

KFH GROUP, INC.

ALAMO AREA REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

Developed for:
**The Alamo Area Council of Governments
and the
San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization**

By:
KFH Group, Incorporated

In association with:
Cambridge Systematics

November 30, 2006

For presentation to the:
**Texas Department of Transportation
Public Transit Division**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
BACKGROUND.....	1
STUDY PROCESS.....	4
SUMMARY OF TRAVEL PATTERNS IN THE ALAMO REGION.....	9
COORDINATION AND SERVICE ALTERNATIVES	16
COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION: PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE ALAMO AREA.....	17
INTRODUCTION.....	17
FUNDING PRIORITIES – JARC, NEW FREEDOM, AND SECTION 5310.....	18
ORGANIZATIONAL/COORDINATION TASKS.....	18
SERVICE AND OPERATING TASKS.....	26
OTHER COORDINATION AND OPERATIONAL TASKS.....	38
ACTION PLAN	39
FUNDING OPTIONS	44

ALAMO AREA REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

BACKGROUND

The 12-county Alamo Area is a geographically and culturally diverse portion of South/Central Texas. To the west is the Texas Hill Country and its lakes, rivers, and tourist attractions, while south and east are the sparsely populated ranch lands of south Texas. In the middle is San Antonio, which is the dominant metropolitan area for the entire region. Many of the sparsely settled counties have a primary town with a population of up to 10,000 people as the focal point of the county. In addition, there are three cities of over 20,000 including Seguin, New Braunfels, and Kerrville. The region is comprised of rapidly suburbanizing areas surrounding San Antonio. Public transit in the 12-county service area is provided by VIA in the San Antonio metropolitan area and the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) also known as Alamo Regional Transit (ART) in the 11 other counties.

A Legislative Mandate

In 2003, enactment of House Bill 3588 in the 78th Texas Legislature substantially altered the way human service transportation is administered. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) was given the added responsibility for direct funding, management, and oversight of selected client transportation services delivered under the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) programs. The intent of HB 3588 is: 1) “To eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation; 2) To generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service; and 3) To further the state’s efforts to reduce air pollution” (*HB3588, Article 13, Chapter 461, Section 461.001*).

In 2005, the TxDOT Strategic Plan called for the development of regional public transportation coordination plans. Texas Transportation Commissioner Andrade then led the efforts to implement a strategy to develop regional public transportation plans. This study is in response to that planning strategy.

Broadly, the project examined ways to more effectively “manage mobility” for the region. A major area of emphasis for this study was the coordination of services at the local level. The project included an evaluation of coordinated transit and human service transportation on a regional scale throughout the Alamo Area.

Outreach Efforts

Community outreach is a key element in: discerning needs, potential opportunities, and challenges. In order to facilitate this consensus building process, the Outreach Plan identified key stakeholders in each of the 12 counties.

I. Identify Appropriate Partners/Agencies

The first step in the process was to identify the key stakeholders within each county. This effort began in May, 2006 and continued through mid June, 2006. The potential lists of contacts that were targeted included:

- County Judges and other elected officials
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), county planning departments
- The Council of Governments Board
- Human service agency representatives
- Veterans groups
- Senior and disabled advocates
- All transportation operators
- Hospitals/Medical Centers
- Transit user representatives from each county
- Intercity carriers
- Others identified as appropriate

II. Receipt of Input

The second step included contacting the key stakeholders and to set up on-site community outreach sessions. In addition, where possible, we piggybacked on pre-existing meetings to avoid duplication of effort. Information for this project was acquired through one of the following appropriate methods depending upon the stakeholders involved:

- One-on-one meetings/interviews
- Public meetings – One meeting in each county during the initial presentation phase, and meetings to review the draft documents
- Phone interviews
- E-mail input

Goals and Objectives

In conjunction with AACOG staff and the members of the Regional Planning and Public Transportation Committee, the following vision was developed.

Residents (including the general public and human service clientele) and visitors to the 12-county Alamo Area will be able to move throughout the region safely, reliably, efficiently, and affordably by using a seamless network of public and private facilities and services that are easy to comprehend, responsive to individual travel needs, and easy to access.

This was followed by the development of goals and corresponding objectives. Specifically, what outcomes are expected/anticipated?

- Enhance the quality of the customer's travel experience.
- Expand the availability of services to those who are unserved.
- Increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery.

- Establish and sustain communications and decision-making mechanisms among sponsors and stakeholders to guide Plan implementation effectively.

STUDY PROCESS

The study was completed through the conduct of three major tasks over an eight-month period. Each major task generated a technical memorandum, each of which are contained in the appendix to this plan (Technical Memoranda Nos. 1-3). The technical memoranda are:

- Technical Memorandum #1: Review of Existing Transit Services
- Technical Memorandum #2: Demographics, Land Uses, and Travel Patterns
- Technical Memorandum #3: Coordination and Service Alternatives

A summary of the key findings documented in each technical memorandum and their implications for subsequent phases of the analysis is presented below.

Existing Transit Services

The first major task of the project was the detailed review of the existing transportation services in the Alamo Area (Technical Memorandum #1). This was conducted through:

1. Surveying existing operators and funding agencies
2. Reviewing activities and service by county
3. Assessing coordination activities

Survey Analysis and Results

A total of 130 surveys (specifically designed for the Alamo Area) were sent to transportation providers and transportation funding agencies. The main goals of the survey were:

- To gather information *from transportation providers* on key characteristics of current transit services.

- To gather information *from transportation funders* about the types of transportation services they sponsor or fund.

A total of 13 transportation providers responded to the survey (six private, not for profit agencies; four public transit agencies; three private, for-profit agencies). The survey disclosed that transportation funders and providers want convenient and cost-effective transportation options for their clients. The survey also revealed the following issues:

- ***Financial issues*** – Funding shortfalls were identified by nearly all respondents as the most significant challenge in providing and coordinating public transportation. Both providers and funders concluded that there is a lack of funds to provide the necessary transportation services for their clients.
- ***Jurisdictional issues*** – Problems such as gaps in coverage were identified by providers in San Antonio and in rural areas. Providers do not have enough vehicles or service flexibility to leave their respective service area to provide much needed medical transportation trips.
- ***Medical Transportation Program (MTP)*** – The MTP program through its uncoordinated approach to scheduling, utilizes significantly more resources than is necessary. Specifically, 1) the last second nature of these trips, 2) program does not screen for nearest destination, and 3) TxDOT-MTP will not adhere to a schedule and will not attempt to group trips, requiring one vehicle for one individual.
- ***Coordination issues*** – Duplication of service issues were noted through the survey responses (both overlap of service and multiple providers).
- ***Client needs - basic mobility*** – Additional special services are needed such as services dedicated for dialysis and chemotherapy patients throughout the region. Because most of the funding goes for these types of trips, agencies are not able to provide basic mobility, such as trips for groceries or shopping.

Service By County

An overview of services was provided for each of the 12-counties in the Alamo Area. This section revealed that much of the current service is determined by the demands of the MTP. TxDOT-MTP does not coordinate trips, which then requires ART to provide a wide range of one-on-one MTP service, often taking vehicles out of county for extended periods for only one person. MTP assigns the trips to AMR, who then assigns the trips to ART. There are no

attempts by TxDOT-MTP or AMR to group trips and therefore reduce costs. ART cannot arrange set schedules for service to allow others to ride because it does not know how many trips MTP will require, where the trips are going, or the vehicle requirements until the evening before service.

Coordination Activities

There are a variety of coordination activities that are taking place across the region. For the most part, however, issues and solutions for rural areas are different from issues and solutions from urbanized areas.

1. Rural Areas – Most services have historically been coordinated over the years. Current coordination occurs whenever it makes business sense, i.e. MTP, Area Agency on Aging (AAA), intercity carriers, student transportation, and Job Access.
2. Urban Area – The San Antonio area has a different set of coordination issues. In San Antonio there are four providers of paratransit service each providing similar service to many of the same individuals. Compounding this, they use three different software products to help manage their operations. VIA has funded a senior transportation coordinator to assist in this effort.

Demographics, Land Uses, and Travel Patterns

Technical Memorandum #2 reviewed and examined where people live (including those most likely to use transit), where major destinations are located, and what the travel patterns are of the residents in the 12-county Alamo Area.

Demographics

The analysis in this study provided a review of transit needs of those population segments that are potentially transit dependent (Figure 1) as well as the overall population distribution in the Alamo Region (Table 1). Potentially transit dependent population segments are those segments of the population that, because of demographic characteristics (age, disability, income, or automobile availability), may potentially require transit services to meet mobility needs.

