

Chambers County

TRANSIT PLAN



**Final Report
September 2009**





CHAMBERS COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN

For the Residents of Chambers County

**Approved by the Chambers County
Commissioners Court
August 25, 2009**

**And by the H-GAC
Transportation Policy Council
September 25, 2009**



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DISCLAIMER

Funding for the development of this planning document was provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation. The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or the Texas Department of Transportation.

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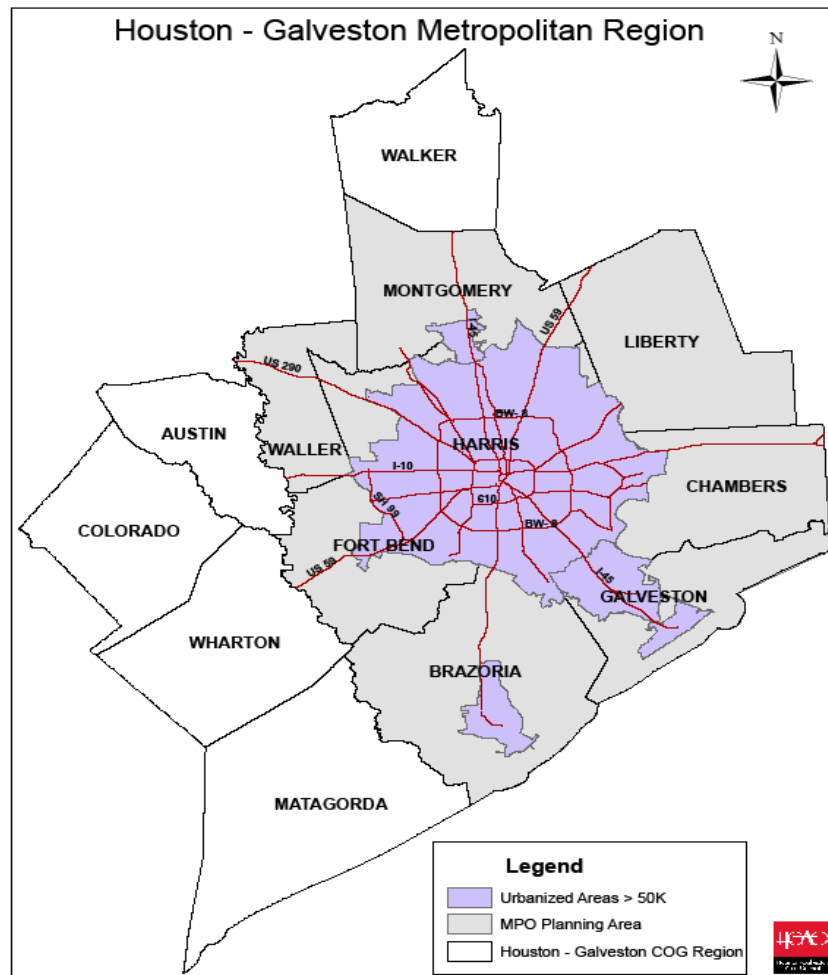
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Houston-Galveston region is home to 5.4 million people including thousands of people who do not have access to an automobile or have other mobility limitations. For the most part, those people depend on public transportation to meet their transportation needs for employment, shopping, and medical trips. Certain parts of the region are served by public transportation providers, such as the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) whose service area includes the western two-thirds of Harris County; however, many other parts of the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning Region have limited or no public transportation services.

Figure 1- H-GAC Region



In many areas, like Chambers County (the County), basic public transportation services have been provided primarily for elderly and disabled persons through the senior citizens centers in Anahuac and Mont Belvieu and through the Medical Transportation Program (MTP) which is now administered by the State Health and Human Services (HHS) Commission.

Some of the unmet transit needs in the County were expressed during public meetings that were held in 2006 as part of the regional transit coordination planning effort (in response to House Bill 3588) and reiterated in 2008 as a focused transit plan for Chambers County was being developed. Business leaders and elected officials pointed out the transit related needs in their respective communities and within the County overall. The recommended services should also provide connections to other parts of the Houston-Galveston region for better access to jobs, educational opportunities, medical trips and social outings for those with limited mobility options today. The county judge, Honorable Jimmy Sylvia expressed that with the rising price of fuel the need for implementing public transportation services in Chambers County is very timely.

Based on the input from the elected officials, the public and new information about the expanding industrial employment opportunities in the Interstate Highway (IH)-10 corridor there are several emerging opportunities for expanding transit services in several directions to accommodate some of the identified transit needs. In cooperation with the Baytown and West Chambers county economic development councils and the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, an employee shuttle service could be implemented that would connect those areas. In addition, another opportunity might include Harris County's new Transit Service Department as a coordinating partner for transit service expansions that could connect the eastern parts of Harris County and the western parts of Chambers County, both of which are outside the METRO Service Area.

Chambers County is home to more than 28,771 people (2007 ACS) and approximately 9% of the population is over 65 years of age which is higher than the regional proportion. However the median household income in Chambers County at \$54,474 is higher than the regional median of \$41,515 indicating more affluent households in some parts of the County.

Chambers County is in a unique situation because it does not have a designated public transportation provider. Due to its relatively smaller population size the County would not receive adequate funding for public transportation services from the State's allocation based on the Elderly and Disabled (5310) and Rural (5311) formula programs to support a comprehensive public transportation system. Therefore an incremental approach to enhancing the public transportation options in Chambers County is recommended that will coordinate available resources with innovative funding initiatives for future expansion. In addition there are some unique opportunities available today to form some strategic partnerships with various entities such as the petrochemical industry, the economic development councils and the regional vanpool program.

The development of the Chambers County Transit Plan combines information that was prepared for the 2006 regional transit coordination plan with more recent information and related data from various sources including but not limited to public comments and Census information.

Justification for Chambers County Public Transportation Expansion

- A county-wide public transportation program is needed for *special needs populations* in the County to augment the localized public transportation services provided today:
 - 9% of Chambers County residents are 65 and older, higher than the regional average of 7.9%.
 - Transportation is needed by the special needs population for: daily essential errands such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, job training, college, employment.
 - 5.8 % of the households in Chambers County do not have automobiles.
- 10.7% of the population is below the poverty level.
- The increase in gas prices is beginning to force people to look for public transportation for work and essential errands,
 - Lower income families are affected most by the rise in gas prices as they have the least amount of disposable income with which to absorb the added expenses.
 - Approximately 22,000 annual trips would be generated by the expanded services, five times the current transit ridership levels.
- The state has established a mandate to coordinate and consolidate health and human service transportation delivery through HB 3588. That coordination should create efficiencies and expand capacity through economies of scale. This presents a unique opportunity for the County to develop an integrated public transit system addressing diverse needs.

The recommended transit projects for Chambers County are:

SHORT- TERM

- 1) **County-wide General Public Demand-Response Service.** Chambers County's residents would benefit from a countywide general public demand-response program that would improve local mobility options for all segments of the population. *That expansion can be partially accomplished by the acquisition of a third transit vehicle to provide demand response services in the eastern portion of the county.* The formation of a public/private partnership including representatives of the Economic Development Councils, the business and industrial employment sectors and the Texas Workforce Solutions program could provide some other sources of transportation revenues (as matching funds) to support that transit expansion.
- 2) **Commuter shuttle Pilot Project between eastern Harris County and western Chambers County.** A commuter shuttle connection between the Baytown Park and Ride, the Wal-Mart/Cedar Bayou Distribution Center and other employment locations near Mont Belvieu is recommended as a starting point for the development of a more comprehensive express bus program along IH 10. Coordination with the Intercity Bus

carriers along that corridor could provide another source of matching funds for further expansion in the future.

- 3) **Implementation of Commute Solutions Program strategies** including but not limited to the development of the following:
 - New vanpools, carpools through the NuRide program; and
 - Telework programs in coordination with the major employers in Chambers County (where feasible).
- 4) Initiate discussions to develop a **Car-Ownership Program** similar to the Ways to Work Program. That program provides low interest loans for used automobiles for low-income families to get to work and to rideshare with other employees. The program could be a cost effective option for a segment of the population in Chambers County.
- 5) Beyond the short-term project period, the County could consider either joining or creating a rural transit district. This option might include merging with the Harris County Transit Program, the Brazos Transit District (Liberty County), Connect Transportation (Galveston County), or a rural transportation program through the TxDOT Beaumont District.

MID-TERM

- 6) **Evaluate the Feasibility of Potential Park-and-Ride services in the following areas:**
 - Westbound towards Baytown, downtown Houston CBD and the Houston Ship Channel;
 - Eastbound towards Port Arthur and Beaumont; and
 - North-South connecting Chambers and Liberty Counties along the SH 146 corridor.

LONG-TERM

- 7) **A Transit Feasibility Assessment of an Intermodal Transfer Center near the intersection of Interstate 10 and SH 146.** Based on the apparent need to enhance transit services in the IH 10 Corridor between Houston and Beaumont/Port Arthur it would be prudent to explore the development of transfer capabilities between the local transit services in Liberty and Chambers counties. That location could become a strategic location to facilitate those transfers to Intercity Buses buses traveling the IH-10 corridor, as well as provide an access point in the area related to the future development of higher speed passenger rail services in that corridor.

The following chapters provide a summary of the information that was considered in the transit planning process for Chambers County. Chapter 2 contains a profile of the study area with relevant data highlighted. Chapter 3 discusses the existing and recommended transit services and Chapters 4 and 5 present the financial plan cost estimates and a feasibility assessment that could be used to outline a recommended approach to implement the recommendations in the plan.

Chapter 2

STUDY AREA PROFILE



This chapter presents summary profiles of Chambers County in order to understand the general population features, the distribution of major concentrations of origins and destinations and the connecting corridors between them. This profile also provides information about transit needs and related travel patterns. This chapter includes the following topics:

- Geographic Profile – a brief discussion of major roadways and cities in the county
- Demographic Profile – a summary of U.S. Census data and population and employment density maps
- Major Attractors and Generators map indicating the locations of major employers, hospitals and schools which could generate transit ridership. (See Appendix B for the associated summary tables).
- Transit Needs Index – a thematic map that shows the locations of highest transit needs in the county based on a model that considers several factors

