significant highway expansions occur. Map 4.7 shows those facilities with projected marginal or unacceptable levels of service in 2030. According to the Texas Urban Mobility Plan, produced by the Waco MPO, only 35% of significant highway construction is funded through 2030. The result is that public transportation remains the most viable solution to meeting the mobility needs of the Waco Urbanized Area.

Chart 4.1 – Projected 2030 Highway Level of Service by Highway Type – McLennan County



Despite the significant percentage of residents in the rural counties needing to travel to their jobs, traffic flows outside of McLennan County generally do not exceed the capacity of the highway network. The one notable exception is Interstate Highway 35, which is used extensively by persons traveling through the region to access either the

Dallas/Fort Worth area or Austin/San Antonio areas. In addition, IH-35 between Laredo and the DFW area is the primary route for trade related to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). By the year 2030, however, it is anticipated that the reconstruction of IH-35 will be completed which will provide a continuous 6-lane interstate between Hillsboro and San Antonio. In addition to this, the State of Texas has proposed the Trans-Texas Corridor to provide additional traffic relief along this corridor. Section 4.1.6 provides additional details on some potential impacts of the Trans-Texas Corridor to public transportation within the region.

Section 4.1.4 – Survey of Current or Likely Public Transportation Users

This section reviews the opinion of those persons who are likely users of public transportation. In May, 2006, a survey was distributed to measure public opinion regarding their purpose for using public transportation, on the usefulness of the service and which services they were likely to use in the future. This survey helped the regional providers determine how well current services were meeting the existing transportation needs of their clients and how effective their methods of outreach were.

Survey Distribution & Home Location of Respondents

530 completed surveys were received at the MPO offices by May 25, 2006. Surveys were completed by residents from all six counties within the HOTCOG region as well as 15 other counties, including Travis and Harris Counties. 69 respondents (13.0%) declined to identify their home zip code and 2 respondents provided invalid zip codes.

Nearly half of all respondents resided in McLennan County with most other HOTCOG Counties having between six and nine percent of respondents. Falls County was not well represented with only seven respondents or 1.3% of the total.

In order to provide statistically relevant analysis, each level of analysis should have at least 100 data points. Since all counties except McLennan have less than this number of respondents, only the total of all surveys and McLennan County responses can be analyzed as part of this survey. Table 4.8 below provides the number of respondents by county.

Table 4.8 – Survey Respondents by County

County	Number of Respondents	Percent of Total
Bosque	39	7.4%
Falls	7	1.3%
Freestone	40	7.5%
Hill	34	6.4%
Limestone	47	8.9%
McLennan	258	48.7%
Other Counties	34	6.4%
No Answer / Invalid	71	13.4%
Total	530	100.0%

Public Transportation Awareness

523 respondents (98.7%) answered the question of whether they were aware of the public transportation services available in their area. Of those that responded, 346 (66.2%) answered yes and 177 (33.8%) answered no.

Table 4.9 – Effectiveness of Traditional Outreach Methods

Method	Responses	Percent of Total
Newspaper	29	5.8%
TV	20	4.0%
Radio	13	2.6%
Internet	6	1.2%
Total Traditional Methods	68	13.6%
Total All Methods	504	100.0%

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer.

When asked how they heard about these services, just over half answered either a friend or family member or by word of mouth. Information provided by offices (government, medical, or social service) and other primary destinations (schools, shopping centers) accounted for nearly 30% of the responses. Traditional methods of

outreach, however, had very low responses (see table 5.9). 355 respondents (67.0%) answered how they heard about the various public transportation services.

Public Transportation Usage

441 respondents (83.2%) answered the question of how many times within the last year they used any public transportation service (see Chart 4.2). Of all respondents, exactly half stated they did not use any service within the past year. More troubling, of those who answered yes to awareness of public transportation, 179 (51.7%) answered that they did not use any service within the past year with another 37 (10.7%) answering that they only used a service once or twice. Of those who used public transportation at least once, 44.3% stated that they used the service 11 or more times within the past year and 60.8% used the service five or more times.

227 respondents (42.8%) answered which public transportation service they have used. Waco Transit Bus Service had the most responses (92 or 32.4%), Greyhound was second (45 or 15.9%) and Limestone County Transit was third (41 or 14.4%). All other services except taxi services (35 responses or 12.3%) had less than 6% of the total responses. Although Waco Transit Bus Service had less than 100 data points, the total number was close enough to 100 to be able to provide some additional analysis. All other services did not have enough data to provide separate analysis that are statistically relevant.

Chart 4.2 – Public Transportation Usage within Last Year

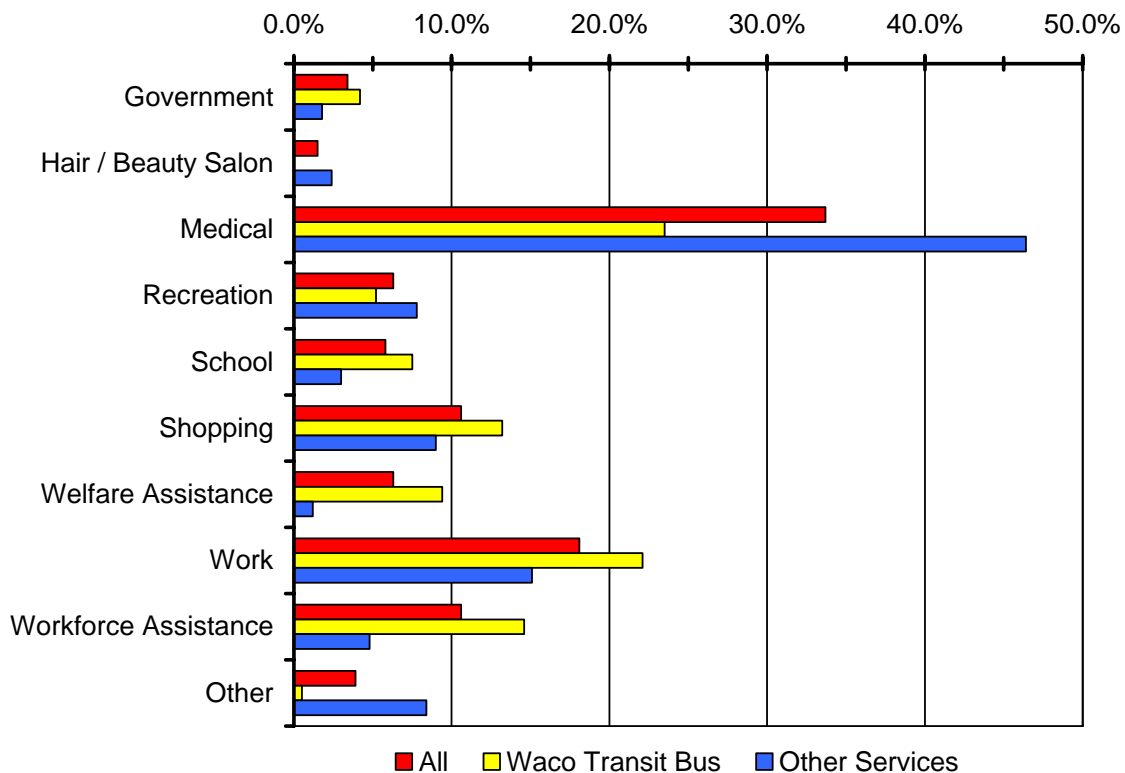


Trip Purposes

226 respondents (42.6%) identified their primary trip purposes while using public transportation (See Chart 4.3). Of these respondents, the primary trip purposes were medical appointments (33.7%) and work (18.1%). Workforce Assistance and shopping were both identified by 10.6% of respondents with all other purposes 6% or less of the total.

Trips by Waco Transit Bus users are relatively evenly split between medical appointments and work usage (23.5% and 22.1% respectively) with 14.6% using the system for workforce assistance and 13.2% for shopping. These four trip purposes comprise nearly 3/4ths of all trips made by Waco Transit. Unlike Waco Transit, trips on all other systems are primarily for medical appointments -- 46.4% -- with work trips a distant second at 15.1% of the total. All other trip purposes individually comprise less than 9% of the total. Interestingly, the top four trip purposes are the same for both Waco Transit & all other systems and comprise a similar percentage of all trips (73.4% and 75.3% respectively).