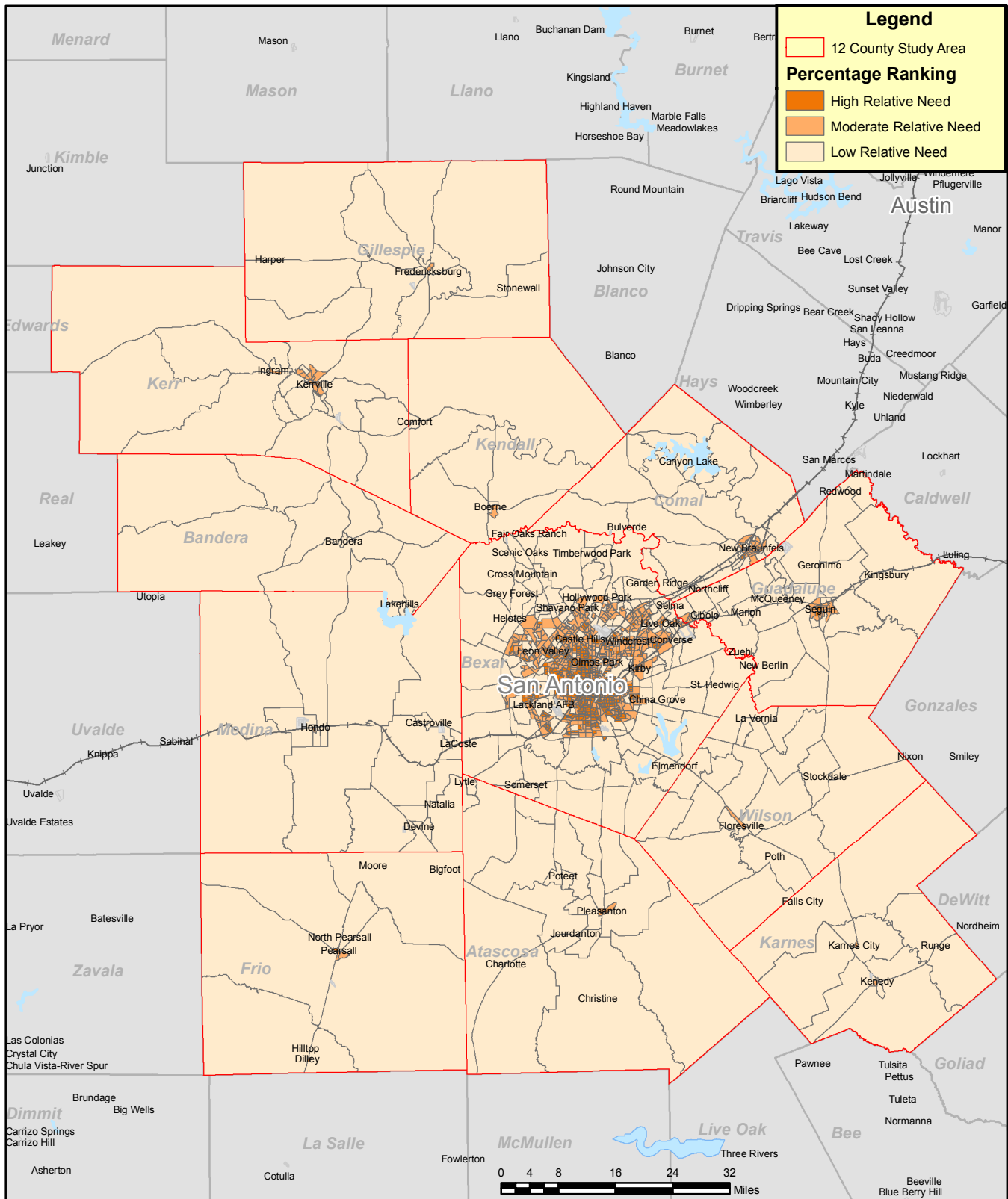


Figure 1: BLOCK GROUPS RANKED BY THE DENSITY OF TRANSIT DEPENDENT PERSONS

Prepared By
KFH
 GROUP

Table 1: POPULATION BY COUNTY

County	1990 US Census	2000 US Census	2002 (AACOG)	2005 US Census
Atascosa	30,533	38,628	40,948	43,226
Bandera	10,562	17,645	19,153	19,988
Bexar	1,185,394	1,392,931	1,446,333	1,518,370
Comal	51,832	78,021	85,109	96,018
Frio	13,472	16,252	16,249	16,387
Gillespie	17,204	20,814	21,607	23,088
Guadalupe	64,873	89,023	94,215	103,032
Karnes	12,455	15,446	15,411	15,351
Kendall	14,589	23,743	25,390	28,607
Kerr	36,304	43,653	44,857	46,496
Medina	27,312	39,304	40,924	43,027
Wilson	22,650	32,408	34,548	37,529
Total	1,487,180	1,807,878	1,884,744	1,991,119

The demographic analysis revealed that the locations with the highest need for transit service in the Alamo Region are the City of San Antonio and the small cities in each of the rural counties. This becomes even more evident when factoring in the percentage of potentially transit dependent persons, the density of autoless households, and supply of affordable housing. Larger cities in the service area can justify fixed-route service. Smaller cities that have moderate percentages of potentially transit dependent persons may be good candidates for demand-responsive service. Lastly, the remote areas lend themselves to a fixed schedule type of service based on their needs.

Following is a select list of other findings that were ascertained during the review of demographics:

- The vast majority of the population resides in Bexar County, most within the City of San Antonio, and as a result, most of the major destinations are within the City.
- Within each of the other counties there is typically a dominant town or city, where most of the county population lives and goes to work, shops, and handles general business.

- There are a number of cities that have the size and nature that can support a fixed-route or flex-route service based on demographics, community support, and tourism. These include Fredericksburg, Kerrville, New Braunfels, and Seguin.

Major Destinations

Another component of the transit planning process is identifying major trip destinations within the study area, including major employers (Figure 2), shopping centers, schools, and medical facilities (Figure 3). The analysis of land uses in the Alamo Area displayed that:

- Most of the major destinations are located within the City of San Antonio.
- Within each county the primary town or city serves as the major trip attractor for residents. Most of the towns are self contained for local travel needs.
- There are a number of small cities that have a large number of tourist attractions and these land uses are often conducive to transit service.

SUMMARY OF TRAVEL PATTERNS IN THE ALAMO REGION

Travel patterns in the 12-County Alamo Region were analyzed through Journey to Work data from the US Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP 2000) and supplemented by outreach efforts comprised of stakeholder focus groups and meetings with public transit operators. The majority of quantitative statistics reflect the published Journey to Work data, while more qualitative insights were supplied by the discussions of current service and gaps that were part of the outreach process.

Journey to Work summaries by place of residence, by place of work, and for worker flows between home and work, revealed that, in those counties well represented by transit options, those options were most utilized, as in the case of Bexar County. As shown by the 2000 Journey to Work data in Table 2, approximately 3.4 percent of Bexar County residents used transit to get to work; meanwhile, transit use comprised only up to 0.3 percent for each of the remaining 11 Alamo Region counties. While transit availability influenced its low use in rural counties, it is interesting to note that a few of those counties— including Karnes, Frio, and Atascosa— had notably high carpool usage (above 20%). Generally, the Alamo Region transit usage exceeded the state as a whole (2.7% compared to 1.9%), but fell short of the national share

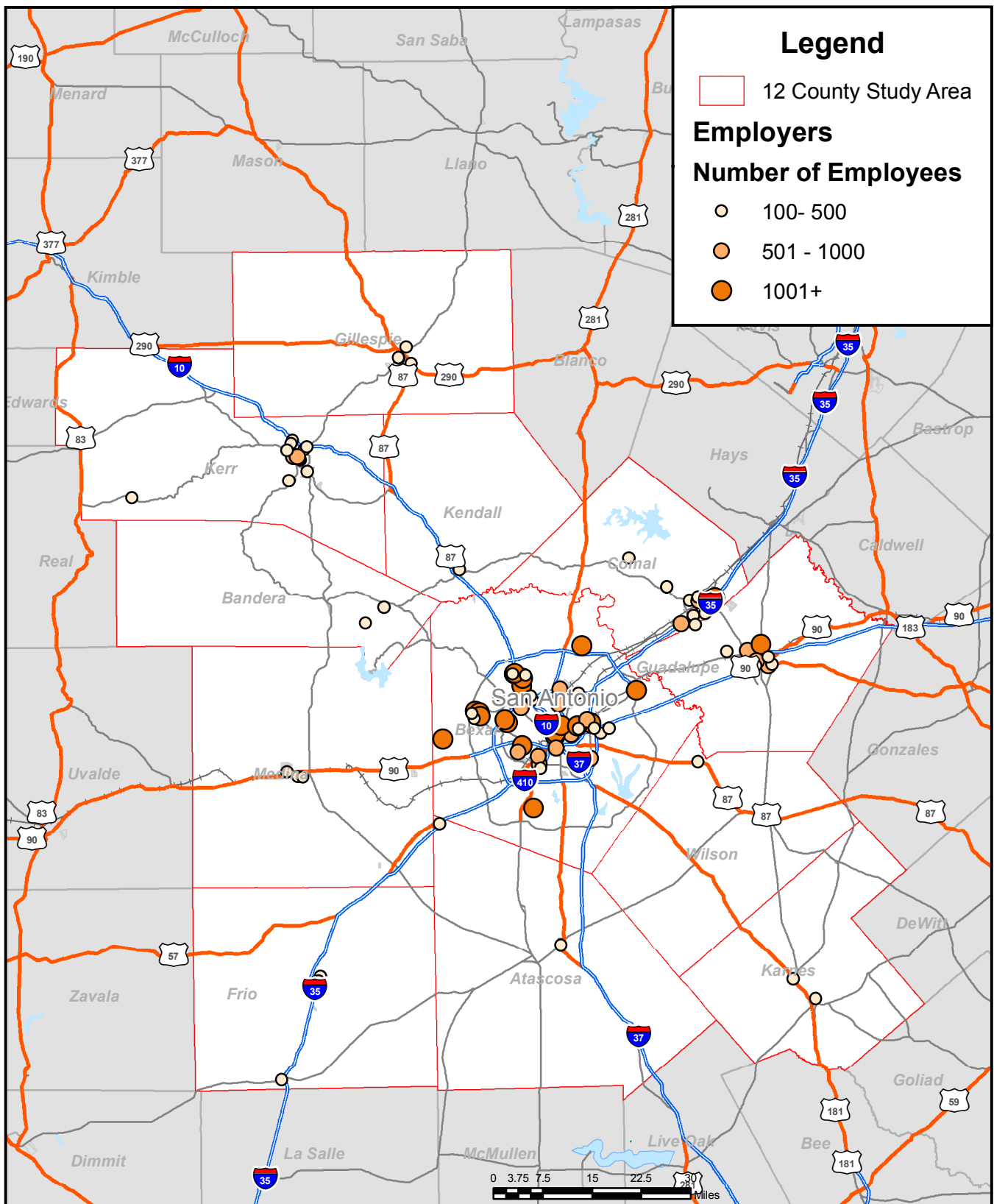


Figure 2: MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN THE AACOG REGION