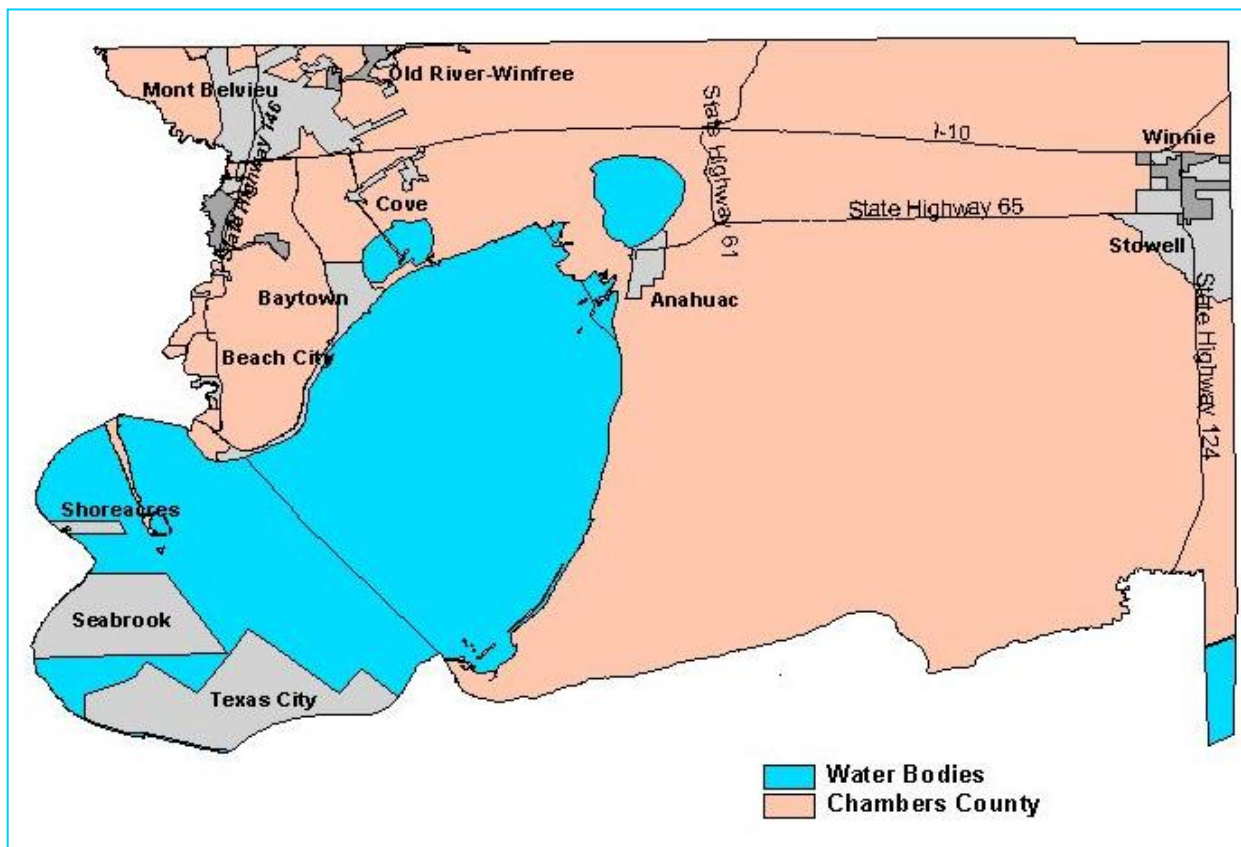
Geographic Profile

Chambers County is located primarily on the east side of Galveston Bay, and includes the eastern portion of Baytown (the western portion is in Harris County), as well as the cities of Mont Belvieu, Old River-Winfree, and Anahuac (the county seat) in the central part of the county. Interstate Highway (IH)-10, which extends across the county in an east-west direction, provides excellent access to metropolitan centers in the area. The eastern and western extremities of the county along IH10 are approximately 25 miles from Beaumont and Houston, respectively. Four major state highways also serve the county. See Figure 1 for a reference map. The Grand Parkway- SH 99 is a planned 155-mile parkway that will encircle the Houston area and will extend through the western portion of Chambers County

as Segment I-2. The northern part of that segment was opened to traffic in 2008. When Segment I-2 is completed it will provide a more direct access to the county from other parts of the region and an alternate hurricane evacuation route from the southern ends of West Chambers and Eastern Harris counties. Since its completion, the Fred Hartman Bridge, an eight-lane suspension bridge that connects Baytown and LaPorte, has proven to have a major impact on the development in West Chambers County.

This network of throughways provides Chambers County with an extremely high degree of accessibility with the regional market. Coupled with the area's strategic location between Greater Houston, Beaumont, and Port Arthur markets, the highway system will increase demand for industrial and commercial property within the county.

Figure 2 – Chambers County Reference Map



Demographic Profile

With an estimated population of 28,771 in 2007 and about 15,000 people in the labor force, Chambers County remains relatively rural within the region. The 2035 population forecast indicates that about 53,000 people will reside in the County reflecting some anticipated growth and development. The past population growth rates indicate stronger growth from 1990 to 2000 (29.6%) for a small population base, with more moderate growth between 2000 and 2007 (10.5%). The population density is approximately 43.5

persons per square mile underscoring the predominant rural nature of the County. Approximately 11 percent of the population falls below the poverty line, 15 percent of persons have a disability, and 9.1 are over 65 years of age which is higher than the regional proportion. Table 1 below shows the demographic profile within Chambers County as compared to H-GAC's 13-county profile.

Table 1 – Demographic Profile

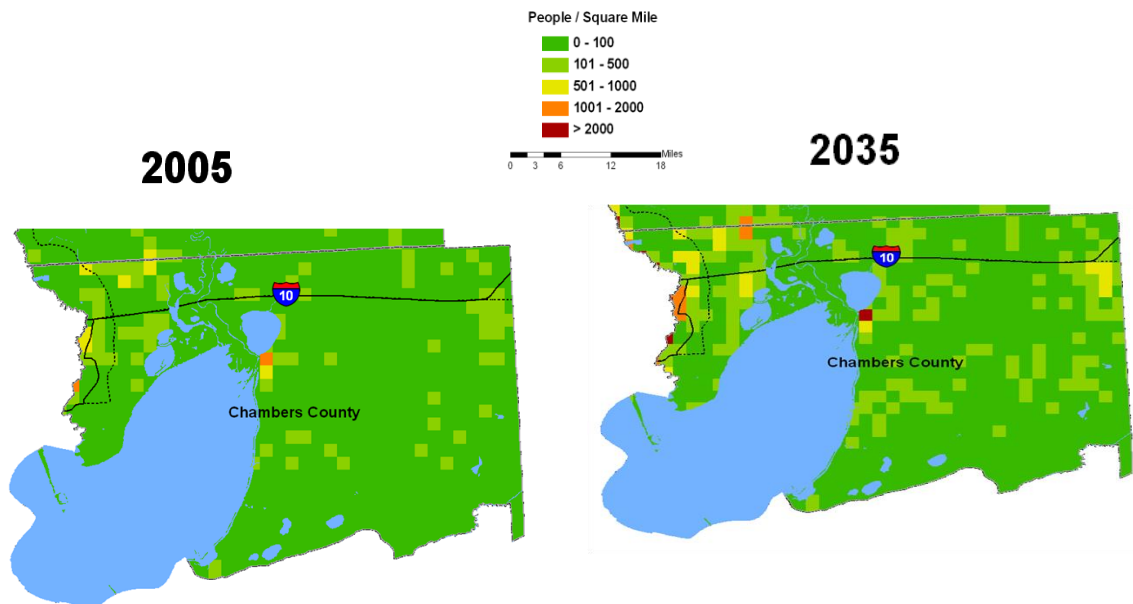
	Chambers County	13-County Area
2000 Population	26,031	4,854,454
2007 Population Estimate	28,771	5,318,437
2000-2007 Change	10.5%	9.6%
1990-2000 Change	29.6%	24.6%
Persons over 65 (2006)	9.1%	7.9%
Persons under 5 (2006)	6.1%	8%
Persons with a disability (2000)	4,175	801,436
Persons with a disability (%) (2000)	15%	16.5%
Non-English Spoken at Home (2000)	11.7%	29%
Persons Hispanic or Latino (2000)	15%	28.6%
Households (2000)	9,139	1,702,792
Median Household Income (2004)	\$54,474	\$41,515
Persons below poverty line (2004)	10.7%	13.5%
Households without an automobile (2000)	5.8%	7.4%
Land Area (square miles) (2000)	599	12,312
Density (persons per square mile) (2000)	43.5	394.3

Source: U.S. Census 2000

The population density map for Chambers County (**Figure 3**) for 2005 shows a couple of small areas with more than 1,000 people per square mile (in orange) in the cities of Anahuac and Baytown. Those areas are projected to increase to over 2000 people per square mile in 2035. At that time they would have sufficient population densities to support fixed route transit services based on METRO's Service Standards for fixed route services in moderate density census tracts in the Houston urbanized area. However given the relatively low population density through-out the County a demand response or deviated fixed route service plan might be more feasible to start with. Other options for fixed route services could be evaluated in a later phase of transit planning. Other locations in the County showing projected growth with more than 1000 people per square mile are near Mont Belvieu and Winnie.

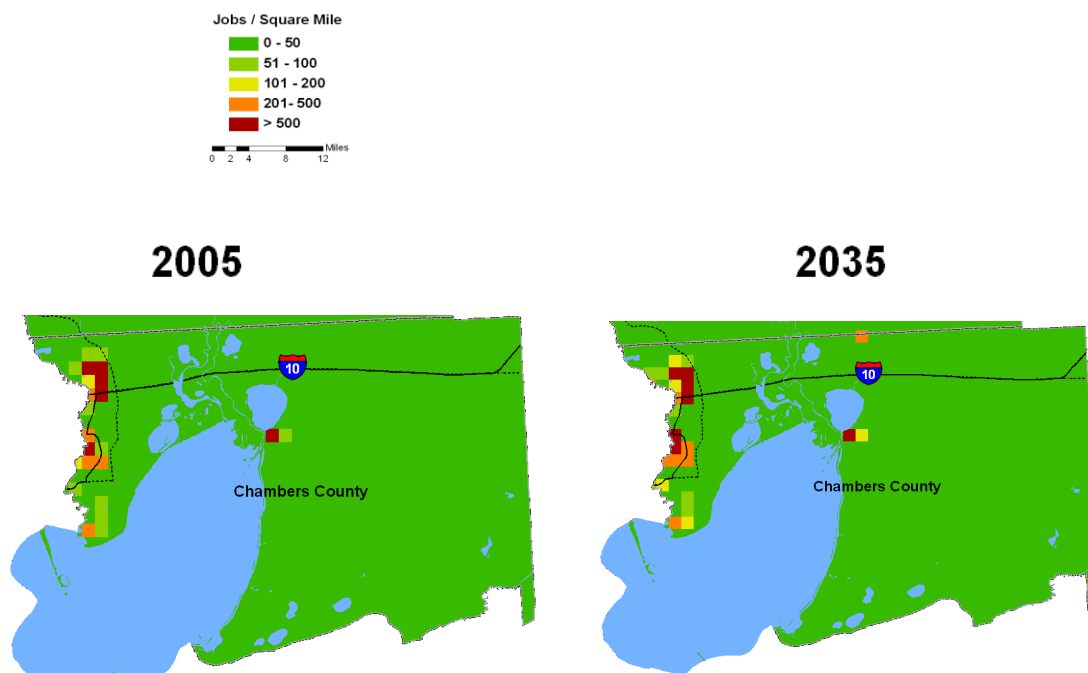
The employment density map (**Figure 4**) shows relatively high concentrations of employment with more than 500 jobs per square mile in Baytown, Mont Belvieu and Anahuac. In the year 2035 if current employment projections become reality, there will be an expanded area with higher employment densities in those cities as well as additional cities in central and far eastern Chambers County near Winnie.