Chart 4.3 – Trip Purposes by Service Provider



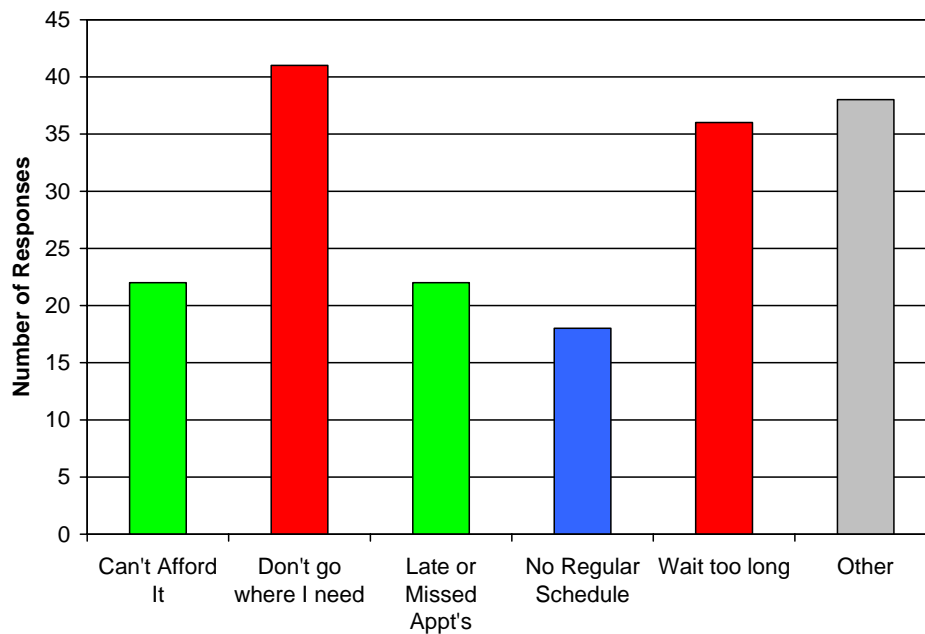
Meeting Needs

314 respondents (59.3%) identified whether the existing public transportation services meets their needs. Of those who responded, 200 (63.7%) answered yes and 114 (36.3%) answered no. Waco Transit Bus Service had a slightly higher percentage answering yes (67.4%) and the remaining systems had a slight lower percentage answering yes (62.2%).

Of the 114 persons who answered no, 91 (79.8%) provided a reason why public transportation did not meet their needs. Interestingly, 19 persons (9.5%) who answered yes also provided a reason why public transportation did not meet their needs along with six persons who did not answer whether or not their needs were met.

177 reasons were provided for why public transportation did not meet the various needs (See Chart 4.4). The service did not go where they needed was the top response (41 or 23.2%) with waiting too long being the second response (36 or 20.3%). I can't afford it and late or missed appointments both had 22 responses (12.4%).

Chart 4.4 – Why Public Transportation Doesn't Meet Needs



284 respondents (53.6%) answered whether or not they were likely to use public transportation again. Of those who responded, 66.5% said they would either be very likely or somewhat likely to use the service again. 11.6% said they would never use the service again. Waco Transit Bus Service had a much higher percentage of respondents responding very likely or somewhat likely at 80.8% and only 3.9% saying they would

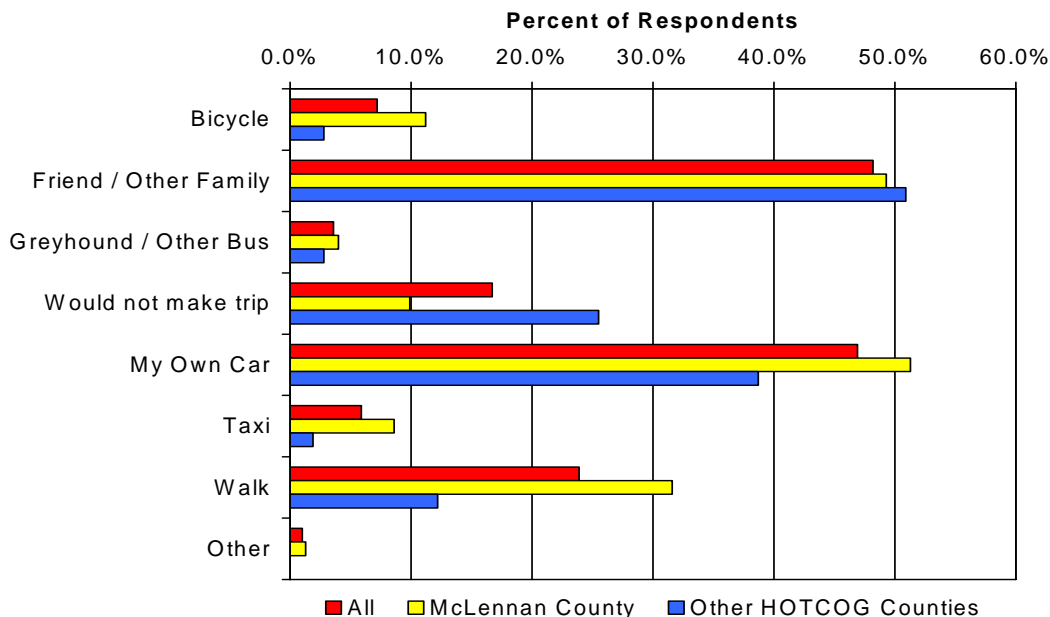
never use the system again. The percentages for the remaining systems even higher with 82.8% saying they were very likely or somewhat likely to use the services again and only a mere 2.5% saying they would never again use the system. Of those who did not use any system, however, only 29.8% said they would use public transportation and more significantly 32.1% said they would never use public transportation.

Mobility without Public Transportation

When asked if public transportation were not available, how would you get to where you need to go, 305 persons (57.6%) responded with 468 different methods (see Chart 4.5). Of those that responded, nearly half indicated that their alternate mode of transportation would be either a friend or other family (48.2%) or their own car (46.9%). Another 23.9% stated that they would walk to their destination. Only 16.7% of respondents stated that they would not make the trip at all.

The data were analyzed by McLennan County vs. other HOTCOG Counties to determine if any geographic differences existed. The most significant difference was the response "Would not make the trip" with McLennan County percentages being less than half of the other HOTCOG counties (9.9% vs. 25.5% respectively). Correspondingly, McLennan County had a much higher percentage of responses for bicycles (11.2% vs. 2.8%), my own car (51.3% vs. 38.7%), taxi (8.6% vs. 1.9%) and walking (31.6% vs. 12.2%). All other responses were not significantly different.

Chart 4.5 – Mobility Options without Public Transportation



Note: Respondents were permitted to choose multiple responses.

Use of Other Transportation Services

428 respondents (80.8%) indicated which transportation services not currently provided they would likely use (See Chart 4.6). 171 respondents stated that they would like to use In-Town Bus Service. 41 respondents, however, indicated that they have used the Waco Transit Bus System (44.6% of Waco Transit Bus System users). This indicates that survey respondents did not understand what “In-Town Bus Service” meant, thus the results for “In-Town Bus Service” for Waco Transit Bus System should be disregarded.

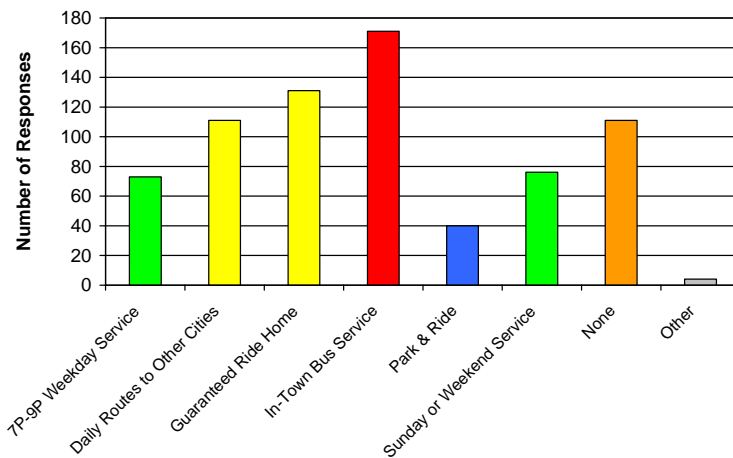
Other items with a high response rate were Guaranteed Ride Home (131 responses or 18.3%) and Daily Routes to Waco, Temple or Dallas/Fort Worth (111 responses or 15.5%). Other services had significantly lower response rates. It is interesting to note that 111 responses (15.5%) indicated that they would not use any new services, if provided.