Prepared By



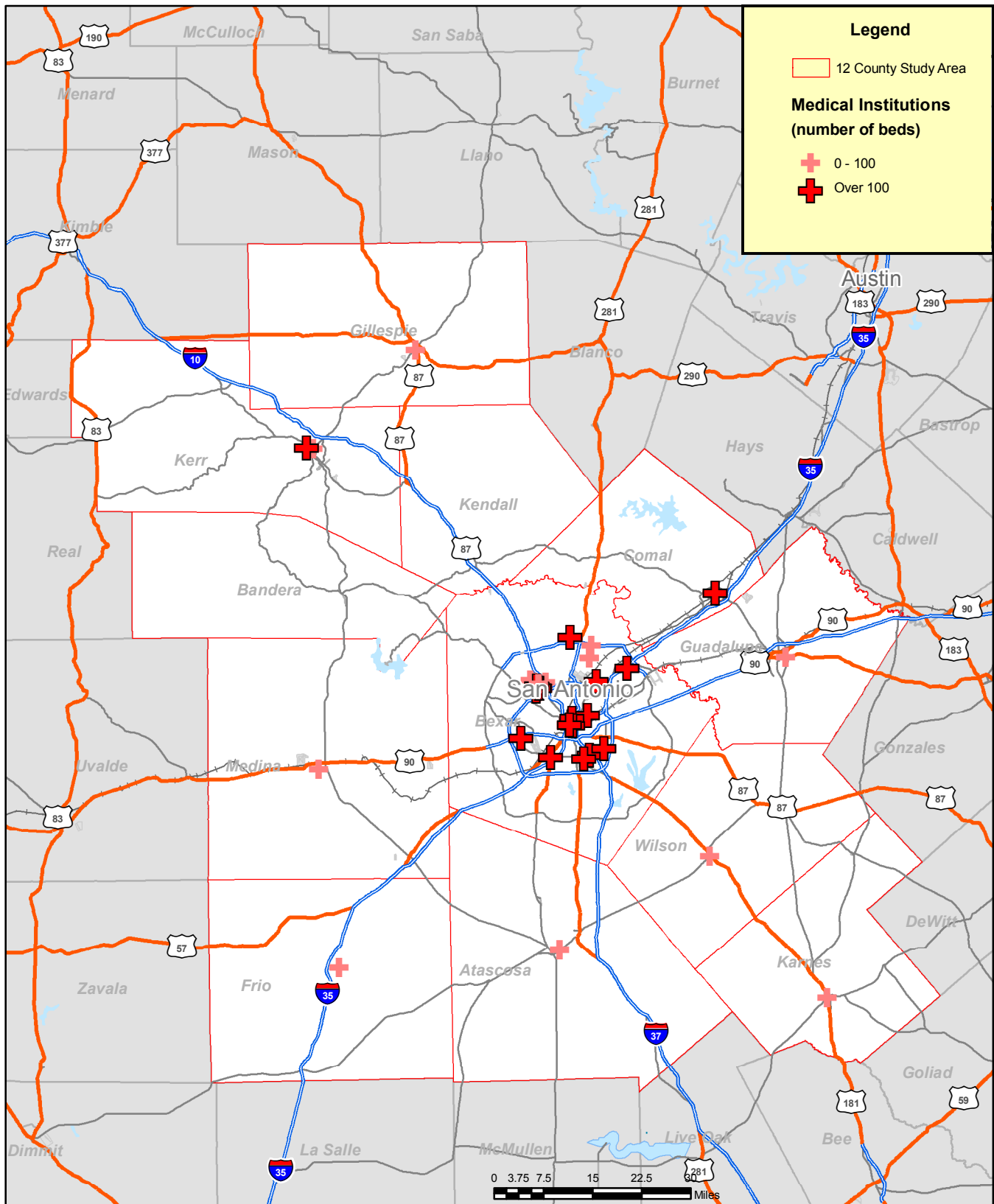


Figure 3: MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE AACOG REGION

Prepared By
KFH
 GROUP

of 4.9 percent. The region also had a greater share of carpools than the state and national shares for this mode (15.4% in the region compared to 14.9% statewide and 12.6% nationally). The share of Alamo Region residents who drove alone was the same as the national share of 78.2 percent, but lesser than the state share of about 80 percent. About 2.4 percent of the region's residents walked as their mode of transportation, more than the state share of 2.0 percent, but less than the national share of 3.0 percent.

Table 2: COMMUTE MODE SHARE: ALAMO REGION, TEXAS, AND US

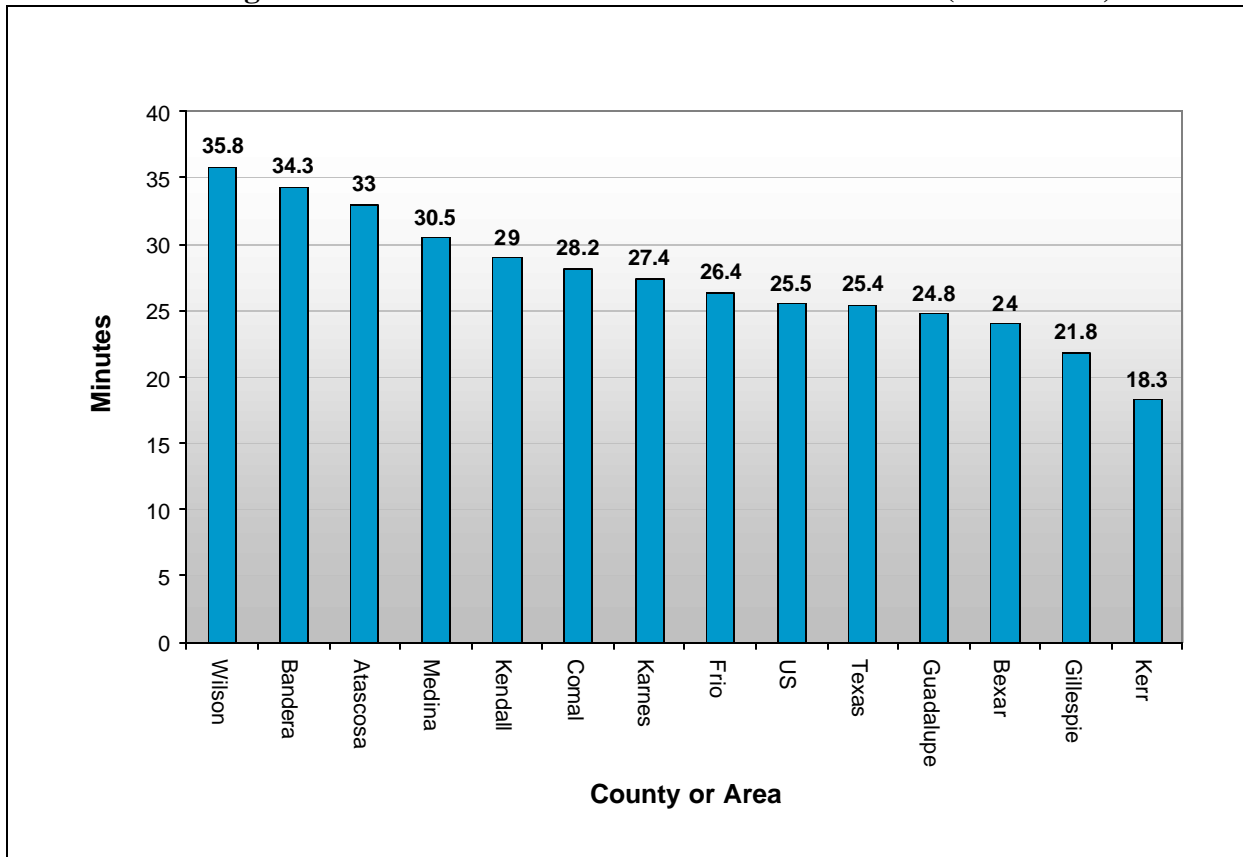
Area	Commuting Mode					
	Drive-Alone	Carpool	Transit	Walk	Bike	Other
Atascosa	75.4%	20.7%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	1.6%
Bandera	79.2%	16.9%	0.2%	2.7%	0.0%	0.9%
Bexar	77.7%	15.1%	3.4%	2.6%	0.2%	1.1%
Comal	83.7%	13.6%	0.1%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%
Frio	70.6%	22.8%	0.1%	3.3%	0.1%	3.1%
Gillespie	79.6%	16.9%	0.1%	2.3%	0.2%	1.0%
Guadalupe	81.8%	15.1%	0.2%	1.7%	0.1%	1.1%
Karnes	75.2%	21.3%	0.0%	2.1%	0.1%	1.3%
Kendall	82.3%	14.7%	0.1%	1.9%	0.2%	0.8%
Kerr	80.9%	14.7%	0.3%	2.5%	0.6%	0.9%
Medina	77.4%	18.2%	0.3%	2.7%	0.1%	1.4%
Wilson	78.4%	19.0%	0.1%	1.2%	0.1%	1.1%
ALAMO Region	78.2%	15.4%	2.7%	2.4%	0.2%	1.1%
Texas	79.9%	14.9%	1.9%	2.0%	0.2%	1.1%
US	78.2%	12.6%	4.9%	3.0%	0.4%	0.8%

Source: Census 2000 SF3, Journey To Work data.

Note: Shares are based on people who worked outside their home.

As shown in Figure 4, on average, commuters from eight of the 12 counties in the Alamo Region spent more time commuting to work than the national and statewide average, which measured approximately 25 minutes in 2000. Commuters in Wilson, Bandera, and Atascosa Counties spent the most time commuting, averaging between 33 to 36 minutes. In contrast, Kerr, Gillespie, and Bexar County commuters spent the least time commuting, with an average range of 18 to 24 minutes.

Figure 4: AVERAGE COMMUTE TRAVEL TIME (MINUTES)



Source: Census 2000 SF3, Journey to Work data.

Measured by the absolute number of commuters, Bexar County is by far the top destination county for workers in the region, primarily due to the size of its own population that does not leave the county to travel to work. Measured by the share of total commuters by county traveling to Bexar County, the greatest commuter shares come from Wilson County, Atascosa County, Kendall County, and Medina County commuters (all contiguous to Bexar County). The smallest shares come from Kerr County and Gillespie County commuters. Table 3 ranks the top destinations for workers of the 12 county region, while Figure 5 displays the share of each county's residents that (1) live and work within the same county, (2) work outside the county of residence, but still inside the Alamo Region, and (3) work outside the Alamo Region.