Figure 3: Population Densities in Chambers County for 2005 and 2035 (Projected)



Source: H-GAC

Figure 4: Employment Densities in Chambers County for 2005 and 2035 (Projected)

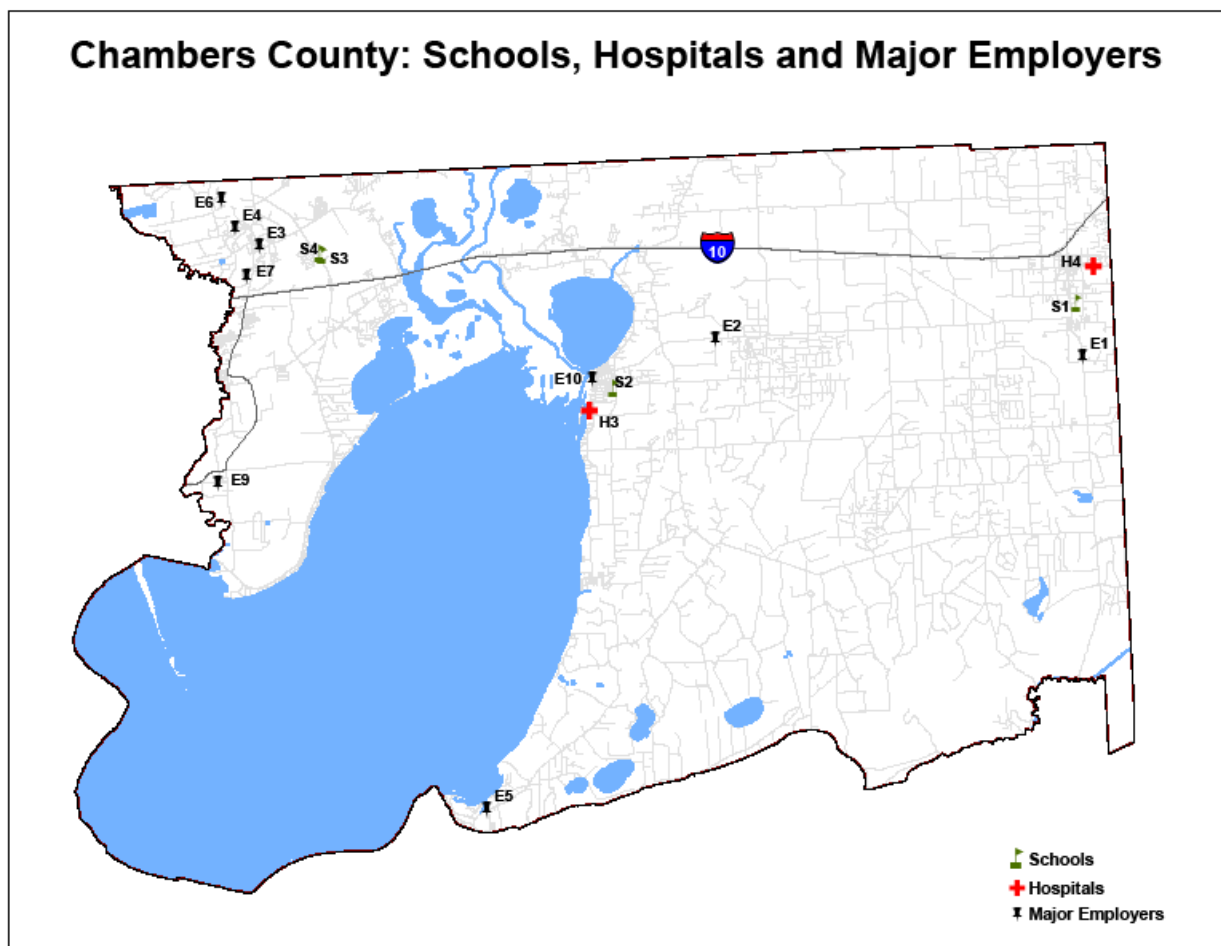


Source: H-GAC

Transit Attractors and Generators

The locations of major employers, schools and hospitals shown in **Figure 5** points out some areas that have some *clustering of activities*, near Mont Belvieu, Anahuac and Winnie/Stowell. Those locations could have the potential for multiple trip purposes to be served within close proximity that would eventually provide the best opportunities for transit hubs or transfer points to connect the countywide public transit services. A listing of the major employers, hospitals and schools that are represented in **Figure 5** is provided in Appendix B.

Figure 5: Major Employers, Hospitals and Schools



Transit Needs Index (TNI)

Transit planners utilize several tools in conducting an assessment of the need for transit services in an area. One of those tools is the Transit Needs Index (TNI) which uses the demographic characteristics (See **Table 2**) of an area and formulates scores using a mathematical model. The model was formulated based on experiences within small Texas cities in the 1990's and updated with 2000 Census data.

The model results are shown in **Figure 6** and indicate the highest areas of transit need are in central and far eastern Chambers County. The lack of a universal, countywide demand-response service in Chambers County could make trips for individuals in these areas difficult, especially if they lack a network of friends or family to assist them. The introduction of such a system, even on an interim pilot project basis could help determine long-term viability of such a service. There currently are not any proposals by the county or by adjacent providers to initiate a universal rural demand-response service.

Table 2 – Transit Needs Index Weights

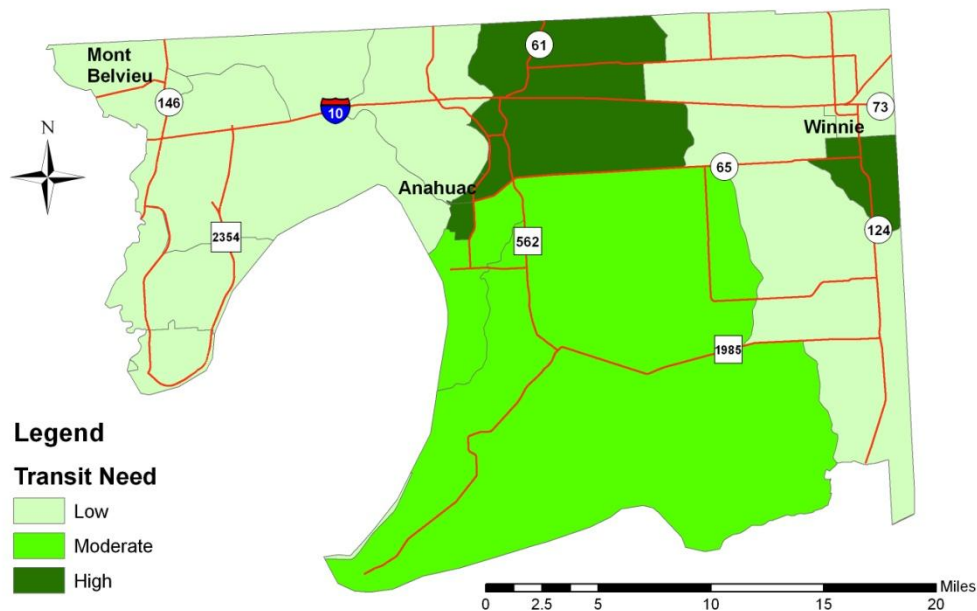
Need Characteristic	Urban (Fixed Route)	Rural (Demand/Response)
Population density	2.0	1.0
Median household income	3.5	2.5
Minority population	2.0	1.0
Zero car households	1.5	1.5
Senior population	0.5	2.0
Work force disability	0.5	2.0

See **Appendix C** for more details about the model formulation for the TNI Methodology¹.

¹ The TNI is derived from the Brazoria County Transit Feasibility Study Report, April 6, 1995 developed by LKC Consulting Services Inc. as reported in the Gulf Coast Region Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan, 2006 and updated by H-GAC staff using 2000 Census data.

Figure 6 - Chambers County Transit Need Index

Chambers County Transit Need Index

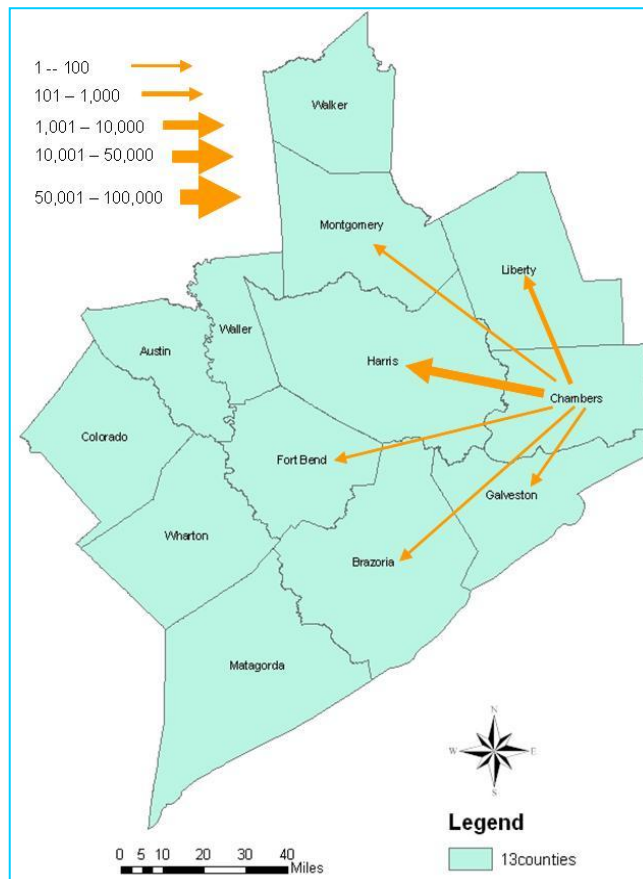


Travel Patterns - Journey to Work (JTW)

The 2000 U.S. Census provides information on the place-of-work and journey-to-work characteristics of all workers 16 years and older; this detailed information is available from H-GAC. The journey-to-work trip is a major factor when considering new transit services that would serve traditional daytime employees.

Figure 7 depicts the journey-to-work flow from Chambers County. In terms of the H-GAC region, workers from Chambers County mainly commute to Harris and Liberty counties. There were 5,375 workers commuting to Harris County daily and the flows to the other counties are much smaller. There were also some 4,555 daily work trips within Chambers County so internal circulation and mobility is another priority for enhanced transit services.

Figure 7: Chambers County: Inter-County JTW Flow, 2000



The emerging growth in industrial employment along the IH 10 Corridor towards Port Arthur and Beaumont will add to the moderate flow of work trips into that region from the Houston-Galveston region as indicated in Table 3. The total of more than 3,700 work trips based on the 2000 Census data has probably increased in recent years and will likely increase more in the near future. That travel pattern provides an opportunity for the adjoining counties of Harris, Chambers and Liberty to jointly develop and sponsor new commuter services in the IH 10 corridor.

In terms of non-work, medical travel patterns, Summary Table 4 shows the major travel patterns for non-emergency medicaid trips provided by the Medical Transportation Program (MTP). The MTP Program reported almost 1000 trips in FY 2007 and about 1,770 in FY 2008 for Medicaid eligible clients in Chambers County with a significant portion of them traveling to Eastern Harris County in the vicinity of a large dialysis clinic. The Medicaid trips could likely increase in the future as the proportion of the elderly increases in the general population.