When broken down by transit system users, Waco Transit Bus users indicated they would use an In-Town Bus Service (refer to note above – 29.7% of responses), Guaranteed Ride Home (23.2% of responses) and 7PM to 9PM Weekday Service (15.9% of responses). Of the 92 persons stating usage of the Waco Transit Bus Service, only 7 (7.6%) stated they would not use any additional service.

Persons using all other services indicated they would use an In-Town Bus Service (27.0% of responses), Daily Routes to Waco, Temple or Dallas/Ft Worth (25.3% of responses) or Guaranteed Ride Home (17.8% of responses). Of the 136 persons stating using of one of the remaining systems, merely three (2.2%) stated they would not use any additional service.

Of those who did not use any system, 101 (33.4%) stated they would not use any additional service. Of the remaining responses, In-Town Bus Service (20.5% of responses) and Guaranteed Ride Home (16.8% of responses) were the most likely to be used.

Chart 4.6 – Likely Usage of Other Services



Section 4.1.4 – Environmental Quality

All six counties within the Heart of Texas Region meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for all pollutants. Each county is therefore considered to be in air quality attainment and are not required to establish control measures to improve air quality.

This fact notwithstanding, all public transportation providers within the State of Texas are required to implement measures that reduce emissions when purchasing new vehicles. The purpose twofold: clean the air in areas that are classified as non-attainment and maintain clean air in the attainment areas. In most cases this is accomplished by the purchase of vehicles that use some type of cleaner fuel. For example, the new fleet of buses for the fixed route system for Waco Transit will utilize ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel. The current fleet for other public transportation providers in the region use either unleaded gasoline or traditional diesel. Vehicles that use traditional diesel cannot use the ultra-low sulfur formula, as it will damage the engine. Because the nation will be required to convert to ultra-low sulfur diesel by 2009, those vehicles using diesel will eventually either need to be converted for use of this type of diesel or be phased out of operation. No conversion will be necessary for the vehicles using unleaded gasoline, however. As these vehicles reach the end of their useful life, replacements must use technology that reduces smog-forming emissions.

Section 4.1.5 – Safety and Security

The purpose of emergency preparedness is to ensure that surface transportation operating agencies throughout the region have the necessary tools, techniques, information, and understanding to be able to prevent when possible, prepare for, respond to, and recover from both natural and man-made disasters.

County Emergency Management Coordinators coordinate emergency management in the Heart of Texas Region. The Trauma Council, also known as Heart of Texas Regional Advisory Council (HOTRAC), works with County Emergency Management Coordinators to develop overall planning for the region. In addition to general emergency coordination, HOTRAC works with EMS providers to coordinate ambulance and pre-hospital services.

Section 4.1.6 – Future Transportation Projects

Trans-Texas Corridor

Proposed by Governor Rick Perry in 2002, the Trans-Texas Corridor would be a series of multi-modal transportation facilities providing inter-regional travel throughout Texas (See Map 4.8). The corridor would provide separate highways for automobiles and heavy trucks, facilities for rail (freight, commuter passenger and high speed passenger), and a corridor for various utilities. One of the highest priority corridors (identified as TTC-35) is

proposed through the Heart of Texas Region. At the time of publication of this document, a preferred 10-mile wide corridor was identified which approximately parallels I-35, then turns east to bypass the Dallas/Fort Worth area. A decision on the final alignment for the corridor is not anticipated until approximately 2008. Although neither the decision to build nor exact alignments have been determined. TTC-35, if constructed, would likely have significant impacts on travel into and out of the region. For purposes of public transportation, connectivity to the commuter and high-speed passenger rail components would be important to residents of the region.

Commuter Rail

Commuter rail uses self-propelled cars on existing freight rail tracks with travel speeds less than 60 mph. These systems are generally far less expensive than other forms of passenger rail and also make numerous stops. Although a part of the Trans-Texas Corridor concept, commuter rail has only been discussed as a possibility by governments in the Heart of Texas and North Central Texas Regions and no substantive plans have as yet been developed. Conceptually, any commuter rail line would likely run from either Dallas or Fort Worth and run approximately parallel I-35 southward to reach Austin and San Antonio. Likely stops would be Cities such as Hillsboro or West with several stops in the Waco area. Should this concept become reality, connections from the other 4 counties (Bosque, Falls, Freestone and Limestone) would become important. Commuter rail has not been discussed as a concept in other portions of the region.

High Speed Passenger Rail

High-speed passenger rail refers to any such equipment that has a normal operating speed in excess of 150 mph. Due to their speed, these facilities are completely grade separated from other transportation facilities and make far fewer stops than other forms of rail transportation. In addition to the Trans-Texas Corridor, another high-speed rail concept has been proposed referred to as the "Texas T-Bone". This concept would create two high speed lines: the first line running from the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport to San Antonio, the second line running from Houston and intersecting the first line in Temple. The Texas T-Bone is currently only conceptual and does not have funding for any phase of study. It is also unclear at this time whether it would compete with or be incorporated within the TTC-35 concept.

Should some version of high-speed passenger rail becomes a reality, it can be assumed that only one stop will exist within the Heart of Texas region, most likely Waco. It is also possible that the closest stop would be Temple, especially with the Texas T-Bone concept. In either situation, additional resources would be necessary to provide connections to the facility from other communities within the region.

Section 4.2 – Legislative Barriers and Other Constraints

A number of public transportation needs have been identified for the Heart of Texas Region within section 4.1 that either currently exist or will become a need within the next 25 years. Some of these needs can be addressed through actions made by the regions local elected leaders. Some, however, cannot be addressed without changes in legislation, either at the federal or state level. This section details those changes that the Heart of Texas Region has identified that need to be made in order to provide necessary public transportation services for the region through the year 2030.

Section 4.2.1 – Legislative Barriers

Barrier 1 – Public Transportation is insufficiently funded

Federal and state funding is packaged to the legislature in such a way that it suggests an increase in funding while hiding the individual revenue sources. When the package is unwrapped, it exposes an increasing Federal portion of revenue, and a decreasing state portion. There are two problems with this. First, the Federal portion is contingent upon local match and there is no dedicated process for the consistent generation of local match by rural and small urban transit providers. Without sufficient local match, the ability to draw down available Federal funding diminishes. Second, an increased demand for service and additional service providers means that more agencies are competing for the same, basically stagnant, pot of money.

Unbundling the package prior to presentation to the legislature would provide a realistic view of funding streams. In theory, this would encourage legislators to earmark more state funding for public transportation. Additionally, creating a consistent method for securing local match would assure maximum drawdown of available Federal funding.

Barrier 2 – Reporting Guidelines

The reporting guidelines for providing public transportation to various groups of people in specific sections of the Authorization Bill for public transportation, including sections 5307, 5310, and 5311, result in preventing coordinated services among various transportation providers and ineffective use of infrastructure. For example, section 5311 does not allow for rural providers to maintain fixed route systems that would increase rider-ship and provide a more coordinated service.

A cohesive Authorization Bill that applies the same general guidelines for client eligibility in both rural, small urban and urban settings would allow more efficient use of agency vehicles, and more coordinated efforts between transportation providers in getting people where they want to go, when they want to be there.

Barrier 3 – Lack of standard policies and procedures for drivers

Internal policies and procedures of transportation providers that affect reporting of driver training and testing at the transit provider level differ between all transportation agencies. Driver training and testing requirements vary among agencies, specifically among those that utilize small, 15 passenger vans compared to the urban provider utilizing large buses. Development of standardized policies and procedures that affect all drivers and their training is necessary to effectively coordinate a regional transportation system.

Barrier 4 – Urban Sprawl/Land-Use Law

State law prohibits the restriction of land uses outside of incorporated cities and a few select counties. In addition, many cities do not have land use restrictions. The resulting development has pushed residential, commercial, office, industrial and public sector land uses far apart from each other. In order to serve the same number of persons and to connect to the same services, public transportation providers must cover even greater distances. For urban services, the low population densities of new developments makes fixed route services unfeasible, further stretching the resources of demand response services. The state legislature does not necessarily need to enact or permit land use restrictions everywhere; however, if they choose not to, additional resources will be needed for public transportation to offset the greater travel distances required as a result of urban sprawl.

Section 4.2.2 – Other Constraints

Constraints differ from legislative barriers in that these are changes that can be made by local elected leaders or by administrative changes by local service providers. Legislative action is not required for these changes to become reality.