Table 3: TOP DESTINATIONS FOR WORKERS

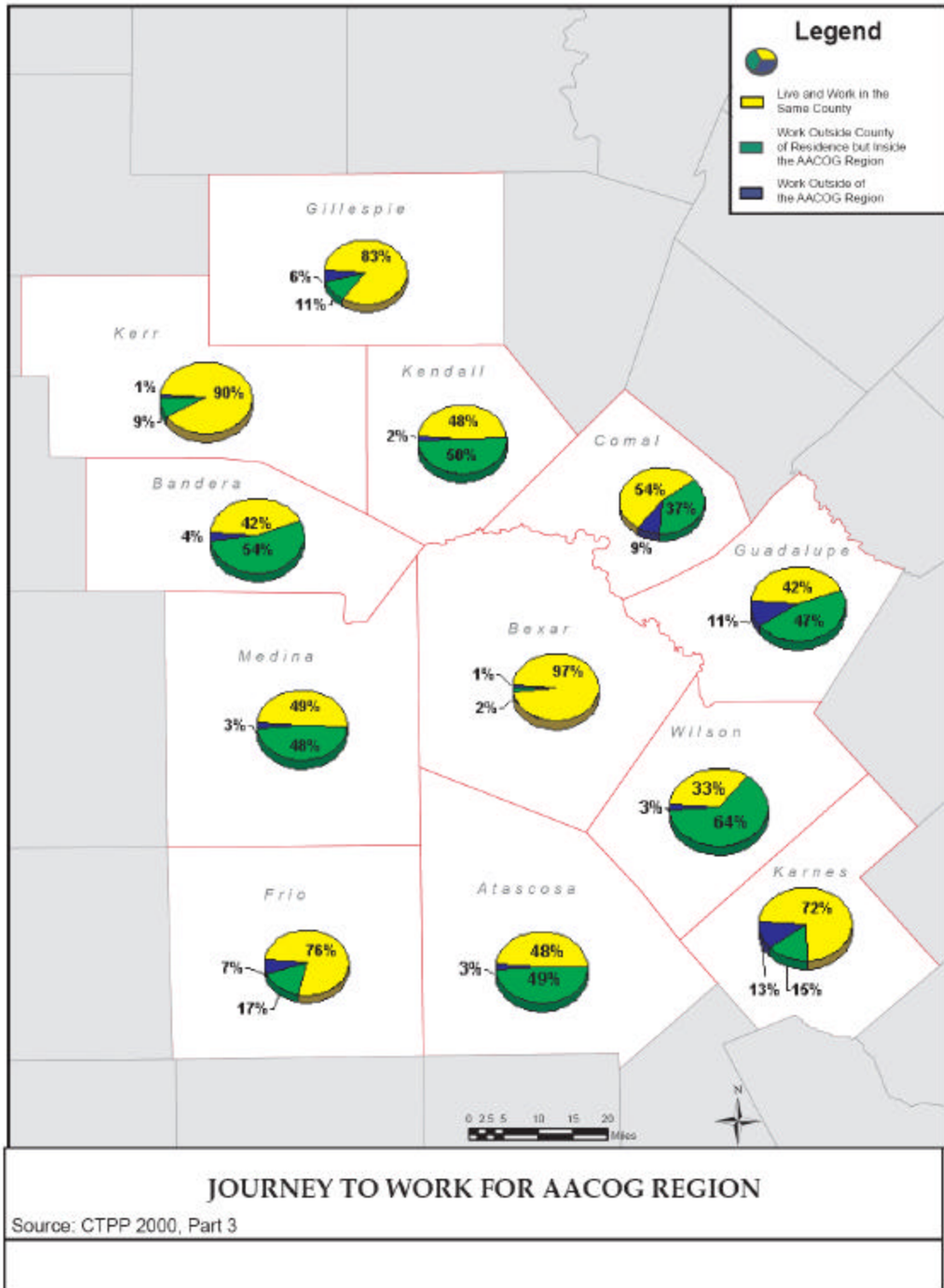
Work Place County	Number of Workers	Percent of Total Workers
Bexar	636,905	81.7%
Comal	29,549	3.8%
Guadalupe	24,063	3.1%
Out of Region	19,405	2.5%
Kerr	17,335	2.2%
Medina	9,280	1.2%
Atascosa	9,090	1.2%
Kendall	8,203	1.1%
Gillespie	8,199	1.1%
Wilson	5,710	0.7%
Frio	4,434	0.6%
Bandera	3,768	0.5%
Karnes	3,574	0.5%
TOTAL	779,515	100.0%

Source: Census 2000 Journey to Work data.

While much of the publicly available data focused solely on work trip patterns, the importance of non-work related trips in the region cannot be understated, particularly for certain stakeholder groups such as veterans groups, lower income workers, and the elderly whose needs were discussed and examined during the outreach process. The outreach process repeatedly confirmed the significance of access to medical facilities, particularly Audie Murphy VA hospital in San Antonio and in Kerrville, for veterans and elderly who live in much more remote areas and currently do not benefit from fixed-route scheduled service to their appointments. In addition to medical appointments, other major local needs included basic local service for shopping, training/school, and personal business.

San Antonio figured prominently as a major destination for residents for all the above reasons, in addition to serving as a major center for cultural and recreational opportunities. As a result, there was significant need for improved and more regular service to this large metropolitan center. In addition to San Antonio, other smaller tourist destinations such as Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, and Kerrville prompted requests for service using theme-based historical trolley transportation services to attract tourists and transport people around the main corridors.

Figure 5: JOURNEY TO WORK DATA BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE AND PLACE OF WORK



COORDINATION AND SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

The Consultant Team in conjunction with key stakeholders developed a range of options/alternatives for improving public transit services in the Alamo Area (Technical Memorandum #3). Needs were compared with existing services to formulate various scenarios. Through the outreach process, the review of demographics, and the analysis of other data it was concluded that public transit services are needed throughout the Alamo Area, however the type and level of transit services should vary in different areas depending upon local area needs and population densities. The project Study Committee carefully reviewed the alternatives and then gave the consultants the guidance to develop the plan itself.

Organizational/Coordination

It was found that the general organization of services is sound in the Alamo Area, with no significant changes to the structure recommended. The study, though, recommended changes to coordination in the region and categorized them on three levels:

1. Human Service Coordination – Rural
2. Regional Coordination with ART
3. Paratransit Coordination – Urban Area

Service Alternatives

Service options were based on the Study Team's analysis of the data, interviews, and public meetings. Basic options were developed for the next five years to address the goals and concerns for public transit in the area. These options were examined in terms of how well they serve the identified markets, the degree to which they address adopted local and state goals for transit, the service type, likely impacts on operating costs and ridership, and capital requirements.

COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION: PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE ALAMO AREA

The Study Committee worked closely with the consultants and the public to develop a plan that will meet a variety of transportation needs for all residents of the 12-county Alamo Area. The plan addresses a wide variety of organizational, coordination, and service activities. In addition the plan addresses the needs associated with the Federal Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and *New Freedom* initiatives, as well as funding for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 program.

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this section of the Plan reviews the assumptions made through this planning process. The second part of this section reviews the organizational/coordination issues that should be employed, followed by rural service activities and then urban activities. Again, making sure that JARC and *New Freedoms* initiatives are being met, as well as FTA Section 5310 funding for elderly and persons with disabilities.

Service Assumptions

1. **Population Growth** – Population continues to grow rapidly in the western and northern parts of the region. That growth will fuel the need for increased transit ridership.
2. **Funding Issues** – The predominant issue in regard to funding is the need for local dollars to match federal funding in rural areas. These funds will be secured from local governments, private businesses, and human service agencies that coordinate services.
3. **Mobility Management** – Short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transit and other transportation providers. The region will designate one entity to coordinate these mobility management activities and combine/coordinate with a variety of entities.
4. **Coordination Efforts** – While there is significant coordination in the rural areas, the planning effort will continue to focus on additional human service coordination. The urban area – San Antonio can also benefit from coordination. Further continued coordination of services between urban and rural areas will be encouraged.

5. **Coordination Must Make Business Sense** – It is important to note that coordination must be a mutually beneficial agreement. That is, coordination must make business sense.
6. **Fixed/Flex-Route and Other Scheduled Service** – Productivity is a key to success. TxDOT funding is dependent to a large degree on numbers of trips provided. The best way to provide the largest number of trips is to utilize the array of fixed-route and hybrid services that tend to group trips according to a schedule.
7. **Use of Technology** – While coordination does not require technology to be successful, the use of technology can be of significant help in the process if used properly. There are areas where technology can assist in the overall mission of providing more service.

FUNDING PRIORITIES – JARC, NEW FREEDOM, AND SECTION 5310

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

ORGANIZATIONAL/COORDINATION TASKS

The transportation programs in the service area are well coordinated between ART and most of the human service transportation programs. Medicaid (managed by TxDOT – PTN), which is provided by ART under a subcontract, duplicates transportation administration and planning. However, while the Study Committee believes that these services should be coordinated at the local level, this is currently totally dependent on TxDOT – PTN/MTP decisions.

The majority of the coordination effort over the course of the plan will focus on activities that the region can control:

- Coordinating the myriad providers in San Antonio
- Coordinating human service transportation

- Coordinating services between ART and VIA
- Development of a Mobility Manager

Coordination Task No. 1 - Coordinating Paratransit Service in San Antonio

As identified in the alternatives phase of this planning effort, there is a need to enhance coordination in the city to maximize productivity and safety. The plan calls for a phased in approach where the first step will be to formalize the coordination work group. This will be followed by a variety of coordination opportunities up to and including linking of technologies to enhance productivity and service capabilities.

Coordination Task No. 1.1 - Formalize Coordination Work Group

The key participants in the San Antonio area should continue to work together in a formalized setting allowing all participants and other interested parties to participate. VIA has recently announced a new position of Senior Transportation Coordinator, whose role in many cases is the same or similar to the activities called for in this task. This position should evolve as the focal point for coordinating paratransit service outside VIA's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit. VIA should seek *New Freedom* funding to support this position. A committee should be formed to include: all major operators, funding agencies, private sector transit providers, other agencies, and consumers. Having political or business leaders on the committee is advisable as well.

Coordination Task No. 1.2 - Coordination Opportunities – Mentoring and Support

There are a very wide variety of transportation providers in the San Antonio area. These include one- and two-van adult day care operators, senior centers, veterans groups, hospital shuttles, volunteer coops as well as other entities. These operators of service, typically in support of other programs, have stated emphatically that they have no interest in relinquishing their service to a larger system. In fact, it is important that these agencies maintain their identities because their strength comes from their passion, dedication, and volunteerism, which

would disappear in a coordinated network. This plan wants to encourage that passion by nurturing the agencies and allowing them to flourish.

While a large number of Section 5310, volunteer, and other niche agencies (such as hospital shuttles) with small scale operations will not desire to become involved in a large scale coordination effort; there are areas where these agencies can benefit from coordination. A mentoring and support program where the agency can turn to for advise, support, training or even vehicles could be implemented.