**Table 3- Commute Patterns to the Southeast Texas Region-
Beaumont, Port Arthur.**

Commuting from H-GAC Region to SETRPC Region	
County of Residence	To SETRPC Region
Brazoria	99
Chambers	985
Fort Bend	70
Galveston	350
Harris	1,460
Liberty	615
Montgomery	110
Waller	35
Total from H-GAC Region	3,724
Source: 2000 Census CTPP (CTPP 2000), Part 3, Table 3-01	
Prepared for SETRPC by TTI 10/10/2008	

**Table 4 - Medical Transportation Program (MTP)
Summary of Major Travel Patterns**

Origin Zip	Destination Zip	One Way Trips	Percent of Total
77514 – Anahuac Area	77521-E. Harris Baytown	457	26%
77560 – Old River Winfree	77521-E. Harris Baytown	252	14%
77514-Anahuac Area	77520 –W. Chambers County	100	6%
77520 – W. Chambers County	77030 – Texas Medical Center	90	5%
77520 – W. Chambers County	77521 – E. Harris Baytown	70	4%

Total One-way trips=1,772 (September 1, 2007 – Aug. 31, 2008 Source: HHS)

Chapter 3

EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES



(Senior Citizen Van picking up a passenger in Anahuac)

Service Overview

In Chambers County the extent of public transportation services are limited to two vehicles that are operated through the senior citizens centers in Mont Belvieu and Anahuac. The vehicles were purchased through the TxDOT Section 5310 program and operated with financial assistance from the County, the Area Agency on Aging and private sources.

Based on the current public transportation allocation formula approximately \$35,000 could be allocated to Chambers County through the TxDOT 5311 program. The County (or another entity) would have to be established as the 5311 grant recipient. Similarly the senior citizens' project already receives some state funds through the TxDOT 5310 program. Table 5 provides an overview of the ridership and funding for public transportation in Chambers County.²

² The estimate of potential funding for the 5311 program was provided by Chris Zeilinger, Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

Table 5 -Transit Ridership and Cost Summary (2007)³

Agency	Ridership	Operating Expense	Revenues	Source of Funds
Senior Citizens Project of Chambers County (2 vehicles)	3,116	\$ 37,705	\$46,763	TxDOT 5310, Title 3B-AAA, Chambers County ⁴
Medical Transportation Program (MTP)	998	\$ 14,970		Texas DOT /Health Human Services
Totals	4,114	\$ 52,675		

Chambers County Elderly and Disabled (E&D) Transportation Program⁵

The ridership, operating expenses and revenues for the senior centers and the MTP program ridership (in **Table 5**) are reported values from TxDOT. The operating expenses for the MTP program were calculated based on the average cost for a rural transit trip in Texas in 2007 which is about \$15.00 per passenger trip. The actual costs per trip as reported (for the senior centers) are lower than the statewide average perhaps because of the use of volunteer drivers for some trips and funding provided from other sources as summarized in the following **Table 6** and illustrated in the bar chart -**Figure 8**.

Table 6 - Summary of E&D Funding by Source

Source	Sr. Center Anahuac	Sr. Center Mont Belvieu
County Funds	\$16,216	\$25,000
Fed, State	\$4,154	0
Farebox	\$19,293	0
Contract	\$23,316	0
Totals	\$62,925	\$25,000

The County budgets over \$ 41,000 for the operations support for the E&D program (two vehicles).

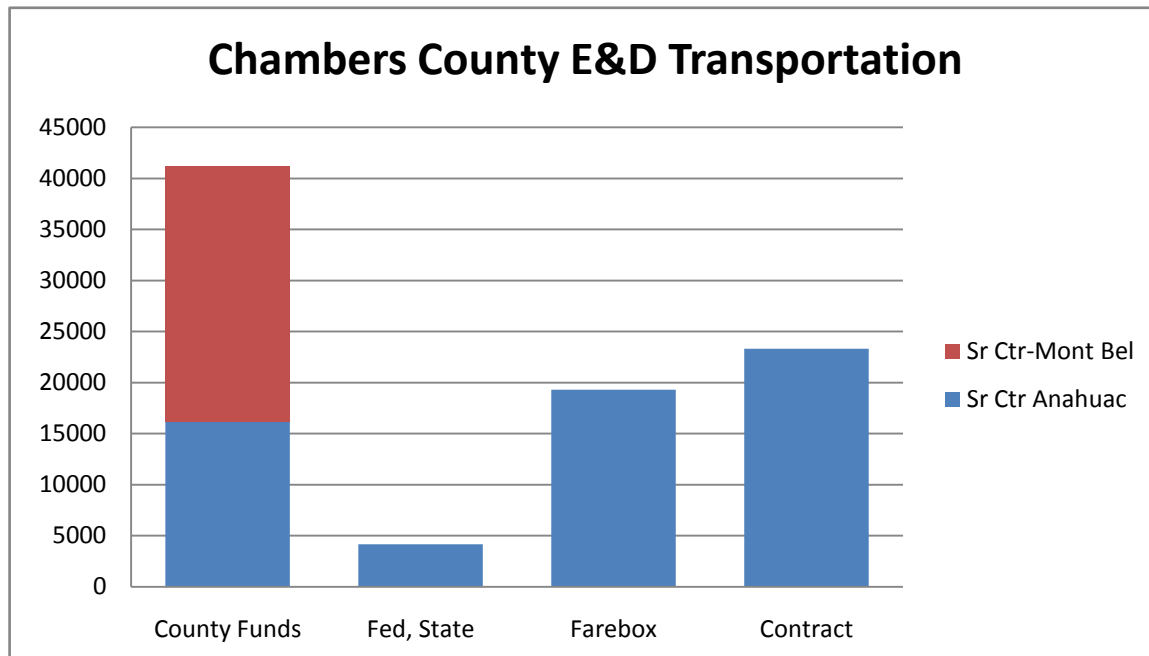
The majority of the funds that are used to support the E&D program *can be counted as local matching funds* because they are from non-DOT sources (Department of Transportation). The exception is in the category of federal and state grant funds.

³ Ridership and cost data for the senior center is reported in the 2007 Texas Transit Statistics Report (September 2008).

⁴ Note, the related Chambers County budget item is to be confirmed 4-22-09.

⁵ Source; TxDOT 2007 Transit Statistics 5310 Program, Commissioner Nelson's office.

Figure 8 - Summary of E&D Funding by Source



Summary of Current Costs:

In summary, approximately **\$84,000** in local funds was used to operate and maintain the elderly and disabled transportation program in chambers County in 2007. Those funds could be counted as **local match** to leverage more state and federal funds to expand the public transportation system in Chambers County because the sources of those funds were not from the Department of Transportation.

The value of the transportation services that are being provided through the medical transportation program (MTP) which is operated by the HHS Commission is approximately **\$15,000** and about **\$4000** was provided in federal and state grants.

Based on the current budgets for public transportation in Chambers County, approximately \$103,000 of the total annual cost of the recommended countywide demand response project (\$477,000.00 at maturity) is available through the combination of programmed federal, state and local funds today.

Additional funding of **\$35,000** might become available through the TxDOT 5311 (rural) program pending the submittal and approval of an application for those funds. A separate financing strategy will be needed for the park and ride (commuter shuttle) with an annual cost of \$113,100.

Optimistically, the combination of available and potential 5311 funds would provide about \$138,000 annually ($\$84 + \$15 + \$4 + \$35 = \$138,000$). ***The gap between the identified funding sources and the total program costs of \$ 590,100 is about \$487,275.*** A financial strategy to increase the magnitude of funds available to Chambers County for expansion of its transit program is outlined in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4

FINANCIAL PLAN AND COST ESTIMATES

Funding Synopsis

If its citizens and elected leaders so choose, Chambers County could consider the creation of a rural transit district, or merging with an adjacent rural transit district in order to apply for Section 5311 Rural funds from TxDOT. As Chambers County is located within the eight-county TMA, CMAQ funds can also be utilized for projects that contribute to air quality improvements and reduce emissions and congestion. JARC and New Freedom funding would also be appropriate funding programs to consider for Chambers County.

The service plan and related financial plan reflects three time points – short term (first year); mid term (year three) and long term (year five).

Financial requirements are driven by service levels, which in turn are driven by passenger demand. Therefore, the process includes the following steps:

1. Demand estimates are derived based upon assumed passenger generation rates per population.
2. Service levels are then derived based upon assumed service productivity (passengers per revenue hour of service).
3. Costs are calculated based upon the service levels and the unit cost of service.

Each of these steps is discussed below as related to general population demand response services. A discussion of a park and ride service between Mont Belvieu and San Jacinto mall where it would connect with the current METRO Park and Ride follows the section on demand response service.

Demand Estimate

The demand for general public demand response service is estimated based upon the population serviced and the annual passenger trips typically generated per person. Among Texas rural providers (excluding providers whose performance is extremely different such as South Padre Island and border rural districts along the border with Mexico and South Padre Island where transit riders are disproportionately nonresident visitors), the median rural operator carries 0.76 annual passenger trip per population of their service area. Brazos Transit District carries ridership at 0.75 annual passenger trips per population within their rural areas. Therefore, the median value is reasonable to use for planning purposes.

U. S. Census estimates for 2007 were used for the population of the service area. The total estimated population for Chambers County is 28,771, which reflects a 10.5% growth rate over year 2000 population. The split of population between the portions of Chambers County that are

within an urbanized area and the portions of Chambers County that are rural (outside the urbanized area) is based upon the proportion of each as established in the year 2000 census.⁶

Table 7 displays the resulting projection of general public demand response service in Chambers County, broken by urbanized and rural areas of the county.

Table 7: Demand Response Ridership Projection

	Urbanized Area	Rural Area	Total
2007 Population	10,358	18,413	28,771
Annual Psgr./Population	0.76	0.76	0.76
Annual Passengers	7,872	13,994	21,866

Service Levels

The next calculation will convert the number of annual passengers into the number of annual revenue hours required to serve those passengers. The amount of service required to carry passengers is a function of several factors, including population density and average trip length.

The median service productivity among the peer rural providers in Texas is 2.79 passengers per revenue hour. The average productivity is 3.21. In this case, Brazos Transit's productivity is nearly double the median, at 5.69. However, this productivity is a blend of demand response and fixed route service; fixed route services are typically more productive than demand response service. This would elevate the Brazos Transit productivity compared to strictly demand response service productivity.

For purposes of planning, the peer average productivity value of 3.21 was selected. This is a reasonable assumption and comparable to the productivity of Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS), a rural provider outside Austin. **Table 8** displays calculation of service levels for Chambers County.

Table 8: Service Level Calculation

	Urbanized Area	Rural Area	Total
Annual Passengers	7,782	13,994	21,866
Passengers/Rev. Hour	3.21	3.21	3.21
Annual Rev. Hours	2,452	4,359	6,811

⁶ Chambers County data source: P2.Urban and Rural [6]– Universe: Total population Data Set Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100 –Percent Data; <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en.datanotes/expsf1u.htm>.

Estimated Cost

The cost of general population demand response service can be estimated by applying a cost per revenue hour to the revenue hours of service necessary to meet the projected demand. Assuming the service is provided by Brazos Transit District, the cost per revenue hour of service was \$70.00 as of May 2008⁷. **Table 9** displays the cost calculation of general public demand response service in Chambers County.