Constraint 1

Public transportation in rural and small urban areas is not viewed as an integral part of the local infrastructure

This constraint is two-fold. First, the City and County leaders do not make the building of a progressive public transportation system a priority. Second, local funding is often committed to new residential, retail and medical development projects with little or no consideration about the subsequent need for access to public transportation this development creates. Better marketing campaigns are a good source of informing the public; however, with already limited funding in the transportation agencies, this is not a viable solution.

Constraint 2

Lack of statewide directory for public transportation providers

A statewide directory for public transportation providers and subcontractors with detailed contact information and service description would be of great assistance in coordinating services between regions and between service providers within the same region.

A printed and/or web-based directory should include:

- Transit Agency
- Physical address and phone number
- Hours of operation
- Types of service
- Fares

Constraint 3

Lack of statewide, standardized scheduling, tracking, and reporting at the public transportation service provider level

There are numerous reporting software packages being used by many transportation agencies that make it difficult to systematically coordinate trips across regional boundaries. Development of standardized, uniform technology will allow coordination among various districts and provide a more adequate means of scheduling, tracking and reporting ridership, eliminating inefficiencies and/or overlapping service.

Constraint 4

Lack of coordinated resources for maintenance of equipment

Rural providers throughout the region utilize small, often over-booked repair shops for maintenance of their fleet. Because these shops do not typically stock the specialized parts needed for the paratransit vehicles, they are forced to keep the vehicles out of service for lengthy periods of time, thus reducing the ability of the provider to meet transportation needs. Unfortunately, often times these repair shops lack expertise to accomplish the repairs quickly and defer to third party agreements that further extend the repair time.

Developing a coordinated vehicle service program with urban facilities that perform a high volume of vehicle repairs and utilize mechanics that have the expertise would decrease downtime and increase service capability. Once a baseline has been established on the fleet, quarterly maintenance could be scheduled as vehicles make regular trips into the city.

Constraint 5

Lack of inter-regional cooperation to assure access to other parts of the state

The current system fails to quickly and seamlessly meet the needs of an individual who, for whatever reason, must cross regional lines. For example, a veteran who lives in Houston but needs the expertise of a doctor at the VA center in Temple, must engage in a tiresome process involving multiple transportation providers in order to follow through with the appointment. One way to address this problem is for transit providers to develop a set up of rendezvous pick up points to be routinely used when trips need to cross regions.

Chapter 5 – Recommendations

This chapter identifies projects or services that the RTCC has identified as being important to meeting the public transportation needs of the region and / or making the existing services more efficient. This chapter identifies projects that can be implemented immediately without additional funds as well as those requiring substantial planning and new revenue sources. Finally, this chapter outlines the efforts regional leaders intend to implement to continue this planning process into the future.

Section 5.1 – Action Items / Service Descriptions

Projects identified within this section are listed in order of priority. High priority has been assigned to projects that have fast implementation schedules, do not require additional revenues or have significant benefits to the region.

PROJECT 1: Support Creation of Coordination Funding Source

Project Description/Background:

Public transportation coordination promises to improve the efficiency of transit services, to create opportunity for filling unmet needs and to simplify system access to the public. Many coordination projects require start-up capital and related staff expenses. For example, joint scheduling of trips in the HOTCOG region requires an investment in scheduling software and related staff training. Integrated vehicle maintenance requires acquisition of specialized tools and will require establishment of a maintenance program and vehicle records. Current funding is not adequate to support all start-up capital and related operating costs. This issue transcends the HOTCOG region; many regions are likely to face this same issue.

Because this issue transcends this region, the RTCC plans to work with other regions to develop support for the creation of a transit coordination fund to support initiation of projects. Similar to a program developed by the Ohio Department of Transportation, a discretionary fund should be created that can be used to buy capital equipment and pay staff start-up activity costs. The operating cost of coordination projects would not be funded through this source.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG region service providers
- Peer regions

Anticipated Benefits:

- Deserving coordination projects can be implemented without reducing funding for services
- Deserving coordination projects can be implemented quickly
- The benefits of these projects then accrue

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Develop a strategy for establishing the funding

Necessary Agreements:

- Not applicable

Performance Measures:

- Return on investment for funded projects

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Include on legislative agenda discussion:

Nov, 2006

PROJECT 2: Create Continuous Coordination Planning Process**Project Description/Background:**

Public transportation coordination promises to improve the efficiency of transit services, to create opportunity for filling unmet needs, and to simplify system access to the public. A continuous coordination planning process will be required to support ongoing coordination efforts of the Heart of Texas regional coordination service plan. The RTCC will need to meet on a regular basis to modify and update the regional plan as necessary. The RTCC will meet on a quarterly basis or more often if necessary as called by the Council Chairperson to ensure the intent of regional coordination continues throughout the Heart of Texas region. The meetings will be held at 10:30 AM on the fourth Tuesday of January, April, July, and October with locations to be determined prior to meeting dates.

Regional coordination will require support from elected officials, public transportation providers, private transportation providers, social service agencies, and others interested in improving access to transportation services within the Heart of Texas region. All coordination activities will require updates, revisions, and oversight.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG
- Waco Transit
- Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Private transportation providers
- Heart of Texas Workforce Board
- Heart of Texas MHMR Center
- Social service agencies
- Other interested agencies

Anticipated Benefits:

- Continuation of RTCC
- A regional coordination living plan updated on a yearly basis
- A coordinated region of service providers, clients, and agencies

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Not applicable

Necessary Agreements:

- RTCC By-Laws

Performance Measures:

- Regional ridership data
- Cost efficiency measures
- Project implementation schedule

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Quarterly meetings each year starting:

Jan, 2007

PROJECT 3: Vehicle Maintenance Integration**Project Description/Background:**

HOTCOG will contract with Waco Transit for maintenance of the paratransit fleet that is operated by private providers.

HOTCOG is the coordinating entity of rural transit in the Heart of Texas region. Four private providers deliver paratransit services and are under contract to HOTCOG. HOTCOG owns 46 high-top lift-equipped vans that are supplied to the private providers. In addition, there are 13 other 5310 vehicles purchased by CTSM prior to the change in laws. CTSM maintains these vehicles and uses them for Section 5310 transportation in urban and rural McLennan county. These services are delivered in a 5649 square mile region.

The private providers use local maintenance shops to service the van fleet. These small rural shops often are back-logged or do not carry specialized parts required to maintain paratransit vans (particularly the wheelchair lift, a component that requires careful maintenance). This results in long vehicle down-times, making it difficult for the provider to meet service demands.

The fixed-route urban provider in the HOTCOG region is Waco Transit. Waco Transit recently opened a new state-of-the-art maintenance and administrative facility. The maintenance area currently has capacity to increase the size of fleet that is maintained. Further, the maintenance area is also expandable for an even greater maintenance capacity. Waco Transit has a skilled workforce that is accustomed to repairing paratransit vehicles.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG
- Waco Transit
- Private paratransit service providers
- Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan Counties

Anticipated Benefits:

- Increased availability of the paratransit fleet
- Cost savings for the maintenance of the paratransit fleet

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Inspection of the HOTCOG paratransit fleet by Waco Transit
- Completion of necessary repairs based upon inspection
- Establishment of vehicle records for the new fleet by Waco Transit

Necessary Agreements:

- Paratransit vehicle maintenance standards/ plan
- Scope of services laying out standards, compensation methodology
- MOU between both agencies contingent upon policy Board approval

Performance Measures:

- Vehicle availability (average number of vehicles available for daily service)
- Maintenance cost per vehicle mile

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

HOTCOG/Waco Transit establish standards/plans:	Feb, 2007
HOTCOG/Waco Transit/CTSM negotiate MOU terms:	Jan, 2007
Policy Board approvals:	Apr, 2007
Fleet inspection/repairs:	Jun, 2007
Implement integrated maintenance:	Jul, 2007

PROJECT 4: Pilot Rural to Community-to-Waco Connectivity Project**Project Description/Background:**

The rural to community connectivity project will provide selected areas within the HOTCOG region access to the City of Waco for employment, educational, and other necessary services to enhance quality of life opportunities. The connectivity project will provide graduating high school students, unemployed trained workers, and entry-level untrained workers from lower income areas of the region a reliable and affordable mode of transportation from rural areas with high unemployment rates, minimal employment options, and limited educational facilities above the high school level.