These include small agency participation in programs developed by the larger operators such as: driver training, maintenance, insurance, and vehicle replacement programs. These efforts can pay immediate safety and performance dividends to those small one or two vehicle services. Many organizations can benefit simply from fuel cards. This is especially so for the volunteer cooperative network in some parts of the city. *New Freedom funding* should be sought for the fuel cards and other support of the small operators. A vehicle replacement program will allow the larger systems to transfer or lease retired (but well maintained) vehicles to these small providers and requiring the agency to participate in training and maintenance programs. The vehicle replacement program will have the transit agency lease (for a minimal amount) vehicles being retired, to a non-profit where the intentions are for the second agency to continue to provide transportation. The receiving agency would be required to train its drivers through the larger system's training and maintenance programs. Minimal funding is required to initiate these activities through the Mobility Manager.

Coordination Task No. 1.3 - Coordinate Paratransit Operations

Paratransit is the most expensive service to operate on a per trip basis. Productivity is the key to controlling paratransit trip costs. The higher the productivity, the lower the per trip cost. Therefore a key objective of the plan is to find ways to improve productivity in the region's paratransit services. The number one issue related to coordination of transportation in San Antonio is the need to coordinate service for elderly and persons with disabilities. With five significant paratransit providers (using four different software packages), all serving the same or similar customers, there are opportunities to coordinate service in order to maximize ridership

and service levels. The reader should be cautioned however that due to the dynamics of paratransit, coordination will not always be effective and/or save money.

Coordination Task No. 1.4 - Urban and Rural Needs Analysis

As part of the coordination effort, the entities will conduct a detailed needs analysis to determine the extent of the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly. This analysis will be used to determine the level of resources necessary to meet virtually all of the needs of the region. The analysis will be conducted in all counties of the service area. This effort should be conducted in Years 1 and 2.

Coordination Task No. 1.5 – Procure Technology for Coordinated Scheduling and Dispatching

Currently the five paratransit systems (including ART) have four different software packages, most of which are not compatible with the other products. Lefleur and VIATrans both use the same software. This task requires each system to have the same software platform. Under this scenario, each system will be able to place trips on the other's vehicle where appropriate, e.g. when System A receives a trip request that it cannot fulfill, but knows System C has a vehicle in the area, based on a search performed through the technology by the reservation staff. Through agreements, each system can book on the other based on the ground rules established prior to implementation of the program. A cost allocation formula can be worked out for payment to each other for trips provided. This would allow each system to retain control, while each system becomes more productive, lowering the cost per trip for all systems.

Cost for this technology will be between \$300,000 and \$.5M, for a ten year investment (plus annual warranty and upgrade costs). This approach has the potential to improve regional paratransit productivity by as much as 20 percent for the operators other than VIA (VIAtrans is operating at or close to peak performance and could not physically improve productivity that much). This alone would pay for the technology within the first five years. Further, by having the same platform there will be greater opportunities for the larger systems to help support the

smaller operators. It may also be possible to receive a grant for the technology, through *New Freedom* or *FTA's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) initiatives*.

Coordination Task No. 2 – Coordinating Services between ART and VIA

This task calls for direct connections between ART and VIA at a variety of transfer points throughout the VIA service area. As ART vehicles come through a commuter corridor, there will be a mutually agreed upon transfer point that gives customers access to a number of bus routes to key destinations (large employers, medical facilities, and training sites for example). It would also be beneficial if the transfer point was a major destination as well. A coordinated fare policy would enhance customer service. This is a low cost task that simply requires careful planning.

Coordination Task No. 3 – Coordination of Human Service Transportation

In this task, ART will work closely with the Alamo Area AAA to target elderly populations in need of paratransit services throughout the rural service area. These efforts are intended to improve mobility for elderly and persons with disabilities that cannot ride the fixed-route of fixed schedule bus. The Alamo WorkSource Board will work closely with the Mobility Manager to continue to identify needs and solutions. Funding for these efforts can include AAA funds, *New Freedom*, and *Section 5310*.

Coordination Task No. 3.1 – Elimination of Cost Transferring

The term client shedding has been in use in the transit industry for a number of years. That term however has negative connotations and is less than accurate in describing the essence of the issue: the transferring of financial responsibility for a group or class of human service agency clients. In this case, it is the transferring of funding for transportation for MTP or adult day care clients from state and Federal NEMT funds to local transit. In effect, that transferring of responsibility to local transit systems instead of the state agency is a core issue in coordination. Therefore in this study, the term “cost transferring” will be used.

The coordination activities will identify where this cost transferring is taking place and why. The Committee will then address how the service should be funded in an equitable manner. In the case of San Antonio, there is evidence that customers are dropping out of the MTP program due to poor service and instead using VIATrans, a service that is not paid by MTP and as a consequence the citizens of VIA's service area are paying for the service.

Coordination Task No. 4 – Development of a Regional Mobility Manager– Brokerage

AACOG, working with each of the providers, funding agencies and other interested stakeholders will become the Regional Mobility Manager, coordinating a wide variety of public and private transportation service as well as acting as the regional rideshare manager for the 12 counties.

The Mobility Manager will have a variety of planning and administrative/financial activities to perform. These include, but are not limited to:

- Planning and identifying needs and solutions
- Seeking public and private funding
- Coordinating various operators in San Antonio
- Coordinating human service transportation
- Conducting rideshare efforts
- Working closely with employers to maximize commuter resources
- Work with planning and economic development staff of the local governments to ensure accessibility and attempt transit oriented development wherever feasible
- Organizing and staff various committees in urban and rural areas
- Working closely with operators to avoid duplication and waste
- Tracking progress in the commuter rail efforts

As part of this task, the Mobility Manager will work with TxDOT-PTN to improve service to MTP customers and to reduce costs through coordination efforts. Scheduled service and grouping of trips will clearly reduce costs. This is where coordination can make a difference.

The Mobility Manager can also assist in the distribution of vehicles retired by a transit operator (but still quite serviceable) to local volunteer and human service organizations.

These efforts will be funded through *JARC and New Freedoms Funding* as well as Section 5311 and Section 5310 funds.

The Regional Approach

ART started as a collection of autonomous and insular county transit services, not unlike other systems in Texas. Over the years this has continued to some extent and services have been operated separately. Now that ART directly operates all of the rural general public and most of the rural MTP service, it creates an opportunity to go from 11 different service areas to one regional service area. The Regional Approach – it is proposed that ART blur county lines (as customers do) and implement one seamless service. Following are the types of services that should be regionalized:

- Commuter/human service routes that start in one county and pick up in other counties on its way to San Antonio. For example, starting in Kerrville with stops in Boerne and Comfort in adjacent counties on its way to San Antonio. Starting in Pearsall in Frio County, through Natalia and Devine in Medina County, and Lytle in Atascosa County is another example.
- In the case of Medina County, an agreement with the adjacent transit system to coordinate long distance medical and other services into San Antonio.
- The option of coordinating commuter service with Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS) in the north – from San Marcos to San Antonio
- As commuter rail becomes a reality in the I-35 corridor, the Mobility Manager will track its progress and work with ART to develop an inter-modal terminal to connect transit to the commuter rail. ART will also shift its service near the stations to initiate feeder service to the rail.

- Blur county lines to provide service
 - ART should be able to move vehicles between counties as needed
 - New Braunfels should be served through the Comal County facility, even the portions of the city that are in Guadalupe County
 - Customers in Vanderpool may best be served through the adjacent transit system into Uvalde.

Ridesharing

Currently in the Alamo Area there is no mechanism outside Bexar County to aid in the formation of vanpools or carpools. Within Bexar County, VIA and AACOG have rideshare programs. Analysis of the commute patterns revealed a great opportunity for ridesharing in each of the major corridors. Ridesharing is typically composed of a central database for matching individuals with similar commute trips into carpools or vanpools. These successful vanpools can grow into fixed routes over time.

Carpools include informal or formal arrangements by individuals to share a ride to work or on other regular trips. Vanpools are typically a formal arrangement by a group of 7 to 15 individuals that share a similar commute trip. Often these arrangements are facilitated by a governmental authority. In this case, AACOG as the Mobility Manager would be responsible for developing the ridesharing and commuter program (designed to attract as many persons with disabilities and low income individuals as possible). Many vanpools pay for themselves as well, while others receive some subsidy.

Some issues that need to be further studied to implement an Alamo Area region-wide rideshare program include:

- A. The issues and cost savings surrounding the use of lease operated passenger vans verses public owned passenger vans. Again however, if the vans are full, they can pay for themselves.
- B. The best subsidy and cost structure to optimize reporting and increase customer utility.
- C. The level of safety associated with 15 passenger vans and the impact of driver training courses for mitigating accident rates.

- D. A Mechanism to add part time riders to the vanpools for training and other needs.
- E. Accessible vehicles should be available as needed.

Organizational Task No. 1 - Organize Operators into a Working Subcommittee

The operators should work together to coordinate as many activities as possible where mutually beneficial. This work group will review operating practices, training opportunities and other operational needs. Reporting and recordkeeping efforts should also be coordinated so that all providers are reporting the same things. The objective of this effort is to bring all of the operators to the same high level of service and safety. This subcommittee will include small operators as well as larger operators.

SERVICE AND OPERATING TASKS

In order to effect a change – ultimately there must be service improvements – an improvement in what the customer sees. The Study Committee stated that three of the primary goals of the plan should be to:

- Enhance the Quality of the Customer’s Travel Experience
- Expand the Availability of Services to Those Who are Unserved
- Increase the Cost-Effectiveness and Efficiency of Service Delivery

There are two basic considerations in designing effective and efficient transit services in areas not yet served. **Effectiveness is doing the right things, while efficiency is doing things right.** The system is *effective* if it meets the travel needs of the residents. This means identifying the markets for transit and determining if those markets are served. A system is *efficient* if it meets those needs in a manner that maximizes travel while minimizing resources expended. This means providing a mix of services that are appropriate to the need. The most challenging aspect of being efficient is to use less expensive fixed-route services in areas which can sustain those services, and then fill in with more expensive demand-responsive services in

areas without sufficient densities or for persons unable to use fixed-route services -- to provide a mix of services that do not compete and result in the most rides and service for the dollars expended.