Table 9: Cost Calculation

	Urbanized Area	Rural Area	Total
Annual Rev. Hours	2,452	4,359	6,811
Cost per Rev. Hour	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$70.00
Annual Cost	\$171,665	\$305,162	\$476,828

Programming Service

The calculations above reflect a mature service operating throughout the entire county. Transit services require time in order to reach mature ridership levels. The community must become aware of availability, understand how to access the service and become trial users. For purposes of programming, it is assumed that ridership reaches 50% of maturity in the short term, 75% of maturity in the mid-term and 100% of maturity in the long term.

Further, introducing new service can be staged in order to control initial costs and test planning assumptions. This financial plan is predicated upon providing demand response service in the rural areas only during the short term and then expanding into the urbanized areas in the mid-term. **Table 10** reflects the costs associated with this service programming.

Table 10: Programming General Public Demand Response Service in 2008\$

Period	Annual Cost at Maturity (\$mil)		Percent of Maturity		Annual Cost for Period (\$mil)		Total (\$mil)
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	
Near term	.172	.305	N/A	50	N/A	.153	.153
Mid term	.172	.305	75	75	.129	.229	.358
Long term	.172	.305	100	100	.171	.305	.477

These data can also be used to estimate fleet requirements. An average vehicle will operate 10 to 12 hours per day for 260 days per year, or between 2600 and 3120 hours per year. Based upon service levels at the programmed levels, the required fleet for the near term is 1 vehicle; for the mid-term are 2 vehicles; and for the long term are 3 vehicles. This does not include back-up or spare vehicles.

⁷ Per Lyle Nelson, Brazos Transit District (BTD), May 13, 2008 email to H-GAC

Shuttle Service

The second element of the service program for Chambers County is the implementation of a shuttle connecting the Mont Belvieu and San Jacinto mall where it would connect with the current Baytown Express Park and Ride. For estimating purposes, it was assumed that patrons would board at a parking area near Eagle Dr., travel non-stop to San Jacinto Mall, stop at the Mall and then proceed downtown Houston. There would be one interim stop at Maxey Rd. between San Jacinto mall and downtown Houston. The total one-way route length is approximately 32 miles. A transfer card would need to be issued to accommodate the complete fare ride into downtown. The estimated costs for Chambers County only include the shuttle ride connection to the San Jacinto Mall Park and Ride.

The service level for the shuttle is based upon delivering a pre-determined service frequency over a selected span of the day. Based upon the distance and expected speeds, the number of vehicles and related revenue hours of service can be calculated.

The proposed span of service and service frequency is as follows:

AM Peak	4 roundtrips
PM Peak	4 roundtrips

This schedule would generate eight round trips each day, using two vehicles during the peak periods. The schedule would coincide with the current Metro scheduled service at the San Jacinto Mall. The service from Eagle Dr. to San Jacinto Mall would generate 870 annual vehicle hours, assuming service over 260 days and a 25 minute round trip commute. Based upon an estimated rate of \$130.00 per hour of service (inclusive of vehicle costs), the annual cost of service would be \$113,100.

From a programming perspective, the cost of the service is driven by the frequency of service offered as opposed to the ridership. If ridership exceeds the provided capacity, cost may increase to permit added service. However, as designed, the shuttle service is operating at a minimum level of service. Therefore, costs cannot be factored down to account for growth of demand. It is assumed that this service would be introduced in the short term.

Total program

The total service program would be as outlined in **Table 11**.

Table 11: Chambers County Transit Service Program in 2008\$

Period	Elements	Annual Cost
Short term	Rural Demand Response	\$153,000
	Park and Ride Service	\$113,100
	TOTAL	\$266,100
Mid term	County-wide Demand Response	\$358,000
	Park and Ride Service	\$113,100
	TOTAL	\$471,100
Long term	County-wide Demand Response	\$477,000
	Park and Ride Service	\$113,100
	TOTAL	\$590,100

During this period, the county-wide demand response service would be closely monitored and evaluated to identify corridors or markets that would support fixed route transit services. If fixed route service is implemented in the long term, additional funds would be required to support the fixed route service.

Chapter 5

FEASIBILITY ASSESMENT

A financial strategy to address the identified funding shortfall of about \$ 500,000 could include the following elements over an extended period of time (2-3 years).

1. Apply for Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs grant funds in response to the TxDOT Coordinated Call for Projects, which will be **due in December 2009**. It is anticipated that annual calls for those projects will be forthcoming assuming that federal (FTA) funds will continue to be available. Since the recommended county-wide demand response services would provide access to jobs and related activities for the general public (including low income populations) it would qualify for JARC funding. The Park-and-Ride operation would also be eligible for JARC funding since it would provide transit connections between suburban employment and training locations.

Additional demand response services for disabled persons, to enhance their abilities to access or better utilize those paratransit services, beyond ADA requirements would be eligible for New Freedom funding.

2. Apply for funding for the Commuter and Transit Services Pilot Projects in response to the H-GAC Call for Projects (which is open now) for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds. The commuter shuttle would also be eligible for CMAQ funding since it would provide more ridesharing opportunities for workers, students and faculty.
3. Coordinate with local businesses and large employers that could benefit from transit patronage close to their business or office sites to provide cash donations or to donate land or a bus shelter that could be counted as a local match contribution.
4. Coordinate with H-GAC staff to garner local match from programs such as the Workforce and Local Development Council Worker Transit Funds.
5. Coordinate with TxDOT staff to secure Transportation Development Credits to provide a portion of the local match required for capital purchases related to the expansion of the transit program in Liberty County.

Several other potential funding sources are summarized in **Appendix D**. Essentially, a *proactive* grants management approach in combination with some innovative strategies to increase local funds for local match could provide ample funds to implement the short and mid-term recommendations in this transit plan. Coordination with the Intercity Bus carriers and state and federal transportation planning staff would be needed to pursue the development of an Intermodal Transit/Transfer terminal in the IH 10 corridor as a longer term transit related recommendation.

Appendix A – Public Involvement

This section includes summaries of the public involvement efforts of several initiatives including:

- Regional Public Transportation Public Meetings (2006)
- Provider Survey (2006)
- Stakeholder and Public Meetings (2008)
- Stakeholder and Public Meetings (2009)

Public Involvement Summaries - 2006

During the plan development process, two (2) public meetings were held in Chambers County with stakeholders to gain input on the need for either an expansion of service or initiation of service in certain areas. A summary of each public meeting is provided below.

Chambers County Public Meeting

August 1, 2006

Nine Attendees

Strengths of Existing Services in Chambers County:

- There is currently demand-response serving elderly/disabled citizens in Chambers County
 - There are 2 buses; one at each end of the county (east/west)
 - Take passengers to Houston, Beaumont, Galveston and Baytown

Issues/Challenges affecting Chambers County:

- Other than service for elderly/disabled, there is no public transportation in Chambers County
 - Need rural provider services
 - Talk to Brazos Transit District since they operate nearby about providing some level of services to Chambers County
- Concerns about existing services:
 - Medical trips must take precedence over other trips
 - There is not an established schedule for trip destinations
- Issues facing Chambers County as a whole:
 - Need better public outreach and education about public transportation and its associated benefits

- Need help understanding funding processes; as well as raising local share match for transit projects
- Better plans (and awareness of plans) for emergency evacuations
- Need more coordination within the county
 - Current process of sharing records is inadequate and incomplete
- Medicaid transportation concerns:
 - Unclear exactly who qualifies for services (age, income, etc.)
 - No coordination with other services
 - Will not allow multi-purpose trips (go to doctor and stop by grocery store on the way home)
- Issues with Veterans Administration (VA) transportation:
 - Must go to Baytown or Beaumont to access services
 - VA buses take Beaumont veterans through Chambers County on the way to Houston
 - Why can't they stop in Chambers County and pick up their veterans as well?
- Other issues facing public transportation:
 - Legislation at the federal level and the state level often conflict with Medicaid contracts
 - Some legislative changes are needed to fix these issues

Suggested Actions for Chambers County:

- Make a schedule for existing services that assigns particular destination to certain days
 - i.e. Mondays, the bus goes to Houston; Tuesdays – Galveston; Wednesdays – Beaumont; etc.
- Look at creating vanpool program for Wal-Mart distribution center in Chambers County
- Possible pilot projects:
 - “Park-and-Ride” vanpool into Harris County
 - County-wide demand response; accessible to everyone

Chambers/East Harris Counties
August 1, 2006
Twenty-two Attendees

Strengths of Existing Services in Baytown:

- Harris County Rides program is operating in Baytown for medical trips
- Three “Park-and-Rides” are planned for area – Baytown Mall, Dayton and Crosby
- All “park-and-rides” will access Texas Medical Center (TMC) via light rail
- Harris County has planned a fixed-route circulator to serve the City of Baytown

Issues/Challenges affecting Baytown:

- Concerns raised about medical trips for those who are not elderly or disabled
 - o One citizen needs weekly trips to TMC for cancer treatments
 - o Another concern was raised on behalf of a deceased citizen who advocated public transportation for similar purpose
 - o RIDES does offer these trips, but system is overloaded
 - Program must focus its resources on areas of greatest needs
- Public transportation is underfunded and lacks political support in City of Baytown
- Existing forms of public transportation in Baytown do not operate on night/weekends

Other Discussion:

- Funding concerns for new services and improving existing services
 - o Discussion about federal funds including:
 - 5307 funding for capital purposes
 - CDBG funds for RIDES/taxi voucher programs
 - JARC funds for Baytown circulator
- Concerns about the proposed route for the circulator
 - o It will access the Baytown Hospital
 - o It will access Lee College
 - o Perhaps a deeper evaluation of proposed route to include other areas of high density

Chambers County Transit Plan Public Involvement (2008)

Meetings, Briefings and Workshops:

Presentation of findings and recommendations for the proposed Chambers County Transit Plan, accompanied by a public comment period that ran from July 7, 2008 through September 15, 2008:

- **Chambers County Courthouse/ City of Anahuac** (July 8, 2008): Workshop/ briefing for Commissioner's Court, area officials, stakeholders, and citizens (Attendance: 37)
 - **West Chambers County/ City of Mont Belvieu** (August 14, 2008): Public meeting for area officials, stakeholders, and citizens (Attendance: 22)
 - **Chambers County Courthouse/ City of Anahuac** (August 26, 2008): Public meeting for area officials, stakeholders, and citizens (Attendance: 18)
-

General Comments and Concerns on County Public Transportation:

Issues and concerns raised in the 2008 meetings held before Hurricane Ike's devastating impact on the county in September 2008 were similar to the 2006 outreach efforts, with more emphasis added to the need to advance the proposed service expansion recommendations. Elected officials, economic development groups, transit officials, business people, and residents were more concerned about the higher price of gasoline and its impact on those less able to afford it.

A new focus addressed the emerging need to connect transportation systems in Chambers County with the planned expansions of the petrochemical industry plants along the IH-10 Corridor, particularly in the Beaumont/ Port Arthur area.

H-GAC Staff observations:

Chambers County does not have a county-wide demand response (or dial-a-ride) service for citizens today. The public transportation services that have been provided with funds from the Area Agency on Aging and the TxDOT 5310 program for the Senior Citizens Project have filled an important gap for a number of years. Ideally, public transportation linkages will be needed eventually to connect with new employment and other travel related opportunities along Interstate 10 toward the east and west in addition to connections for north-south travel within Chambers County and into adjacent counties.⁸

Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia:

... With regards to a rural bus system that could operate within the sparsely populated towns that make up Chambers County. "I think this is very timely with the price of fuel."