Partnering Agencies:

- Regional transportation service providers
- Heart of Texas Workforce Board
- Educational Institutions
- Heart of Texas Workforce Center
- Area employers

Anticipated Benefits:

- Higher employment rates in selected areas
- More opportunities for employers to access trained workers
- Public and private partnerships for transportation services

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Initial operating cost of service start-up
- Costs of marketing the service
- Public outreach in selected areas
- Route selection and design

Necessary Agreements:

- Joint approval of program rules and participant qualifications
- MOU between participating agencies
- Employer Contracts

Performance Measures:

- Ridership
- Revenue generated by program

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Development of service area:	Jan, 2007
Drafting of connectivity project:	Mar, 2007
Route development:	May, 2007
Service Implementation:	Aug, 2007

PROJECT 5: Statewide Transportation Services Handbook

Project Description/Background:

The development of a statewide transportation services handbook will aid in a more effective and efficient transportation system for citizens by providing reference between providers to coordinate trips. Many providers are unaware of services available outside their respective service areas or between providers within the same service area.

Each regional scheduling center or provider will be able to utilize the handbook for development of transfer points, future route planning, and one stop scheduling of passenger trips throughout the state. Additionally, the handbook will provide contact and service information on providers, suppliers, repair centers, and coordination programs. Detailed information on fare structure, service hours, service programs, and contact information would fill an existing gap in coordination efforts.

Partnering Agencies:

- All public and private transportation service providers within the state
- Public transportation vendors and suppliers

Anticipated Benefits:

- Quick reference
- More efficient and effective trip scheduling
- Improved customer service

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Information gathering
- Handbook development
- Handbook design and printing
- Advertising and marketing
- Statewide distribution of handbook

Necessary Agreements:

- Advertising contracts
- Printing agreements

Performance Measures:

- Copy distribution
- Advertising revenue/participation
- One stop scheduling of trip requests

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Information gathering and dissemination:	Feb, 2007
Layout and art work development:	May, 2007
Printing:	Aug, 2007
Handbook distribution:	Oct, 2007

PROJECT 6: Design Service Routes Serving Multiple Counties

Project Description/Background:

Service Routes serving multiple counties will allow rural operators to establish a route system with consistent ridership that meets the actual need in selected areas. The methodology behind service routes will allow for a more efficient service for the clients riding in the selected areas and provide the rural operator more control over vehicle and driver assignments. The service route program provides a stable demand responsive route system to service certain areas of the community on selected days and selected times. Once the service route areas are selected, the rural provider notifies all riders in the area of the times and days the service will be provided. The client can then plan their routine travel within the established time schedules providing the client with a more defined transportation experience. The coordination of trips at the local level provide for a more seamless transportation system and allow the client more control over their daily lives.

Many areas of the HOTCOG region require transportation services on select days and/or times of the day due to regularly scheduled appointments. Clients request trips for their transportation needs throughout the HOTCOG region by contacting the local transportation provider at least a day in advance. Rural providers in the HOTCOG region assign vehicles based upon demand. Clients request trips as needed, but must at times modify their trip request due to demand on the rural public transportation system and vehicle availability. The rural service is provided as a first come first serve program and those clients who may call in requests later are asked to negotiate another time or another day to receive transportation service. If service routes are defined, the client who may call in later requesting a trip within the defined service route area and time would be more likely to receive the requested trip.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG
- Private paratransit providers
- TxDOT

Anticipated Benefits:

- Increased ridership
- More reliable rural transportation
- Lower operating costs
- Decreases in trip negotiations

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Costs of marketing the service
- Public outreach in selected areas
- Route selection(s) and design

Necessary Agreements:

- Joint approval of program rules
- MOU between HOTCOG and TxDOT

Performance Measures:

- Ridership
- Passengers per hour counts
- Cost per revenue mile

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Program development:	Mar, 2007
TxDOT Approval:	Aug, 2007
Route selection(s):	Oct, 2007
Client notification:	Nov, 2007
Service implementation:	Jan, 2008

PROJECT 7: Integrate Scheduling for Rural Trips

Project Description/Background:

The integration of scheduling functions within one regional center will provide citizens within the HOTCOG region a one-stop shop for requesting demand responsive transportation services. The regional scheduling project will utilize facilities and infrastructure currently in place. The regional scheduling of trips will provide more efficient utilization of facilities, equipment, and scheduling personnel. The regional scheduling center will supervise coordinated distribution of all demand responsive trips to transportation providers throughout the region. All passenger trips will be managed

through effective use of vehicles and drivers; this ensures the availability of a truly seamless and coordinated network of transportation services to citizens of the HOTCOG region. All clients will be able to request all demand responsive trips originating within the HOTCOG region by calling one phone number.

Each individual public transportation provider within the region provides a scheduling person(s) to answer calls for trip requests, modification, or cancellation. The individual scheduling personnel assign trips to vehicles and drivers based upon the availability of their respective capacity and individual system resources. The combination of scheduling functions among all transportation providers within the region will allow maximum utilization of all public transportation provider's vehicles and personnel within the HOTCOG region.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG
- Waco Transit
- All private paratransit providers

Anticipated Benefits:

- More efficient and effective trip scheduling
- Improved customer service
- Better utilization of facilities, equipment, and personnel
- Increase in client trips

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Acquisition of a common regional scheduling program
- Setup for regional scheduling center
- Personnel training
- Marketing of scheduling center information throughout region

Necessary Agreements:

- Regional scheduling center standards/plan
- Scope of services laying out standards, compensation methodology
- MOU for both agencies' policy Board approval

Performance Measures:

- Increase in passenger per hour performance
- Ridership increase
- Vehicle utilization
- Zero trip denials within region
- Tracking of trip coordination

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

HOTCOG/Waco Transit establish standards/plans:	May, 2007
HOTCOG/Waco Transit negotiate MOU terms:	July, 2007
Policy Board approvals:	Sep, 2007
Scheduling software acquisition/implementation:	Jan, 2008
Implement regional scheduling center:	Apr, 2008

PROJECT 8: Rural Transit/Workforce Voucher Program**Project Description/Background:**

In the region, many job seekers are without a dedicated and reliable source of funds for transportation services to access education and job training centers, workforce programs, or employment. A newly established voucher program has the potential for providing dependable transportation services for job seekers to access these services. Four private providers serve rural transit areas and could provide transportation services through greater marketing. The voucher program is currently funded by the Heart of Texas Workforce and could be funded through partnerships with employer contributions in the future. The voucher program will help build a trained workforce throughout the region.

Partnering Agencies:

- Heart of Texas Workforce Board
- Private paratransit service providers
- Area employers

Anticipated Benefits:

- Reliable access for job seekers in rural areas
- More reliable workforce
- Better trained workforce
- Increased ridership

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Development of outreach methods and marketing strategy
- Designation of test areas within region

Necessary Agreements:

- MOU between Rural Transportation Providers and Workforce Board
- Employer Contracts

Performance Measures:

- Job seeker participation
- Number of successful members
- Participant ridership

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Marketing and outreach of program and participant qualifications: March, 2007

Development of employer participation: Sep, 2007

Employer Contracts Issued: Jan, 2008

PROJECT 9: Consolidate Paratransit Van Procurement**Project Description/Background:**

In the region, multiple providers operate paratransit vans. Four private providers under contract to HOTCOG serve rural transit needs and provide urban services to the elderly and disabled. Waco Transit operates fixed-route transit in the Waco urbanized area and complementary ADA paratransit within that area. HOTCOG and Waco Transit are pursuing integrated vehicle maintenance as part of their region's coordination plan.

This project builds upon the integrated vehicle maintenance plan to increase the benefits of that program. A common paratransit fleet among all 5307, 5310 and 5311 providers within the region would streamline both operation and maintenance activities. Drivers could be jointly trained on the vehicle operation and mechanics would maintain a single basic vehicle regardless of provider.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG
- Waco Transit
- Private paratransit service providers

Anticipated Benefits:

- The cost of maintaining the paratransit fleet will reduce
- Parts stocking will be simplified
- Both driver and mechanic training will be simplified

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Joint development of a common paratransit vehicle specification
- Development of a regional vehicle replacement/acquisition plan
- No significant start up cost envisioned

Necessary Agreements:

- Joint approval of specification and vehicle replacement/acquisition plan

Performance Measures:

- Vehicle availability (average number of vehicles available for daily service)
- Maintenance cost per vehicle mile

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Drafting of paratransit vehicle specification: May, 2007
Drafting of regional paratransit vehicle acquisition plan: Sep, 2007

PROJECT 10: Develop Reverse-Commute Service with Employers

Project Description/Background:

The reverse-commute service will provide residents within the urbanized area express service between designated areas of Waco and major employment centers. Travel time to and from work will be decreased through the express reverse-commute service program. The reverse-commute service will be provided during peak hours including mornings, evenings, and/or scheduled shift changes of the major employment centers within the urbanized area. The reverse-commute service will be provided by utilization of existing revenue vehicles.