Rural Areas

There are a variety of services that should be provided in the rural areas to meet the most needs possible. As discussed above, paratransit, the predominant mode in use in the rural parts of the Alamo Area, is the most expensive and least productive form of transit available to ART. This plan calls for using paratransit only where necessary or advantageous.

There will be a “family” of services, each designed to meet particular needs. Most services will be scheduled, with these schedules prominently displayed and promoted. This will allow for the most productive service and of course the greatest ridership, meeting the most needs. The family of services is described below, with summaries in Table 4.

- Fredericksburg, Kerrville, New Braunfels, and Seguin can all sustain a fixed-route service to support both local needs, work trips, and in the case of Fredericksburg, Kerrville and New Braunfels, the significant tourist population (Figure 6). Persons with disabilities will be particularly well served.
- Smaller towns can sustain a dial-a-ride (Figure 6).
- Rural areas would receive a fixed schedule service.
- Commuter/Medical Service – There is considerable need for daily service through the identified corridors to San Antonio. This service would start early enough to get commuters to work, students to school, and people to medical facilities. These services can be funded through *Job Access* funding and would go a long way to addressing these needs.
 - Connections would also be made to other systems as appropriate
 - The commuter bus would meet VIA at a designated transfer center (at a major destination), where most people would get off for their destination, or to transfer, while medical appointments can go straight to their destination on the ART vehicle.
 - Where demand warrants, a mid day run can be implemented.
- Vanpools and ridesharing can also provide commuter service in a very flexible manner especially in corridors that cannot support a commuter bus.

Table 4: OPERATIONAL TASKS FOR THE ALAMO AREA

No.	Operational Task	Benefits	Costs	Funding Sources
1	Medicaid Service	Provides least disruption to public transit. Still allows for coordination where feasible	This program should be able to stay within its MTP funding Will require sedans for each county	MTP
2	Commuter Service	Responds to need expressed by consumers, agencies, and advocates	Each corridor will need 12 hours of service per day. Monday thru Friday	Local funding, JARC, Section 5311
3	Ridesharing	An inexpensive way to address commuter needs. Part of Mobility Manager	One full-time staff will be needed to promote and manage the program	JARC, New Freedom
4	Fixed/Flex Route	The most effective way to serve resident of small cities. ADA complementary paratransit will use existing paratransit vehicles	14 hour days with 2 - 3 vehicles M - Sat	Local funding, Section 5311, New Freedom
5	Small Town Dial-a-Ride	An excellent way to meet the needs of small town residents in cost efficient manner	12 hour days with 1 - 2 vehicles	Local funds, New Freedom Section 5311
6	Fixed Schedule	Allows system to group what would otherwise be very unproductive and costly service	10 hour days with 1 - 2 vehicles per county	Local funds, Section 5311
7	Paratransit Service	This service would be available for those that cannot ride fixed-route or fixed schedule service. Must not compete with dial-a-ride or fixed-route.	One vehicle per county with 10 hour days	New Freedom, Section 5311, local funding
8	Bexar County	Will meet a defined need in an area where there is a jurisdictional gap in service, Coordinate with urban paratransit operations	Up to 2 vehicles for 12 - 14 hours per day	New Freedom, local funding
9	Shopper Shuttle	Targeting elderly persons this can be an effective service	1 - 2 vehicles operating 10 hours per day	Local businesses - Wal-Mart HEB for example

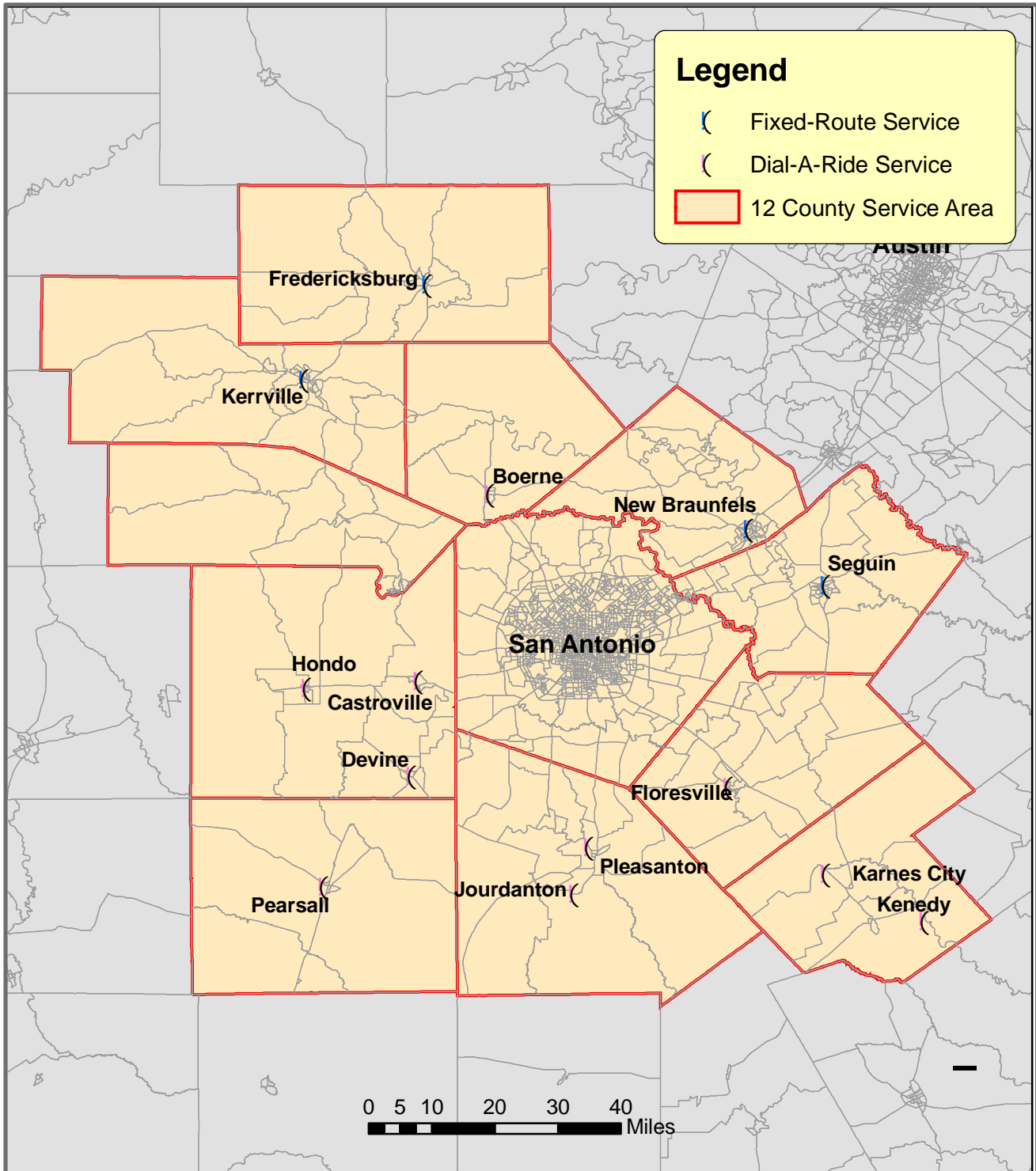


Figure 6: RECOMMENDED FIXED-ROUTE AND DIAL-A-RIDE CITIES

Prepared by:
KFH
 GROUP



Operational Task No. 1 - Addressing Medicaid Needs

At the present time, the MTP service cannot be integrated into ART's public service because of the sporadic, disparate, and last minute nature of these trips (as distributed by TxDOT- PTN). Because this service must be run separately, it is recommended that ART operate its service through a separate Medicaid cost center using a fleet of sedans to transport most persons on Medicaid. Where possible, trips will be coordinated using ART services, but until MTP decides to follow transit system bus schedules, this service should be separated (for the most part) from public transit. This is done to ensure that MTP service does not overwhelm the public service. Further, general public passengers can also ride on the MTP dedicated vehicles where it fits into the schedule.

The costs associated with this option include procuring or leasing vehicles (one or two for each county with a 20% spare ratio). These costs will be borne through the Medicaid contract.

Operational Task No. 2 - Commuter, Job Training, Education, and Medical Service

The demographic review and analysis of travel patterns, surveys of operators, public meetings, and discussions with other stakeholder reveals an agreement that more commuter opportunities into San Antonio should be in place for work, training, school, and medical service. In the heavily traveled corridors (Figure 7), this service can start as a bus service that should be scheduled with at least three round trips daily for morning and evening commute and a mid day trip. In corridors less heavily traveled, a vanpool may be more appropriate as a starting point, with the opportunity to grow into a bus service. In addition to the potential bus service, there are plans to develop an intercity commuter rail service from the San Antonio area to the Austin area. When this service is operating, ART's commuter service should change as well – providing feeder service to the rail.