⁸ H-GAC Staff member K.J. Hackett, 2009.

Mike Shields, executive director of the West Chambers County Economic Development Foundation:

... said the system might inadvertently help the county on another economic front – rejuvenating the workforce. He is working with Harris County Transit to link the Baytown transit to Cedar Crossing for job related transportation.

“This would not only take people to the west toward Houston and out of Chambers County for work, but it will also tie the area together and bring people back here to work,” he said.

Guy R. Jackson, Mayor of Anahuac:

... said he hopes the new system gets up and running as soon as possible and that a demand response system would work best for the county because of the low density.

“I do not foresee the price of fuel coming down in the near future and until incomes rise to meet that cost, we’ll have this need to move our workers,” he said. “We have this whole socioeconomic group who can’t afford to get to work and without them and their contributions, our economy will come to a screeching halt.”

Comment:

Senior citizen transportation is a high priority.

Comment:

The Veteran’s bus going from Beaumont to the Medical Center in Houston needs to stop in Chambers County.

General questions and concerns:

1. What are the funding sources for the recommended projects? (Judge Sylvia)
 2. Will the existing services (for seniors) be discontinued?
 3. Have the Workforce cutbacks affected the transportation projects or plans?
 4. How can Chambers County benefit from the transit services in Baytown (Park and Ride and new circulator services)?
 5. What is the probability of obtaining a third vehicle for the elderly?
 6. How do you arrange transportation after you arrive at the destination?
 7. What about transportation to/from work destinations?
 8. What about park and ride locations in Chambers County?
 9. Can there be coordination for the Anahuac ISD student who is blind to travel to the School for the Blind in Houston on the bus from Beaumont? Currently the student must get on the bus in Beaumont because there is no stop in Chambers County.
-

From: Gene Harrington, Chambers County resident

Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2008

<http://baytownsun.com/story.lasso?ewcd=182d57801f868bd2>

I read the above, and it stresses "input is needed" from the public. If so, I offer mine. It appears to me CC is trying incredibly hard to become part of Houston. We welcomed the Houston Grand Parkway (and its traffic) into our county, we put up billboards on I-10 inviting "growth" into CC, and now we want to connect with two urban areas via busing. Do you feel the average resident of CC wants to become a resident of a Houston suburb?

I work in Mont Belvieu, 12 hr rotating shifts. Would the proposed busing be able to pick me up at 4AM, and drop me off before 5AM at the Enterprise parking lot? Would it then pick me up at 5PM, and return me to Winnie? When I go on night shifts, would it bring me to work by 5PM, and drive me home at 5AM? Would it function 24 hours and 365 days a year, holidays included, without fail? If not, this busing would not be suitable for shift working employees in CC, like the article says.

Our peaceful, quite, rural way of life in CC is *rapidly* disappearing. Some of this change is inevitable, but, sadly, much of it seems accelerated by design. The growth in MB is incredible. There is now a massive traffic pileup at I-10 and 146 that didn't exist until a few years ago. The Lanai subdivision is tightly packed (what happened to setbacks?), and the Houston Grand Parkway will certainly exacerbate the problem.

Winnie has "growth", too, but it is of the wrong kind. 12-15 people (of dubious legality) living in a dilapidated mobile home use the school and utilities and county medical, yet pay almost nothing into the system. Our ECCISD classrooms are full of non-English speaking people as it is. What is attracting them en mass to Winnie? Who is bringing them in? I have heard anecdotal evidence of some of the mobile homes residents dumping raw sewerage into our community, although I cannot confirm this.

I do know their little children walk unsupervised across the highway to Dollar General, a tragedy (and lawsuit) waiting to happen...

Winnie has RV trailer parks springing up *everywhere*! What do you feel they add to our community? Are they an addition to our tax base, or, just more traffic and drain of our systems? What would new busing bring? Where do we go from here?

When the four Commissioners, The Judge, the Mayors, and other officials meet, I strongly urge the will of the *average* Chambers County resident to be considered. We are rapidly moving into a near future where our former quiet, peaceful, rural lifestyle in Chambers County will be irreversibly destroyed.

Response to: Gene Harrington

From: Mark Huddleston, Chambers County Commissioner

Sent: Friday, July 11, 2008

I agree with much of what you have stated. Unfortunately, because we are situated next to one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country, both growth and change are inevitable. The Mont Belvieu area, being the closest to Houston, has seen the majority of the growth so far and there is still a lot of land available for development, both residential and commercial. However, much of Chambers County east of the Trinity River is undevelopable because it lies within areas subject to inland and tidal flooding....and that will reduce the amount of growth here locally.

As elected officials and community leaders, we are charged with making sure that the growth that is coming is the kind of growth that we want for our rural communities. We have taken advantage of every law that is available to help but sometimes that's not enough...and in those instances we try to lobby the Legislators to pass laws that will allow Counties more authority. The Texas Legislature doesn't allow county government much authority when it comes to controlling development and zoning...RV Parks being one of those.

As for the busing issue, our Legislators passed House Bill 3588 in the 78th Legislature, which mandates the coordination of public transportation services "and funding" among Health and Human Service agencies, the Texas Workforce Commission, and TxDOT. Initially, it was developed to assist those persons that don't have access to an automobile or have other mobility limitations....but it also includes the goals to reduce congestion, enhance safety, expand economic opportunity, and improve air quality. Obviously not much of this is relevant in rural Chambers County, but because the County is adjacent to the Houston Metro area, we're included in the planning and coordination....and it may be that busing is not the answer or the need for us.

I appreciate your comments and I hope that I can count on you to participate in the development (or non-development as the case may be) of public transportation for Chambers County. I will keep in touch and may ask you to serve on a committee to formally express your opinions.

Chambers County Transit Plan Public Involvement (2009)

Meetings, Briefings and Workshops:

Presentation of findings and recommendations for the proposed Chambers County Transit Plan, accompanied by a public comment period that ran from April 29, 2009 through June 5, 2009:

- **Chambers County Courthouse/ City of Anahuac** (April 28, 2009): Briefing and public meeting for Commissioner's Court, area officials, stakeholders, and citizens (Attendance: 25)
- **West Chambers County/ Mont Belvieu City Hall** (May 11, 2009): Public meeting for area officials, stakeholders, and citizens (Attendance: 13)
- **Mont Belvieu City Council Meeting/ City of Mont Belvieu** (May 11, 2009): Briefing and public meeting for City Council, area officials, stakeholders, and citizens (Attendance: 25)

Comment card

From: Smith, Raymond C

Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2009

I travel btw Beach City & Texas City daily. There is a tremendous amount of traffic both ways commuting daily. I see not mention of this in the Mid-Term Plan (I assume this is where it would be.).

Ray Smith
Beach City

Response to: Ray Smith

From: Kari Hackett

Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2009

Mr. Smith, we've reviewed your comment and considered the commute you described from Beach City to Texas City. Presuming that you're traveling along SH 146, I know from personal experience how that slows down especially through the Seabrook and Kemah areas. Although we have not included a Park and Ride recommendation along that corridor in the Chambers County Transit Plan at this time, it is something that could be considered for the future. We will add your written comment to the Public Involvement summary so that it is documented.

Improvements to the SH 146 highway corridor in the bottleneck areas are probably a few years out. The Commute Solutions options are available today if carpooling, vanpooling or teleworking are options that your employer or a group of employees at your worksite are interested in. I'm copying this message to some other people who might have a role in

improving the mobility options in that part of our region. Thanks for your involvement with our regional transit planning process.

Response to: Ray Smith
From: Veronica Baxter-Lamb
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2009

Mr. Smith:

The Commute Solutions Program offers various commute alternatives that you may be interested in checking into for your daily work commute. Listed below are 3 of these programs:

Regional Vanpool Program:

The STAR Vanpool program is operated by the Metropolitan Transit Authority Rideshare Department and currently contracts with H-GAC. There are 750 vanpools currently serving 8000 residents throughout the eight-county Houston-Galveston Transportation Management Area (Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller counties).

This program is funded by H-GAC and METRO. A \$35 per month subsidy is provided to every vanpool participant, however you must vanpool about 12 days per month to be eligible for the subsidy. Some employers also participate by offering additional subsidies to help lower the costs of their employees' commute to work. If you are interested in becoming the van driver then you may be eligible to ride for free. For more information, please contact Beverly Elam of METRO at 713-739-3816 or email Beverly.Elam@ridemetro.org to be matched for a vanpool in your area. I'm not certain how many vans are originating in your area now but Beverly Elam can let you know.

NuRide:

This is an online rideshare community where you register into the program using your work email, find carpool buddies/partners online that live and work near you, and share the responsibilities of driving each day. The program is very flexible in that you can ride to work with an individual and return home with different passenger. Every trip that is pre-registered and confirmed after the trip is taken earns points that may be redeemed for rewards. These rewards are donated by local area businesses in the form of gift certificates, theatre and sporting events tickets, discounts at local businesses and restaurants, etc. NuRide is funded by H-GAC. For more information about NuRide go to www.nuride.com or contact Karen Williams at 713-965-7116, ext. 160 or email kwilliams@nuride.com.

Regional Telework Program:

This program is administered and funded by H-GAC. You can only participate in teleworking or telecommuting if your employer has a formal Telework program with established policies and procedures. H-GAC staff works with employers throughout the region to assist them in

developing their company telework program. H-GAC also offers federal grants to employers that are willing to develop a formal Telework program within their company or organization. For more information about teleworking please contact Ch'rese Jackson, H-GAC Telework Coordinator at 713-993-2487 or email chrese.jackson@h-gac.com.

Comment Card:

From: Billy Combs, Beach City

Sent: May 11, 2009

I've got to think about this. I'll comment on your website.

From: David Mohlman

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Subject: FW: Family Services Financial Coach/Ways to Work Staff starting in Baytown

Dear Mr. Hackett:

The work by H-GAC in reaching out to Chambers County to improve transportation there is much appreciated. I was unable to attend the public meeting yesterday at Mont Belvieu City Hall, but I noticed on the agenda that short-term recommendations include initiation of discussions to develop a car-ownership program such as Ways to Work.

Attached please find a news release prepared yesterday by Family Services of Greater Houston on expansion of Ways to Work as well as the Making Ends Meet financial stability program to Baytown and Highlands in east Harris County. Each Monday beginning May 18, a financial coach employed by Family Services will be officed in Baytown. This news release ran this morning on page 11 of The Baytown Sun newspaper, and also was sent yesterday to other newspapers serving this area.

Know that the United Way of Baytown Area service area includes not only Baytown and Highlands in east Harris County, but also extends into Chambers County, so in light of the attached news release, see in thread below the communication yesterday/today between me and Ms. Shunney Nair of Family Services as to the appropriateness of making these programs available immediately to residents of Chambers County who could come to Baytown on Mondays to meet with the financial coach (Ms. Nair's initial responses appear in red in the midst of the text of my message to her).

Any guidance/support from you and H-GAC would be appreciated.