The current fixed route system provides regularly scheduled service to these areas, but due to the distances between employees and the major employment centers many employees find the fixed route system does not meet their required needs based upon travel time. With this in mind, the reverse-commute service would provide more timely service for the employees to and from the employment centers. This program would offer a larger employee selection pool for employers to hire employees.

Partnering Agencies:

- Waco Transit
- Heart of Texas Workforce Board
- Major employers with the urbanized area
- HOTCOG

Anticipated Benefits:

- Shorter travel times to work
- Larger employee selection pool for employers

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Route selection(s) and design
- Costs of marketing the service
- Public outreach to employers and employees

Necessary Agreements:

- Funding source agreements

Performance Measures:

- Ridership
- Passengers per hour counts
- Employer and employee satisfaction

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Program development:	Mar, 2008
Route Selection:	Mar, 2010
Service implementation:	Oct, 2012

PROJECT 11: Integrate Dispatching for Urban, Rural, and MTP Trips

Project Description/Background:

The integration of dispatching functions within one regional center will provide regional oversight and coordination of the day-to-day functions. A centralized dispatch function will provide citizens a one-stop shop for checking vehicle arrival times, same day trip requests, and current trip information. The regional dispatching of trips will provide more efficient utilization of equipment on a real time basis. Cancellations and same day trip management can be provided at the time of occurrence. The regional dispatching center will supervise coordinated distribution of all demand responsive trips to transportation providers on a real time basis. All passenger trips will be managed through effective use of vehicles and drivers to ensure a seamless and coordinated network of transportation services without trip denials. All clients will be able to request information on the day of service for all demand responsive trips originating within the region by calling one phone number.

Currently, each individual public transportation provider within the region provides a dispatching function to provide day of trip support to drivers and clients. Many times various providers receive requests for trip modification or same day trips, but do not realize another provider could provide the requested trip due to cancellations or available passenger seating. The individual dispatching personnel normally would not allow changes to schedules or add-on trips unless the requested changes can be worked into the existing schedule, but a regional dispatching system would provide clients with immediate trip assignments through the regional dispatching center allowing more efficient service to the client on same day trip requests and changes. The combination of dispatching functions among all transportation providers within the region will allow maximum utilization of all transportation provider's vehicles and personnel within the region on a real time basis.

The regional dispatching project will require additional capital purchases to include a system able to provide immediate communication between drivers and dispatchers throughout the region. The equipment would include mobile data terminals and voice operated instruments. Radio and/or cellular equipment will be required to provide coverage and support of the entire region.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG
- Waco Transit
- All private paratransit providers

Anticipated Benefits:

- Real time trip modifications and/or additions
- Improved customer service
- Better utilization of equipment and personnel
- Increase in client satisfaction

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Acquisition of a regional radio and/or cellular equipment
- Setup for regional dispatching center
- Personnel training
- Marketing of dispatching center information throughout region

Necessary Agreements:

- Regional scheduling center standards/plan
- Scope of services laying out standards, compensation methodology
- MOU for both agencies' policy Board approval

Performance Measures:

- Increase in passenger per hour performance
- Ridership increase
- Vehicle utilization
- Zero trip denials within region
- Tracking of trip coordination
- Same day trip performance

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

HOTCOG/Waco Transit establish standards/plans:	Aug, 2008
HOTCOG/Waco Transit seek funding:	Jan, 2008
HOTCOG/Waco Transit negotiate MOU terms:	July, 2009
Policy Board approvals:	Sep, 2009
Equipment acquisition/implementation/construction:	Jan, 2010
Implement regional dispatching center:	Jan, 2011

PROJECT 12: Plan Mid-to-Long Term Commuter Service Program

Project Description/Background:

The growing demand on roadways in the McLennan County area will exceed the future projected demand of the existing and future funded road network construction. With this in mind, traffic congestion will increase above capacity on various roadways within McLennan County. A viable solution for congestion mitigation would be to provide mid-to-long term commuter services. These services would provide area residents with park and ride options on congested roadways entering the Waco urbanized area. The peek hour commuter service would provide express service to major employment centers and the Downtown Intermodal Center of Waco Transit. Commuters could then utilize the fixed route public transportation system for daily trips and the commuter service for trips in and out of the city.

Congestion continues to rise throughout roadways across the State of Texas and McLennan County is no different. The amounts of construction dollars available to improve, provide additional lanes, and maintain roadways are limited. Through service modeling and data projections, commuter service in and around the Waco urbanized area will become a viable option for residents in McLennan County.

Partnering Agencies:

- Waco Transit
- HOTCOG
- City of Waco
- TxDOT
- FTA

Anticipated Benefits:

- Decrease in congestion
- Maintenance of current air quality and non-attainment status

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Plan development including environmental planning/analysis
- Route selection(s) and design
- Property acquisition
- Park and Ride lot construction
- Commuter vehicle procurement
- Costs of marketing the service
- Public outreach to employers and employees

Necessary Agreements:

- Funding source agreements
- Land acquisition agreements
- Construction Contracts

Performance Measures:

- Ridership
- Passengers per hour counts
- Congestion Mitigation
- Air Quality

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

Program development:	Mar, 2010
Route Selection:	Mar, 2011
Property Acquisition:	Oct, 2012
Construction:	Oct, 2014
Service implementation:	Oct, 2016

PROJECT 13: Consolidate Project identity

Project Description/Background

Currently in the Heart of Texas region, multiple transit providers are identified by the name of their county or organization. All of the rural providers are subsidized from grants through the HOTCOG Rural Transit District. The sister urban provider is a contract vendor of the City of Waco.

By developing a common identify, coordinated transportation would symbolize the unified effort amongst both urban and rural providers to provide a seamless transportation experience for riders. The common identity would not eliminate existing agency names, but would represent the agency’s participation and commitment to regional coordination.

Partnering Agencies:

- HOTCOG
- Waco Transit
- Central Texas Senior Ministry
- Bosque County Transit
- Falls County Transit
- Hill County Transit
- Limestone County Transit
- Freestone County Transit

Anticipated Benefits:

- Coordinates service delivery
- Standard logos on all vehicles

Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities:

- Cost of the logo design

Necessary Agreements:

- Joint development of a logo to be used on all transit vehicles
- Resolution from all boards represented in the coordinated effort

Performance Measures:

- Acceptance by the communities
- Increased ridership with coordinated representation

Schedule (projected task completion dates):

- Board approvals February 07
- Order logos March 07
- Secure logos on all vehicles April 07

Insert Chart 5.1 – Project Implementation Schedule

Insert Chart 5.2 – Project Matrix

Section 5.2 – Continuing & Sustaining the Plan

Sustaining the Plan

Members of the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC) are responsible for the maintenance of the regional coordination plan through quarterly meeting and annual updates of the plan documents.

As the lead agency, The HOTCOG of the Regional Transportation Coordination Plan, the HOTCOG will ensure quarterly meeting agendas are generated and posted, will provide administrative support to the RTCC, and will provide the needed staff support to ensure maintenance and yearly updates of the Heart of Texas Regional Coordination Plan are completed.

Regional Transportation Coordination Council By-Laws

Every two (2) years a chairperson of the council will be elected by a majority of the members present at the January meeting. The chairperson of the council is limited to serving two (2) consecutive two (2) year terms.

A Vice-Chairperson of the council will be elected every two (2) years by a majority of the members present at the January meeting. The vice-chairperson of the council is limited to serving two (2) consecutive two (2) year terms. The vice-chairperson will provide support to the chairperson and in the event of the absence of the chairperson will act in their behalf.

The chairperson can appoint subcommittees and/or working groups of the RTCC members to address issues, concerns, and planning activities of the council.

Any By-Law changes or additions must be presented to RTCC for a majority vote of the members present at the January meeting.

Meeting Schedule

The RTCC will meet on a quarterly basis, more often if necessary, to modify and update the regional plan to ensure the intent of regional coordination continues throughout the Heart of Texas region.

Regular meetings will be held at 10:30 AM on the fourth Tuesday of January, April, July, and October with locations to be determined prior to meeting dates. The lead agency will send out periodic updates, agendas, and information as necessary to meet the adopted schedule.