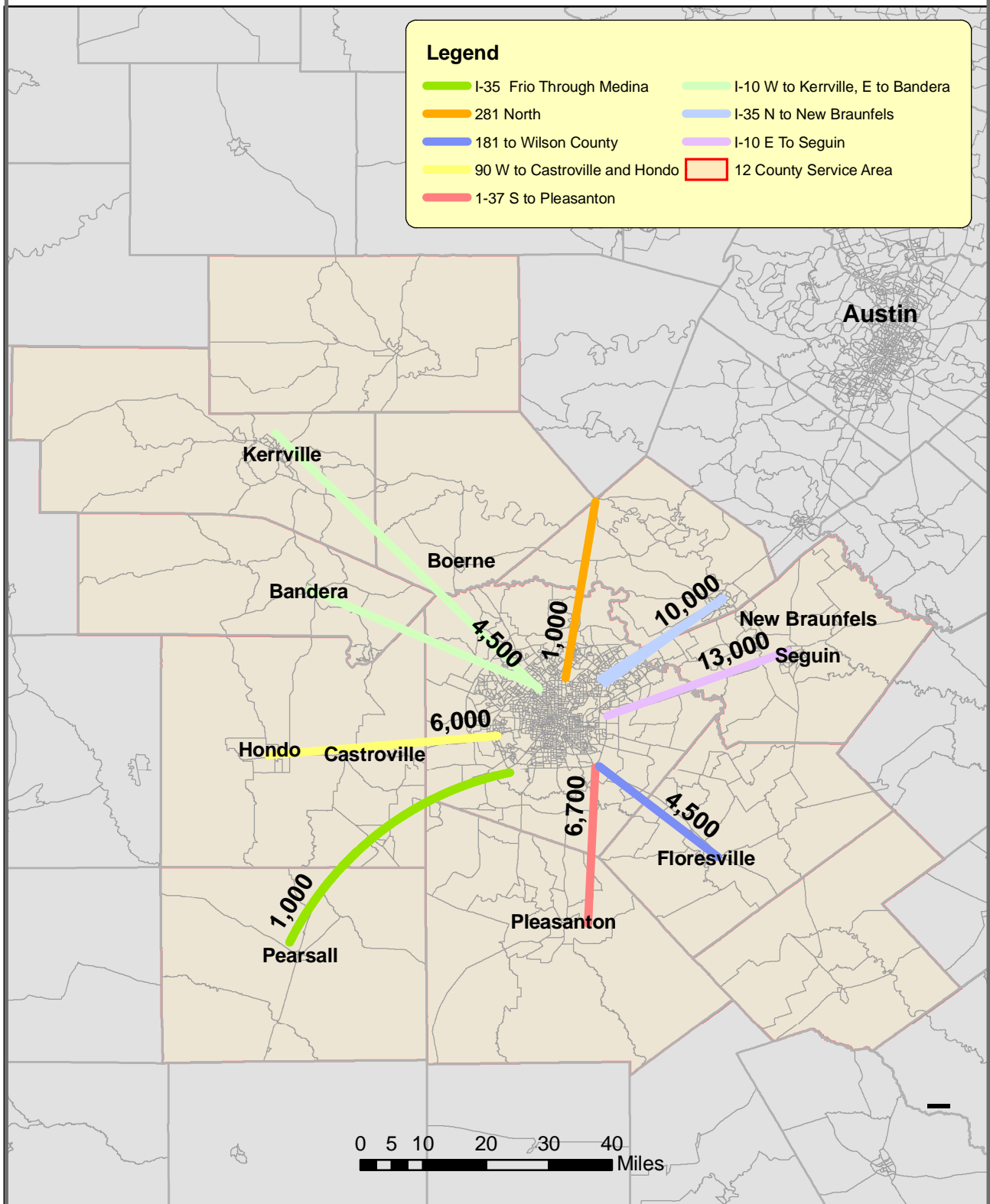


Figure 7: DAILY NUMBER OF COMMUTERS TO BEXAR COUNTY

Prepared by:
KFH
 GROUP

Major Corridors

Based on the analysis of U.S. Census Journey to Work data in Technical Memorandum No. 2, we can determine the potential for each corridor. The ranking by persons traveling to Bexar County is as follows:

- I-10 east to Seguin – This corridor generates 13,000 daily commuter trips to Bexar County
- I-35 north to New Braunfels – This service could be coordinated with CARTS service out of San Marcos to generate even more ridership than the 10,000 commuters in Comal County, making it the highest usage corridor. In the future, there may be a commuter rail service in this corridor, requiring ART to shift its efforts from long distance commuter service to feeder service for the rail.
- I-10 west to Bandera and to Kendall County. Bandera contributes 3,000 commuters and Kendall contributes 4,500 commuters.
- I-37 south to Pleasanton has over 6,700 commuters.
- U.S. 90 west to Castroville and Hondo has about 6,000 daily commuters, with the potential to link up with services coming from the west.
- U.S. 181 south to Wilson County yields about 4,500 commuters.
- U.S. 281 north would yield about 1,000 commuters in a very low density suburban environment.
- I-35 south to Frio County with stops in eastern Medina will yield about 1,000 riders – this service is currently funded through the JARC program.

The first two corridors can justify a commuter bus with three round trips daily. All of the others should start with vanpools and market the service to the point where a large bus would be more appropriate.

Operational Task No. 3 - Implement Fixed-Route and Flex-Route Service

Basic fixed-route concepts are essential rules that should be followed in the creation of a fixed-route local bus service plan in the Alamo Region include:

- **Minimum Density** – Fixed-route service should be available in communities of at least 1,000 persons per square mile, as well as areas with major destinations. Tourist areas can have a lower density.
- **Service Days and Hours** – It is recommended that service operate at a minimum, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturday. In tourist areas Sunday service should be considered during tourist season(s) and service hours can be later in the evening for both tourists and employees.
- **Maximize Use of Fixed-Route** – Accessible fixed-route local bus service has proven capable of transporting most persons with disabilities. Indeed, mainstreaming is the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legislation. Incentives and training should be provided for persons with disabilities to ride fixed-route.
- **Serving Job Access** – The fixed-route services will be critical to serving persons needing transportation to employment. Since people have jobs all over the area, the best way to serve the most persons needing access to work, is through fixed/flex-route. This is the mode of transit that virtually all work trips use in the United States.
- **ADA Complementary Paratransit** – For the more tourist-oriented fixed-route services, the consultants recommend accessible fixed-route service with complementary paratransit service rather than route deviation service (where the vehicle will deviate off of the route as requested). Flex-route would be more appropriate for Seguin. While the fixed-route approach is slightly more expensive, it provides far superior service for both fixed-route riders and persons who cannot ride fixed-route, due to a disability as defined by the ADA. In addition, ART will still continue to operate general public paratransit in much of the county.
- **Serve Public School Students** – Student transportation for children who live less than two miles from a school is an important part of a fixed-route system where this two mile rule applies. Each route should be designed to generate maximum ridership for students. Routes can change during peak school hours to accommodate student needs.
- **Timed Transfer and Interlining** – Fixed routes will meet at designated transfer points and then become a second route (interlining). This reduces the need for transfers. These services will also be timed to meet inter- and intra-county service, where possible.

- **Out and Back** – This is the traditional form of fixed-route transit, where as a general rule, a bus goes in two directions down each street it traverses. Large loop style routes where the vehicle goes one-way down each street are generally ineffective due to long travel times, circuitous routings, and difficulties in comprehending schedules. Two way loop style routes can work.
- **Modest Goals** – Initially modest goals should be set, allowing the service time to build a customer base, like any other business.
- **Marketing Funds** – As with any new start-up business, transit needs to be professionally marketed and promoted, with a reasonable budget.

ADA Needs and Requirements

ADA requires that service be available for persons with disabilities who *cannot* get to a bus stop or effectively ride the bus. There are two approaches that are generally used. The first is through a complementary but separate curb-to-curb service for qualifying individuals. In this plan, that service would be provided through ART’s existing network of paratransit services. The second approach would be to provide a “Flex” route that would operate as a fixed route, but time would be built in for the bus to go off route to pick up a rider that requested the service. This plan calls for a fixed-route service that will flex off route when a passenger calls with a special need. Please note that this service will be available for anyone that wants this service (as required in regulation), however persons who do not have a disability limiting their access to a bus will be required to pay a premium fare of \$3 (for example).

This service for persons with disabilities will be advertised on all literature – all buses are accessible and curb-to-curb service is available, with a telephone number to call. In addition, all bus shelters and benches must meet the ADA requirements for accessibility.

Research at other similar systems indicates that ADA ridership will be low. Reasons cited include: those tourists with disabilities will probably come with their own vehicles, and many persons that would qualify are already using the service through Medicaid or the general public.

It should be noted that each of these proposed services below require local funds to implement. These funds should come from a variety of local sources and other federal funds that

are available as a match (MTP funds for example). The fixed-route services will be funded through *New Freedom*, JARC, Section 5311, and the local funds.

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

Larger Cities – Fixed/Flex-Route Service

- **Fredericksburg** – While the city size by itself is not large enough to sustain a fixed-route service, a combination of residents and tourists could support fixed-route service in this significant tourist oriented city. A two bus fixed-route system with complementary paratransit is the appropriate size system for this city. A third bus can enter service during peak times/days and during festivals. Because there is a tourist orientation to this route, it should operate as a fixed-route with complementary paratransit supplied by the existing demand-response vehicles.
- **Kerrville** – Kerrville is large enough to sustain a three bus fixed-route service with its population and the tourist factor. Kerrville is the major employment and education center of the western part of the Alamo Region. Service can be coordinated with intercity buses and other ART routes that provide service into Kerrville. This should also be operated as a fixed-route.
- **New Braunfels** – New Braunfels can sustain at least a two vehicle system operating in a flex-route mode. It is anticipated that many of the riders will be residents with some tourists using the service. This service will also connect to commuter service to San Antonio and north as well as intercity buses.
- **Seguin** – There is currently a form of fixed-route in Seguin, using two buses. Ridership is low, in large part due to the design of the service – the bus travels through numerous areas with no potential for ridership and it stops at every stop whether someone is there or not – greatly slowing down service.

Operational Task No. 4 – Dial-a-Ride Service in Smaller Communities

The primary towns of each county with at least 3,500 population are candidates for dial-a-ride service. These towns are described in Table 5. This immediate response type of service is designed to attract more users through its convenience. Many persons with disabilities will find it very convenient to use for routine needs.

Table 5: SMALL CITIES OF THE ALAMO REGION

Pleasanton/ Jourdanton	11,998
Hondo	7,897
Pearsall	7,157
Boerne	6,178
Floresville	5,868
Devine	4,140
Kenedy/ Karnes City	6,944

As with other services, these services will need the support of the local communities in which they serve. It is anticipated that local governments and private businesses will generate the local match in order for this service to start. *New Freedom* funding will support this service. In addition in communities with professional transportation companies that can meet the standards of ART, it may be feasible to contract with those firms.

There would typically be one dial-a-ride vehicle serving the smaller towns. The simplest approach is to have the driver answer calls for service within the next hour and schedule the customer while they are on the telephone. Using technology can work – centralizing the operation – however it is not necessary for one vehicle service. A large system in Texas chose to operate in the low tech mode described above, because it was just as effective, but less costly.