Best regards,
David

David Mohlman, Executive Director
United Way of Baytown Area

Response to: Dan Woods

From: Hackett, Kari

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Subject: Family Services Financial Coach/Ways to Work Staff starting in Baytown

Dan, thanks for your time on the phone. As I mentioned it will be increasingly more important to coordinate our transportation planning activities with the various stakeholders in our region to leverage the local transportation related funds that are already budgeted. Those stakeholders include but not limited to TxDOT, the Workforce, the United Way and HHS.

The email message below refers to the Ways to Work program initiative that I mentioned.

I've attached a copy of the powerpoint presentation for the revised DRAFT of the Chambers County Transit Plan for background "summary" information.

The complete document has more details and is available online at www.h-gac.com/transportation under the "What's New" tab.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the information.

From: MCMURRAY, KIM R

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Subject: Jefferson County update

Kari:

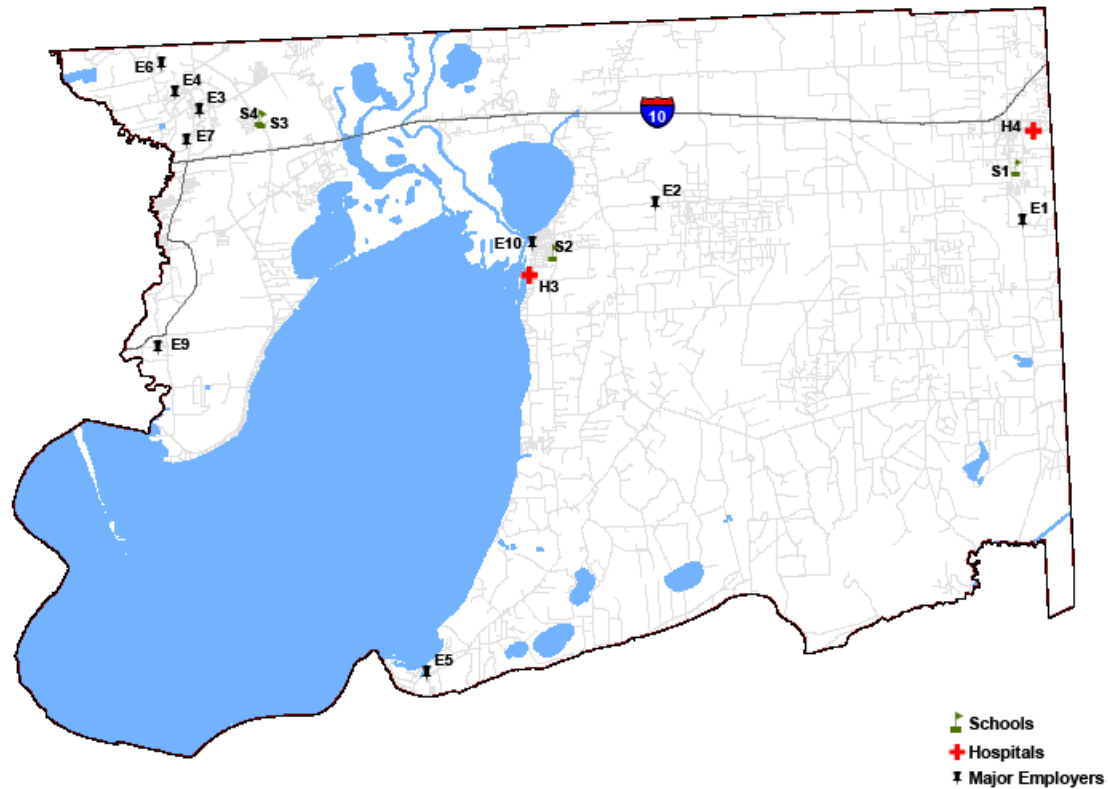
I know the status of the industrial projects in this area have a major impact on the transit plans your group is developing. (I was at the Chambers County Commissioners Court meeting last week and should have at least said hi.) Anyway, I'm attending a meeting next week (May 20) where we'll get the latest updates on all the major projects, projections on worker needs, etc. I will be taking notes and can update you on what we learn, assuming you aren't already plugged in.

Just let me know who in your shop I should contact after the meeting, and I'll be happy to do so.

Kim McMurray
Entergy Texas Economic Development
Beaumont

Appendix B – Major Attractors and Generators

Chambers County: Schools, Hospitals and Major Employers



Largest Single Employer Buildings in Chambers County (100+ jobs)

ID	Company	Street Address	City	Est. Employees
E1	Arboretum of Winnie	1215 State Highway 124	Winnie, TX 77665-8613	100-499
E2	Chambers County Solid Waste	7505 Highway 65	Anahuac, TX 77514	100-499
E3	Eagle Pointe Golf Club & Rec	12450 Eagle Pointe Dr	Mont Belvieu, TX 77580	100-499
E4	Enterprise Products	10207 FM 1942	Mont Belvieu, TX 77580	100-499
E5	Jeri's Seafood Inc	136 County Dock Rd	Anahuac, TX 77514	100-499
E6	Pol-Tex Intl	13830 Hatcherville Rd	Mont Belvieu, TX 77580	100-499
E7	Cryogenic Vessel Alternatives	9528 Warren Road	Mont Belvieu, TX 77580	50-99
E8	Koppel Steel Corporation	2600 Texas Highway 99	Baytown, TX 77520	na
E9	Seapac Inc.	4000 Cedar Blvd	Baytown, TX 77522	na
E10	Chambers County Jail	201 Court St	Anahuac, TX 77514	100-499

ID	Hospitals	Address	City
H3	Bayside Community Hospital	P. O. Box 398	Anahuac
H4	Winnie Community Hospital	538 Broadway	Winnie

SID	Schools
S1	EAST CHAMBERS ELEMENTARY
S2	ANAHUAC ELEMENTARY
S3	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
S4	BARBERS HILL H S

Appendix C – Transit Needs Index (TNI) Methodology

The methodology for calculating the TNI involves the identification of geographic concentrations of potential transit need based on 2000 US Census data. Data was collected on the following demographic categories:

- Population density (persons/square mile)
- Minority Population (all races other than “White, Not Hispanic”)
- Median Household Income
- Auto ownership (households without automobiles)
- Senior population (persons 65 and older)
- Disabled population

For each demographic characteristic urban and rural weighting factors were applied in a mathematical model (multivariate equation) to determine levels of potential transit need. The weights applied are based on experience from other small transit systems in Texas. Urban and rural block groups were based on Census Bureau urbanized area boundaries. Urban block groups have a density of at least 500 people per square mile.

Table 3 – Transit Needs Index Weights

Need Characteristic	Urban (Fixed Route)	Rural (Demand/Response)
Population density	2.0	1.0
Median household income	3.5	2.5
Minority population	2.0	1.0
Zero car households	1.5	1.5
Senior population	0.5	2.0
Work force disability	0.5	2.0

The TNI factors were calculated as follows:

1. Block groups were assigned an “urban” or “rural” classification based on the region’s urbanized area boundaries defined by the Bureau of the Census.
2. Individual factor indices were calculated as follows:

• Need Factor	Index Calculation
• Population density	Divided the block group density by the regional (county) density
• Median household income	<p>The negative of the difference of the block group median income (BGI) and regional median income (RGI) divided by the regional median income</p> $\frac{BGI - RGI}{RGI}$ <p>Higher Block Group median incomes compared to the region will result in a negative income index, suggesting a lower financial impact in owning an automobile</p>
• Minority population	Divided the percentage of minorities in each block group by the regional percentage
• Zero car households	Divided the percentage of households without autos in each block group by the regional percentage
• Senior population	Divided the percentage of population over 65 in each block group by the regional percentage
• Work force disability	Divided the percentage of disabled in each block group by the regional percentage

3. Urban or rural weight factors were applied to each factor index. A sample formulation is shown here:

$$\text{TNI (rural)} = (\text{pop density index} * 1) + (\text{household inc. index} * 2.5) + (\text{min. pop index} * 1) + (\text{ZeroHH index} * 1.5) + (\text{seniors index} * 2) + (\text{disabled index} * 2)$$

4. The factor indices for each block group were summed to get total transit need index for each block group.

Appendix D – Potential Transit Funding Programs⁹

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

Federal Funding Resources

In August 2005, President George W. Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) that provides \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over five years, through FY2009, including \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs. This reauthorization provides a 46 percent increase over the transit funding guaranteed in the previous bill.

Surface Transportation Program

The SAFETEA-LU program provides federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding on an annual basis to support both highway and transit improvements. In non-attainment areas, STP funding can be programmed to support local improvements such as reconstruction of streets, sidewalks, and other streetscape elements. STP funds are programmed typically by the local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in different categories, one of which includes urban improvements.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program

Congress established the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program to address projects that lead toward reduction of congestion and air pollution in urban areas that have been identified as either non-attainment or on the threshold of non-attainment. CMAQ money is also available to attainment areas through annual allocations to state departments of transportation. CMAQ money is very useful in addressing community betterment projects that have a direct nexus to reducing vehicular congestion and air pollution. The local MPO identifies a wide range of community betterment projects and decides CMAQ programming priorities. A project that receives 80 percent of project costs must demonstrate that it will create a linkage to reducing congestion and pollution.

H-GAC's **Commute Solutions** program (www.CommuteSolutionsHouston.org) is CMAQ-funded and offers a range of options for commuters. Rideshare initiatives include carpooling, vanpooling, and transit. A new and innovative carpool matching program called NuRide facilitates carpooling and provides incentives for participation. Commute Solutions is a one-stop alternative transportation resource in the Houston-Galveston area

⁹ Excerpts from the *Gulf Coast Region Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan*, The Goodman Corp, et al, for H-GAC, 2006

for both commuters and businesses. Staff and stakeholders provide advice, answers and assistance on commuting options and employee transportation programs. Collectively, Commute Solutions has helped some of the largest and most prestigious employers in the region get their employees to work faster and less stressed, while saving them thousands of dollars in fuel and automobile maintenance costs. In addition the Houston-Galveston region's Telework program now includes close to 200 major employers.

FTA Section 5307 and Section 5309 Statutory Provisions

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) allocates funding on an annual basis to all urbanized and rural areas for support of the planning, operation (in some urban and rural areas), and development of transportation systems and improvements that provide a linkage between transportation infrastructure and the community.

The Section 5307 program is an annual allocation to designated recipients (typically transit agencies, states, or cities) who can use their appropriated allocation for planning, engineering design, construction, and, in some cases, operations.

The FTA Section 5309 program is a discretionary fund to support bus and rail improvements that, in recent history, had been earmarked directly by Congress for specific projects. It is within the Section 5309 program that many communities in the nation have pursued and achieved congressional support for transit access-related programs under the Livable Communities Initiative (LCI), discussed later.

Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program

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

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

The TCSP program is divided into a research component for recipients seeking to utilize TCSP funding to establish methodologies linked to meeting the objectives identified above, and a grant component for projects directly linked to implementation (engineering, design, and capital development).

SAFETEA-LU authorized \$25 million during 2005 and \$61 million each year from 2006 to 2009. TCSP funding competes with no other federal community betterment appropriation and, in most cases, requires no local share. The TCSP program research and

grant components require dedication of a portion of the awarded funds toward an evaluation component for the program.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Since 1974, the Community Development Block Grant Program has been the backbone of improvement efforts in many communities, providing a flexible source of annual grant funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for local governments nationwide. With the participation of their citizens, communities can devote these funds to a wide range of activities that best serve their own particular development priorities, provided that these projects:

1. Benefit low- and moderate-income families
2. Prevent or eliminate slums or blight; or
3. Meet other urgent community development needs

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

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

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

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

State Administered Federal Funds

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

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

Section 5303 funds are provided to the MPO through TxDOT for transit or highway planning activities. Section 5304 monies are used by TxDOT for statewide transit planning and research activities.