Annual Updates to the Plan

All annual plan updates will be provided for council approval prior to the October quarterly meeting for implementation and inclusion in the update process of the plan each year. All approved updates to the plan will be completed after the October council meeting and prior to the January council meeting for adoption during the January council meeting.

Project Management

Each project and/or action item will be assigned a project manager who will be responsible to the Council Chairperson for updates to the project and provide oversight to ensure the project remains on schedule. Project managers will request assistance as needed to complete projects as adopted by the RTCC.

Project Submittal

All new project or action item requests will be submitted to the council chairperson by the deadline of September 1st of each year for inclusion as an agenda item on the RTCC's October meeting. All changes, modifications, and new projects must be adopted by a majority vote of the RTCC. All new projects submitted for inclusion into the Regional Coordination Plan will be submitted in the following format:

- Project Description/Background
- Partnering Agencies
- Anticipated Benefits
- Anticipated Start-up Costs/Activities
- Necessary Agreements
- Performance Measures
- Anticipated Schedule
- Sustaining Costs/Activities

Appendix A – Supporting Maps

Insert Map 2.1 – HOT Region

Insert Map 2.2 – Population Density

Insert Map 2.3 – Household Income

Insert Map 2.4 – Poverty

Insert Map 2.5 – Persons over Age 65

Insert Map 2.6 – Persons with a Disability

Insert Map 2.7 – Housing Units with No Autos

Insert Map 2.8 – Waco Transit Fixed Routes

Insert Map 2.9 – Amtrak & Aviation

Insert Map 2.10 – Greyhound

Insert Map 4.1 – Transit Need Index HOT Region

Insert Map 4.2 – Transit Need Index Waco

Insert Map 4.3 – Employment Destinations

Insert Map 4.4 – Educational Destinations

Insert Map 4.5 – Medical Destinations

Insert Map 4.6 – Nursing Homes & Senior Centers

Insert Map 4.7 – Waco Congestion

Appendix B – Demographic Data

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Appendix C – Transit Need Index

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Appendix D – Survey Results

Question 1: Before this survey, are you aware of the public transportation services available in your area?

Yes: 346 (66.16%)
No: 177 (33.84%)
No Answer: 7

Question 2: How many times during the past 12 months have you used any public transportation service?

			Of those who answered yes to question 1:		
None:	265	(50.00%)	None:	179	(51.73%)
1 or 2:	43	(8.11%)	1 or 2:	37	(10.69%)
3 or 4:	26	(4.91%)	3 or 4:	25	(7.23%)
5 to 10:	29	(5.47%)	5 to 10:	26	(7.51%)
11 or more:	78	(14.72%)	11 or more:	71	(20.52%)
No Answer:	89		No Answer:	8	

Question 3: Which services have you used? (Check all that apply)

Waco Transit Bus	92	(32.39%)
Greyhound	45	(15.85%)
Limestone County Transit	41	(14.44%)
Taxi	35	(12.32%)
Bosque County Transit	16	(5.63%)
CTSM – Hill	15	(5.28%)
Freestone County Transit	14	(4.93%)
Waco Transit Van	11	(3.87%)
CTSM – McLennan	8	(2.82%)
CTSM – Falls	6	(2.11%)
Other	1	(0.4%)

Question 4A: Do these transportation services meet your needs?

Yes	200	(63.69%)
No	114	(36.31%)
No Answer	216	

Question 4B: If no, please check all of the reasons why your needs are not met.

They don't go where I need to go	41	(23.16%)
I have to wait too long	36	(20.34%)
I can't afford it	22	(12.43%)
I have been late or have missed appointments	22	(12.43%)
There is not a regular schedule	18	(10.17%)
Other	38	(21.47%)
No Answer	198	

Question 5: If you have used these transportation services, what were the primary reasons for your trip? (Check all that apply)

Medical Appointment	140	(33.73%)
Work	75	(18.07%)
Shopping	44	(10.60%)
Workforce Assistance	44	(10.60%)
Welfare Assistance	26	(6.27%)
Recreation	26	(6.27%)
School	24	(5.78%)
Government Business	14	(3.37%)
Hair / Beauty Salon	6	(1.45%)
Other	16	(3.86%)
No Answer	304	

Question 6: How likely are you to use these services again?

Very Likely	121	(42.61%)
Somewhat Likely	68	(23.94%)
Not Likely	62	(21.83%)
Never	33	(11.62%)
No Answer	246	

Question 7: If these services were not available, how would you get to where you need to go? (Check all that apply)

Friend / Other Family	147	(31.41%)
My Own Car	143	(30.56%)
Walk	73	(15.60%)
Would not make the trip	51	(10.90%)
Bicycle	22	(4.70%)
Taxi	18	(3.85%)
Greyhound / Other Bus	11	(2.35%)
Other	3	(0.64%)
No Answer	225	

Question 8: How did you hear about these services? (Check all that apply)

Word of Mouth	153	(30.36%)
Friend / Other Family	101	(20.04%)
Welfare Office	45	(8.93%)
Government Office	34	(6.75%)
Medical Office	31	(6.15%)
Newspaper	29	(5.75%)
Employer	24	(4.76%)
TV	20	(3.97%)
Radio	13	(2.58%)
School	7	(1.39%)
Internet	6	(1.19%)
Shopping Center	6	(1.19%)
Other	35	(6.94%)
No Answer	175	

Question 9: If made available, which of the following transportation services would you likely use? (Check all that apply)

In-Town Bus Service	171	(23.85%)
Guaranteed Ride Home	131	(18.27%)
Daily Routes to Waco, Temple or Dallas/Ft Worth	111	(15.48%)
None	111	(15.48%)
Sunday or Weekend Service	76	(10.60%)
7PM to 9PM Weekday Service	73	(10.18%)
Park & Ride	40	(5.58%)
Other	4	(0.56%)
No Answer	102	

Appendix E – Likely Destinations for Public Transportation Users

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Appendix F – Statewide Inventory Survey

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Appendix G – Public Outreach Summary

The Regional Transportation Coordination Committee voted unanimously to present the first draft of the Hot of Texas Regional Service Plan to the following board meetings and council meetings in order to solicit letters of support and / or resolutions.

The first draft of the HOT Regional Service Plan was presented at numerous public meetings held in conjunction with Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCG), town hall meetings, and Commissioners' Court meetings during the months of September and October, 2006. These meetings were well attended with many recommendations to move the project forward. Written public comments were received from the forms that were distributed and are included in this document.

Schedule of Board Meetings:

- October 19, 2006 5:30 PM Heart of Texas Workforce Board
- October 20, 2006 5:15 PM Waco Transit Board Meeting
- October 26, 2006 10:00 AM Heart of Texas Council of Governments
- November 10, 2006 2:00 PM Waco MPO Technical Committee
- November 14, 2006 2:00 PM Waco MPO Policy Board
- November 21, 2006 4:00 PM Central Texas Senior Ministries
- November 21, 2006 3:00 PM Waco City Council Meeting – Work Session
- November 21, 2006 6:00 PM Waco City Council Meeting – Business Session

The last planning meeting of the Regional Transportation Coordination Committee was held on November 28, 2006. During the meeting, only minor changes were recommended for our Service Plan before the final document could be printed.

Also during the RTCC meeting, the "Framework for Action, A Self Assessment Tool for Communities," was completed as a group. This assessment raised much discussion,

particularly for the future to sustain the plan. The final copy and comments of the "Framework for Action" are included with this Plan.

The first meeting of the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Council has been set for the fourth Tuesday in January, 2007. As noted earlier in this Plan, an official council will be established during this meeting along with election of officers.

Appendix H – Resolutions of Adoption or Support

Bosque County



October 31, 2006

Regional Coordination Plan
The Heart of Texas Region
Heart of Texas Council of Governments
Lead Agency
1415 South New Road
Waco, Texas 76711

Dear Regional Transportation Coordination Committee:

Please accept this letter of support for the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Plan and continued success as you undertake the task of implementing the Plan.

We strongly support the endeavors of the Regional Transportation Plan and the benefits it will bring to the communities in Bosque, Falls Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan counties. We feel the projects outlined within the Plan have been researched thoroughly and are essential in fulfilling the needs of our communities.

Sincerely,



Cole Word
County Judge

Central Texas Senior Ministry



MEALS ON WHEELS • SENIOR CENTERS • TRANSPORTATION

November 21, 2006

Regional Coordination Plan
The Heart of Texas Region
Heart of Texas Council of Governments
Lead Agency
1415 South New Road
Waco, Texas 76711

Dear Regional Transportation Coordination Committee:

Please accept this letter as an initial endorsement for the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Plan and continued success as you undertake the task of implementing the Plan.