These towns can each sustain a one bus dial-a-ride with some of the larger towns, justifying two vehicles. Dial-a-ride service is such that the customer calls for service and within an hour the vehicle arrives to take the customer to a variety of local destinations. It operates similar to a shared ride taxi. In fact, taxi providers can be used to supplement the service on a subcontract basis (if they meet FTA requirements as applicable). Often these services have the customer call the driver directly for service. The driver then logs in the trip and provides it in the proper order. This approach is used in a number of communities and works best if operating in a small well defined service area. The enhanced quality of this service and the real time scheduling will allow for higher productivity (at least four one-way trips per hour). Fares should

be \$2 with discounts available. Funding for this service should come from each town and from *New Freedom* funding because it will expand opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Operational Task No. 5 - Fixed Schedule Service

Fixed schedule service operates in designated rural areas according to a posted schedule. The bus will be in a specific area at a specific time. Passengers can be picked up at their door or at designated stops in the area. The vehicle then proceeds to the designated destination area (typically the largest town in the county). Service is limited to specific days and times. The level of service would be dependent on the need. Fixed schedule service allows ART to group more trips and eliminate the one-on-one trips typical of rural demand-response service. This type of service would operate in the rural portions of each county in the service area. Some areas may receive five days a week service, while others may receive one day per week service. In most counties, one vehicle would serve the rural portions of the county (or parts of adjacent counties where feasible). Section 5311 and *New Freedom* funding should be accessed.

Operational Task No. 6 - Paratransit Service

Because of its expense, paratransit service will only be available for MTP trips that are not coordinated according to the bus schedule. In addition, persons that cannot use the other modes due to a disability will be provided paratransit and *New Freedom and Section 5311* funding will be requested for this high level of service. This service must not compete with small town dial-a-ride, fixed schedule, or fixed-route service. The fare for paratransit should be higher than other services.

Operational Task No. 7 - Expanded Service in Bexar County

To address one of the few jurisdictional gaps in the service area, using *New Freedom* funding, new service will be available to all elderly residents and residents with disabilities in the portions of Bexar County not currently served by VIA. This service will be coordinated with

Lefleur, VIA, ART, the City of San Antonio, Warm Springs, and other human service agencies and cooperatives.

Operational Task No. 8 - Shopper Shuttle Services

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

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

OTHER COORDINATION AND OPERATIONAL TASKS

There are a number of other tasks that need to be accomplished in order to ensure success. These are discussed below:

- **Image Change** – ART needs a “make-over” demonstrating its new image as a public transit system. A new logo and color scheme should be employed – even separate color schemes for the different fixed-route services.
- **One Stop Shopping** – a single source of general and specific information for all transit services available. This can include a single web site, telephone support, and the centralized ticket purchasing. In the rural areas this can include intercity bus and ART, while in urban areas it can be the myriad of paratransit operators, fixed-route, and intercity bus.
- **Through Ticketing and Transferring** – Passengers should be able to purchase tickets to ride the regional system, VIA, and intercity service at each of the major transfer points. ART should explore the option of becoming the intercity ticket agent.

- **Fare Structures** – the higher the fare, the lower the ridership. Fares are much too high at the present time. Fares should be considerably lower in order to entice greater ridership. The fares should be compatible across the system, for example:
 - Commuter service – Should cost no more than \$3 - \$5 each way
 - Local Service – Local fixed-route or flex-route service or fixed schedule service should have a fare of \$.50 to \$1.00
 - Paratransit fares should be double the fixed-route/fixed schedule services

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is designed to maximize improvements. That is, provide the most service to the most people. Therefore as part of this plan, we emphasize the fixed-route services first, in order to maximize ridership. Please note that this is necessary because TxDOT allocates annual funds based on a formula that stresses high ridership. The lower ridership services will be implemented in the 4th and 5th years of the plan.

Year 1

Year 1 will include a variety of tasks, starting with the development of the Mobility Manager approach to coordinating transit. Along with that will be the initial set-up of a rideshare program. The second task will be to develop a new image and logo for ART, in order to inform the public that this service is for anybody, breaking down old myths that still persist. Concurrent with these other activities, ART should start and complete a variety of planning initiatives, so that it can be prepared to procure additional vehicles as needed. This procurement should take place as soon as possible in the first year – service initiation dates will be dependent upon the delivery of these vehicles.

In the San Antonio area the tasks are quite different. The first tasks will be to set up the proper committees to start the coordination process. These committees will identify the coordination path that the paratransit operators will take over the next five years.

Rural

1. Image change – bright new colors and a new image.

2. Establish Mobility Manager – a critical task – developing the administrative/management/planning infrastructure to address future needs. This task will also include seeking funds for new technology for the region.
3. Initiate Rideshare Program – After hiring staff, the rideshare efforts should begin. This will also give planners an idea of the number of persons interested in using transit to commute.
4. Seek JARC, *New Freedom*, and Section 5310 funding for the services needing these funds.
5. Plan for Commuter Service – Which corridors will receive service first, what types of vehicles will be needed?
6. Plan for Fixed-Route – Which cities will receive service first. Again vehicles need to be purchased.
7. Plan for Dial-a-Ride – Same questions apply here.
8. Plan for Medicaid Changes – This will require administrative changes as well as a fleet of sedans.
9. Procure Buses and Sedans – This should be done as soon as decisions are made as to which services will be initiated first.
10. Implement Frio County JARC service – This service will be a pilot for ART to determine the feasibility (although this is a lightly traveled corridor). If it works in this corridor, it can work in any San Antonio based corridor in the region.
11. Conduct a detailed needs analysis of the rural service area – in conjunction with a similar review in Bexar County.

Urban

1. Establish Advisory Committee – Building on the efforts underway and in conjunction with key stakeholders, a formal committee will be formed.
2. Establish Operators Committee – The operators should establish a working group – perhaps a subcommittee of the above committee, for the operators to identify opportunities for coordination. Initial coordination activities should center on coordinated training – bringing each system up to the highest standards of training. Maintenance and communication should be the other areas under review.
3. Plan for Bexar supplemental service outside VIA coverage area – seek *New Freedom* funding

4. Review technology issues – Ultimately all systems should be linked to one system. Working with the Mobility Manager, the operators should start to discuss technology needs and seek grant funding.
5. Conduct a detailed needs analysis for Bexar County – in conjunction with a similar review in the rural parts of the service area.

Year 2

Near the end of the second year, ART will initiate two fixed routes and the first commuter routes. The Mobility Manager will also begin planning for the second round of service improvements in Year 3. In this year, the Mobility Manager should also begin raising funds for the system through advertising and sponsorship programs with the private sector. All entities must be careful not to implement too many things at one time.

Rural

1. Implement first commuter service – the most viable services will be initiated first.
2. Implement first two fixed routes – those with local funding should start first.
3. Implement new MTP structure – ART’s MTP service will change how it operates in order to be as efficient and effective as possible and to ensure that MTP does not control the public service.
4. Plan additional services for Year 3 implementation – also determine potential vehicle needs.
5. Initiate fund raising and sales activities with the private sector.
6. ART will participate in the procurement of technologies (see urban activities below)

Urban

1. Initiate mentoring and support program between small and larger operators. This should also include the leasing of vehicles as appropriate.
2. Plan for procurement of new technology for all operators as warranted.

3. Complete the coordination planning and activate training, maintenance, and other programs.

Year 3

In Year 3, the Mobility Manager will develop the one stop information center and identify additional public and private sector funding. New services will be initiated throughout the service area as local funds come available to support service. In San Antonio technology should be pursued once the entities agree to a future service design that will maximize productivity and overall performance of the service. Also looming is the possibility that as the census data is made available, New Braunfels may become a small urban area, necessitating different funding arrangements.

Rural

1. Implement fixed schedule county services in selected counties of the region.
2. Implement dial-a-ride services in 50 percent of the towns (again based on funding commitments).
3. Implement two fixed routes.
4. Develop and implement one stop information center.
5. Pursue funding opportunities.
6. Determine changes based on Census information – New Braunfels becoming a small urban area.
7. Track progress of the commuter rail service.
8. Seek funding for an inter-modal facility in the New Braunfels area.

Urban

1. Initiate limited trip sharing arrangements to determine feasibility of coordination
2. Determine roles and policies and procedures for coordinated paratransit network.
3. Procure technology for a phased implementation of technologies as warranted.

Year 4

In the 4th year ART will implement the final of the proposed service improvements and then initiate a new planning process to review additional needs as they occur. In the San Antonio area the operators will initiate the new coordinated network of services.

Rural

1. Implement all other services as local funding becomes available – this will be the final piece of the operational changes in the regional plan.
2. Consolidate service and fine tune as necessary – Fine tuning will be necessary on a regular basis – at least semi-annually.
3. Look for additional needs through a planning process – initiate a new round of service planning as the service area grows and changes.
4. Develop through ticketing for intercity bus, ART, and VIA – These entities will work together to develop a seamless network. Frio County will be used as a pilot project.
5. Implement shopper shuttles – throughout service area where local funding is available.

Urban

1. Implement coordinated paratransit network – The implementation of the coordinated network will begin in Year 4. The first two operators should be linked up.
2. Implement technology – at the same time as the coordinated network is introduced, the technology – software will be initiated.

Year 5

In Year 5 all services should be in place and the technology should be in its second phase on implementation. Most activities will be fine tuning and initiating a new five year planning process.

Rural

1. Initiate new five year plan activities – as the Mobility Manager a new five year planning process should be implemented.
2. Mobility Manager takes over intercity bus agents where feasible – This is an excellent opportunity to coordinate and generate revenue for the system.

Urban

1. Continue coordination efforts – complete the coordination of operators and the linkage to the technology.
2. Implement the second phase of the technologies – Mobile Data Terminals.
3. Continual technology training – technology training is essential and on-going.
4. Discuss further coordination opportunities among the paratransit operators.

FUNDING OPTIONS – JARC, NEW FREEDOM, AND SECTION 5310

The JARC funds are targeted for access to employment for low income persons. The *New Freedom* funding is to be used to expand access beyond ADA for persons with disabilities. The Section 5310 funds are available for elderly and disabled transportation. These programs all require a system plan to use these funds. As part of the plan the funding sources are addressed through the document. They are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: SUMMARY OF FUNDING SOURCES

Activity	JARC	New Freedom	Section 5310	Section 5311	MTP	Health and Human Service	Local Funding	Public/Private	MPO Planning	TxDOT Planning
Mobility Manager	Yes	Yes							Yes	Yes
Ridesharing/Vanpools	Yes							Yes		
Procure Vehicles		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes			
Commuter Service	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Implement Fixed-Route		Yes				Yes	Yes			
Implement New MTP					Yes					
Procure Technology		Yes	Yes	Yes						
Implement Dial-a-Ride		Yes		Yes			Yes			
Implement Fixed Schedule		Yes		Yes			Yes			
Serve Bexar		Yes				Yes	Yes			
Shopper Shuttles							Yes	Yes		
Implement San Antonio		Yes	Yes							