Both Section 5303 and Section 5304 are 80 percent federal and 20 percent state match. Section 5303 funds are administered in concert with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 112 planning funds through the Transportation Planning and Programming Division. The Public Transportation Division monitors transit activities and submits required reports to FTA.

Urbanized Area Grants Program (Section 5307)

Grants for public transportation in urbanized areas are distributed by FTA using a formula based on population and population density. In areas of over 200,000 population, grants are awarded directly to the local recipient. Grants for urbanized areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 may be made to the governor or to local recipients designated by the governor.

Currently, the cities make application directly to FTA. Capital/Planning is 80 percent federal maximum and 20 percent state/local match on most projects. Elderly and Disabled projects may receive up to 95 percent federal funding. Administrative/Operating expenses can use 50 percent federal share and 50 percent state/local match. Section 5307 is the major federal funding source for urbanized transit properties. Unobligated funds may be transferred to another Section 5307 recipient or to the Section 5311 program.

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

Provides capital grants or loans for the provision of services to elderly persons and/or persons with disabilities. Eligible recipients include private nonprofit organizations or associations, public bodies that coordinate services for the elderly and/or disabled; or any public body that certifies that nonprofit organizations in the area are not readily available to carry out the services.

The funding ratio is 80 percent federal maximum and 20 percent local match. TxDOT has been designated by the Governor to administer the Section 5310 program. Grants are

typically used to purchase vans (many of which are lift-equipped) and ancillary equipment, such as radios. The Section 5310 program is undergoing a major redesign at present to reflect the strengthened coordination requirements for local recipients. Refinements are also necessary to ensure that federal planning requirements are met.

Non-Urbanized (Rural) Grants Program (Section 5311)

Provides grants for public transportation in non-urbanized areas fewer than 50,000 in population. Eligible recipients include state agencies, local public bodies, private nonprofit organizations, Indian tribes and groups, and operators of public transportation services. Unless the Governor certifies to FTA that intercity bus service needs are being met, 15 percent of the allocation must be reserved for the development and support of intercity bus transportation.

The funding ratio for Capital/Planning/Administrative is 80 percent federal maximum and 20 percent state/local match on most projects. ADA projects may receive up to 90 percent federal funding. Operating costs are supported at 50 percent federal share and 50 percent state/local match. TxDOT has been designated by the Governor to administer the Section 5311 program.

Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) Funds (Section 5316)

The Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funds are used for public transportation projects for access to jobs and reverse commute purposes. A **job access** project is one that transports welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to employment.

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

New Freedom Funds (Section 5317)

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

Useful Federal Funding Tools

Capital Cost of Contracting

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

Joint Development Provisions

Joint development provisions enable a local government or transit entity to pursue redevelopment opportunities (with or without private sector participation) to implement mixed-use development into the transit terminal/parking facility development to maximize services linked by transit (retail, daycare, community facilities, residential, etc.).

A local government or transit entity may acquire land and develop that land in a manner compatible and conducive to public transit improvements in a way that generates economic value and additional revenue to help support transit operations. The joint development approach also reflects combining transit terminal operations with a parking facility, in lieu of building just a parking garage, to maximize the funding opportunity provided by creating facilities to promote public transportation.

The joint development approach can also be used to maximize private funding opportunities, using these funding opportunities to leverage future federal funding matches. Joint development benefits are provided to projects that maximize the services linked to public transportation, such as daycare, retail, restaurants, health care, and community facilities.

Transportation Corridors

Federal transit legal provisions enable the acquisition of real property by a federally supported transit agency within a 1,500-ft. radius of any transit terminal, to support development that is compatible and conducive to public transit improvements in a way that generates economic value and additional revenue to help support transit operations.

Local government funding of pedestrian infrastructure improvements and utility improvements through public works and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) resources can be used to satisfy the local share to compliment federal funding grants or appropriations, and to leverage future federal funding matches.

Funding Partnerships

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

Parking and Farebox Revenue

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

Livable Communities Initiative (LCI)

FTA has made a strong financial commitment to the improvement of communities under the federal LCI program. This commitment reinforces the importance of integrating and linking communities with the nation's transportation systems through infrastructure improvements that provide greater access to public transportation. These provisions authorize projects that enhance the effectiveness of mass transportation projects. The flexible funding provisions of SAFETEA-LU strengthen the funding opportunities for transit investments that meet community needs.

The essential purpose of the federal transit laws is not simply to fund the capital and operating costs of transit systems themselves, but also to improve the quality of life in urban and rural communities through the use of transit systems, and recognizing them as the lifeblood of livable communities. Thus, the objective of the LCI program is to improve mobility and quality of services available to residents in neighborhoods by:

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

State Funding Resources

In addition to the previous section regarding sources of federal funding available to public transportation services, there are several sources of state funding as well. Many of these state funding resources are set up and distributed in a similar manner as their federal counterparts, but each is worthy of individual discussion.

Transportation Development Credits

The transportation bill passed by the U.S. Congress in 1997 enabled the utilization of Transportation Development Credits (TDC), formerly known as toll road credits, for local match to federally funded transportation projects. Several states, including Texas, that have toll facilities have adopted the utilization of TDC's to match federally funded transportation projects. The toll road credit is derived from the revenues paid by the users of a toll facility to support bonds that have been issued to build the toll facility. If the facility is located along a state or federal highway system, the revenues utilized to debt service the capital improvement bonds may be used as a credit to match federally funded transportation projects.

The Texas Department of Transportation Commission has recently issued rules relating to the distribution of TDC's for Texas transportation projects, including transit. The rules generally favor those areas of the state that generate the credit, such as Houston or Dallas. However, a portion of the TDC's will be available for areas of the state (25% of the total TDC value) that do not have toll facilities. In the case of non-toll generating areas, TxDOT has established that other factors, such as local area need, the amount of local contribution to the project, and the ability of the project to meet state transportation objectives, will determine the recipients of the TDC's.

State Public Transit Funding

During the 1975 State legislative session, the legislature transformed the Highway Department to the Department of Highways and Public Transportation, subsequently renamed the Department of Transportation, and established a State Public Transit Trust Fund at \$30 million per biennium.

This amount of funding has subsequently increased to its current level of \$58 million each biennium. This funding is supported by highway-related user fees deposited annually into what has become known as "Fund 6." What is noteworthy regarding Fund 6 is that a large portion of the \$58 million has been dedicated through legislative initiative; however, \$18 million is discretionary. There has been recent discussion by TxDOT, as evidenced through its report to the Legislative Budget Board, to shift the \$18 million non-dedicated Fund 6 support for transit to the General Revenues of the State.

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

State Transit Funding Distribution Formula

The TxDOT Transportation Commission has established a new formula for the distribution of state public transit funding, to small urban and rural areas, which has injected new “accountability” within the state oversight of transit operations. The new formula relies on a combination of factors including evidence of local need (demographics, economic, etc.), actual performance of transit (passengers per hour, cost per hour, etc.), and the amount of local contribution to the overall transit budget of the operator. The implementation of the new formula has resulted in several small urban and rural operators receiving less state funding than previously experienced, and some operators receiving more state funding than previously experienced.

The implementation of the new formula has been particularly hard on some small operators who receive little or no financial support from local jurisdictions such as small cities and counties. However, the new formula has been successful in increasing the awareness at the local level that some financial participation will be necessary to sustain and increase public transit services. The factors utilized within the formula that impact the distribution will be reexamined by TxDOT to determine their relevance and fairness.

Intercity Bus Funding

The existing and previous two national Transportation Bills, established that 15 percent of funding provided through the Rural Formula program of FTA’s Section 5311(f) will be made available for improvement of Inter-City Bus Service. This funding resource, which for Texas is approximately \$4 million annually, can be utilized to support a variety of planning, infrastructure, and operating needs related to the linkage of cities through inter-city bus carriers. Therefore, projects that include intercity bus terminals, subsidies for new intercity bus linkages, and improvements to existing intercity bus stops have, in recent years, been funded through this program.

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program

Ten percent of STP funds are set aside as a separate funding category for transportation enhancements. Funds are allocated to state departments of transportation for distribution. In Texas, TxDOT administers a competitive program known as the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP). The goal of STEP is to encourage diverse

modes of travel, increase community benefits of transportation investment, strengthen partnerships between state and local governments, and promote citizen involvement in transportation decisions. To be eligible for consideration, all projects must demonstrate a relationship to the surface transportation system through either function or impact and go above and beyond standard transportation activities.

The funds provided by this program are on a cost reimbursement basis, not a grant. Projects undertaken with enhancement funds are eligible for reimbursement of 80 percent of allowable costs. The governmental entity nominating a project is responsible for the remaining cost share, including all cost overruns, and for continuing maintenance.

Leverage/Use of Local Resources

Communities often fail to take advantage of local resources that can be used as local match to leverage federal funding. A myriad of opportunities exist to provide local match in a way that reduces or eliminates any requirement for additional general fund commitments to a federally assisted project.

For the most part, all of the federal programs identified above require a 20 percent cash or in-kind local contribution. Local contributions can qualify as local match as follows:

Land Donation

The value of land not previously dedicated to support transit-related purposes can be utilized under the FTA program as match for capital improvements. FTA requires two appraisals of a parcel (one prior to grant approval) to support its value for leveraging purposes. The value of the land often meets the local share requirement of the specific community betterment project being targeted for use of federal funds.

Private Utility Relocation

City franchise agreements with private utility companies often include the provision that the utility company is responsible for relocation costs associated with publicly funded community betterment improvements. Cities around the nation have taken advantage of private utility investment in required utility relocation associated with public improvements such as street/sidewalk reconstruction and streetscape to provide an urban-friendly transit utilization atmosphere. The value of private utility company investments associated with these public improvements can be used as local match for federally funded projects.

Bond Program

Local funds for major capital investments are generally raised through general obligation bonds. Issuing of bonds can be done only with the approval of the voters and transit service expansions could be included as part of a bond referendum.

Sales Tax

The Legislature has designated that part of the local (city) sales tax may be used for property tax relief or economic development. Referenced in 4A and 4B, one use for any portion allocated to economic development is public transit. The use must be explicitly in the local designation. Over 530 Texas cities have adopted this program, but not all have designated transit as part of their application of the funds.

Regional Mobility Authorities (RMA)

An RMA can be established in counties to facilitate major capital investments such as toll roads. A portion of the toll road revenues can be designated for public transportation.

Local Development Council – Worker Transit Fund

Administered by H-GAC, the Worker Transit Fund is a grant program designed to provide assistance when the needs for worker transit and economic development converge. The program focus is on retaining, expanding or attracting employers to rural counties and small cities. Emphasis is placed on skilled trades, manufacturing, and distribution.

Grant funds must be matched 1:1 with local cash generated from local governments, small businesses, economic development corporations, chambers of commerce and other community development organizations.



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