We strongly support the endeavors of the Regional Transportation Plan and the benefits it will bring to the communities of Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan Counties. We feel the projects outlined within the Plan have been researched thoroughly and are essential in fulfilling the needs of our communities.

Sincerely,



Bill Dube, President
Central Texas Senior Ministry Board of Directors

P.O. Box 85
Waco, Texas 76703
254-752-0316
Fax: 254-752-0387
www.seniorministry.org

Freestone County

FREESTONE COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES
FREESTONE COUNTY TRANSIT
201 NORTH BATEMAN ROAD,
FAIRFIELD, TEXAS 75840
(903)389-5800
FAX (903)389-2802
nan11@valornet.com

November 1, 2006

Regional Coordination Plan
The Heart of Texas Region
Heart of Texas Council of Governments
Lead Agency
1415 South New Road
Waco, Texas 76711

Dear Regional Transportation Coordination Committee:

Please accept this letter of support for the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Plan and continued success as you undertake the task of implementing the Plan.

We strongly support the endeavors of the Regional Transportation Plan and the benefits it will bring to the communities in Bosque, Falls Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan counties. We feel the projects outlined within the Plan have been researched thoroughly and are essential in fulfilling the needs of our communities.

Sincerely,



Linda Grant
Freestone County Judge

Limestone County



STATE OF TEXAS

Limestone County

ELENOR F. HOLMES
County Judge

254-729-3810
FAX: 254-729-2643
elenor.holmes@co.limestone.tx.us

P. O. Box 469
200 W. State St., Suite 101
Groesbeck, Texas 76642

November 15, 2006

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HOTCOG

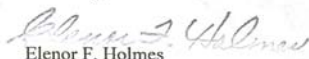
Regional Coordination Plan
The Heart of Texas Region
Heart of Texas Council of Governments
Lead Agency
1415 South New Road
Waco, Texas 76711

Dear Regional Transportation Coordination Committee:

Please accept this letter of support for the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Cooperation Plan and continued success as you undertake the task of implementing the Plan.

We strongly support the endeavors of the Regional Transportation Plan and the benefits it will bring to the communities in Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan counties. We feel the projects outlined within the Plan have been researched thoroughly and are essential in fulfilling the needs of our communities.

Sincerely,


Elenor F. Holmes
County Judge

/pf

Heart of Texas Council of Governments



Calvin Rueter
President

Judge Cole Word
Vice-President

Mayor Ken Hensel
Secretary/Treasurer

Kenneth L. Simons, CPA
Executive Director

HEART OF TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING A TRANSPORTATION REGIONAL SERVICE PLAN FOR THE HEART OF TEXAS REGION

WHEREAS The Heart of Texas Council of Governments, the McLennan County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Heart of Texas Workforce Board, Waco Transit and the Transportation Providers for Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan counties agree that coordinated transportation of people is extremely important to thousands of customers traveling daily on public service vehicles.

WHEREAS, the need for regional cooperation on transportation issues affects all of the public transportation providers in the Heart of Texas Region; and

WHEREAS, the importance of developing a regional mobility among all public transportation providers in the Region will create a seamless transportation for the public; and

WHEREAS all of the public transportation providers have come together to develop a Regional Service Plan as mandated by HB 3588 and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) which will eliminate duplicated service and inefficiencies while reducing air pollution; a jointly written service plan for the Heart of Texas region will be presented to the Texas Transportation Commission and the Public Transportation division of the Texas Department of Transportation. This Plan represents not only the letter but the spirit of the act by which the Heart of Texas region's transportation clients and providers are dedicated to partnerships in planning for its transportation needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:

That this resolution will be sent to the Texas Transportation Commission as an attestation of support of the Regional Service Plan developed for the Heart of Texas region.

Adopted this the 26th Day of October, 2006 by the Executive Committee of the Heart of Texas Council of Governments.

Handwritten signature of Calvin Rueter in black ink.

Calvin Rueter, President
Special Districts

Attest:

Ken Hensel, Secretary-Treasurer
Mayor, City of Rosebud

A Voluntary Association of Local Governments
1514 South New Road, Waco, Texas 76711 • 254-292-1800 • Fax 254-756-0102
P.O. Box 20847, Waco, Texas 76702

Heart of Texas Workforce



Heart of Texas Workforce

November 1, 2006

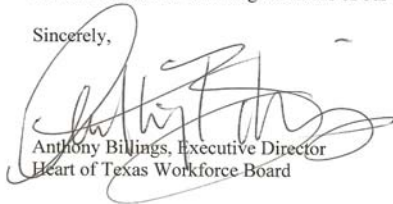
Regional Coordination Plan
The Heart of Texas Region
Heart of Texas Council of Governments
Lead Agency
1415 South New Road
Waco, Texas 76711

Dear Regional Transportation Coordination Committee:

Please accept this letter of support for the Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Plan and continued success as you undertake the task of implementing the Plan.

We strongly support the endeavors of the Regional Transportation Plan and the benefits it will bring to the communities in Bosque, Falls Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan counties. We feel the projects outlined within the Plan have been researched thoroughly and are essential in fulfilling the needs of our communities.

Sincerely,



Anthony Billings, Executive Director
Heart of Texas Workforce Board

1416 S. New Road, 2nd Floor • Waco, Texas 76711 • 254-296-5300 • Fax 254-753-3173

City of Waco


RESOLUTION NO. 2006-717

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WACO, TEXAS:

That the City of Waco shall accept the Transportation Regional Service Plan for the Heart of Texas Region.

That it is hereby officially found and determined that the meeting at which this resolution is passed is open to the public as required by law, and that public notice of the time, place and purpose of said meeting was given as required.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 21st day of November, 2006.


Virginia DuPuy, Mayor
City of Waco, Texas

ATTEST:


Patricia W. Ervin, City Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM & LEGALITY:


Arthur Pertile, III, City Attorney

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Waco Metropolitan Planning Organization

RESOLUTION 2006-3

WHEREAS, the Texas State Legislature passed House Bill 3588 which requires each region in the state to adopt a coordinated public transportation plan and,

WHEREAS, these plans are to identify the long-term regional public transportation needs and the services required to address those needs and,

WHEREAS, these plans are also to identify the various providers of public transportation within the region and opportunities to coordinate services between providers in order to make the overall system more efficient and,

WHEREAS, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users requires projects that intend to use funds from either the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute Program or the New Freedoms Program to be part of a coordinated public transportation plan and,

WHEREAS, the Heart of Texas Council of Governments has produced a coordinated public transportation plan for the Heart of Texas Region which meets the requirements identified in House Bill 3588 and SAFETEA-LU and,

WHEREAS, HOTCOG has received assistance in the production of this plan from the MPO staff and numerous other public transportation stakeholders within the Heart of Texas Region and,

WHEREAS, the coordinated public transportation plan includes McLennan County and the urbanized area of Waco and,

WHEREAS, the Waco MPO is responsible for long-range public transportation planning for McLennan County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE POLICY BOARD OF THE WACO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION:

That the Waco MPO Policy Board hereby adopts and supports the Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan for the Heart of Texas Region.

That the Waco MPO hereby agrees to incorporate the recommendations of the Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan for the Heart of Texas Region into the Waco Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

City of Bellmead
City of Beverly Hills
City of Bruceville-Eddy
City of Crawford
City of Ghoslon
City of Hallsburg
City of Hewitt
City of Lacy-Lakeview
City of Leroy
City of Lorena
City of Mart
City of McGregor
City of Moody
City of Riesel
City of Robinson
City of Ross
City of Waco
City of West
City of Woodway
McLennan County
Heart of Texas Council of Governments
Texas Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration



**WACO
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING
ORGANIZATION**

P.O. Box 2570
Waco, Texas 76702-2570
254-750-5650
254-750-1605 FAX
mpo@ci.waco.tx.us
www.waco-texas.com/mpo.htm

That it is hereby officially found and determined that the meetings at which this resolution is passed are open to the public as required by law and that public notice of the time, place and purpose of said meetings were given as required.

PASSED AND APPROVED this the 14th day of November, 2006


Virginia Dufny
Chair
Waco MPO Policy Board

ATTEST:


Christopher Evilia, AICP
Director, Waco MPO



Waco Transit Advisory Board

Be it resolved by the Waco Transit Advisory Board of Waco, Texas: