



FY 2022-2026

**Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan
for the
Central Texas State Planning Region 23**



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Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan, FY 2022-2026

FOR TEXAS STATE PLANNING REGION 23

DECEMBER 2021 | FINAL PLAN

Prepared For:



Prepared By:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP) is a planning report required by TxDOT to be updated every five years. This RCTP is prepared for the Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) and Central Texas State Planning Region 23 for the period of 2022 through 2026. The RCTP study area includes nine counties: Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Llano, Mason, Milam, Mills, and San Saba. The RCTP provides strategies for meeting the public's transportation needs and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. The Central Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Group (CTRTAG) served as the steering committee that guided the development of the RCTP update.

The RCTP study area is currently served by multiple transportation providers, including both those offering public fixed routes as well as demand-response services. There are also providers offering services through private, non-profit, community-based organizations, health and human services agencies, and workforce agencies. Providers were surveyed so that each provider could describe its type of service, service area, size and type of fleet, and a short description of the provider's role in the region. Providers were also asked to share how their transportation resources and fleets have changed over the past five years, especially given the impact of COVID-19. In total, ten providers completed the survey.

Users of the region's transportation resources were also surveyed and interviewed between May and July 2021. Public outreach focused upon user preferences and needs, yielding a total of 260 responses through a combination of on-board and online surveys. All priority populations are represented in the collected public outreach responses. Local 2-1-1 HELPLINE data and Census data were also analyzed to identify transportation priorities and demographic trends.

Analysis of stakeholder input and available data yielded seven need statements related to transportation in the study area:

1. Regional transportation and health & human service providers need increased funding to provide certain services desired by citizens.
2. New fixed routes and other improved services are needed in the region to connect citizens to their destinations.
3. The region needs to explore and utilize creative partnerships where possible to fill funding and service gaps.
4. More regular regional coordination is needed to provide improved transportation services.
5. Priority populations experience greater barriers to transportation access in the region and need accommodations to overcome those barriers.
6. Citizens living in rural areas need better access to the regional transportation system.
7. Citizens in the region need improved awareness of their transportation options and resources.

Table 5 presents these need statements alongside existing resources, related opportunities and barriers, and recommended actions to address each need. A total of 32 recommendations were identified as part of the needs and gaps assessment. **Table 8** presents a prioritized hierarchy of these recommendations along with information that would support implementation of each one. Each recommendation is also accompanied by performance metrics that could be used to track implementation progress. Information about each high priority recommendation is presented on the next two pages.

Recommendation	Priority Level	Implementation Lead	First Steps
Improve coordination with local leaders and elected officials	High	CTRTAG Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify relevant points of contact from each city and county in the CTCOG region that should receive public transportation information and requests. - Modify CTRTAG meeting agendas to feature a rotating Local Agency Update item that allows for staff from a different city or county each meeting to provide an update on public transportation needs and efforts.
Adjust or add service to connect residents to grocery stores in order to address food desert issues in north Killeen and east Temple	High	HCTD Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define food desert boundaries in both cities to create target locations for potential fixed-route service. - Revive conversations with private business representatives to explore appetite for funding transit services.
Provide new service to Industrial Blvd./Wendland Rd. industrial corridor in northern Temple	High	HCTD Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with business owners in northern Temple industrial corridor to better understand home-to-work trip origin data and travel mode preference data for current and prospective employees. - Based on user feedback, develop public transportation scenarios that include fixed-route transit service, carpool and vanpool, and private shuttle service program options.
Explore public-private partnerships (P3s) and employer-subsidized transportation opportunities by engaging with representatives from the northern Temple industrial area, hospitals, universities, Fort Hood, grocery stores, and other partners for which documented service gaps exist	High	HCTD Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a review of desired public transportation service improvements to identify those which would directly or indirectly benefit regional partners, such as business owners or large campus institutions, including Fort Hood. - Meet with regional partners to gauge interest in their supporting public transportation investments. Identify opportunities for direct funding, other resource sharing, or strategic partnership on grant applications.
Deploy a flex-route service at targeted times of day and geographic areas to accommodate the first- and last-mile transportation needs of seniors and students	High	HCTD Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare operating and capital cost estimates and identify potential funding partners for each flex-route zone. - Implement service improvements as funding allows.
Establish regular communications between cities, counties, chambers of commerce, CTCOG, KTMPPO, The HOP, Fort Hood, and other regional stakeholders	High	CTRTAG Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify relevant points of contact from each city, county, and other regional stakeholder in the CTCOG region that should receive public transportation information and requests. - Send summaries of CTRTAG meetings and other regional public transportation coordination meetings to regional points of contact.
Hold an annual Transportation Summit, similar to the one in 2019, to identify issues and find solutions related to regional transportation needs	High	United Way of Central Texas Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a recurring time of year and meeting space that can accommodate desired Transportation Summit activities. Develop a comprehensive list of stakeholders to invite (see Recommendation 4a). - As part of each summit, dedicate time to review progress on regional priorities related to public transportation, including those in this table.

Recommendation	Priority Level	Implementation Lead	First Steps
Continue to provide virtual engagement options for coordination meetings to accommodate those unable to attend in person	High	CTCOG Staff	- Maintain a virtual video-in or call-in option for all public transportation coordination meetings.
Create a Transit Advisory Committee to improve communication and coordination between local entities and the Hill Country Transit District Board	High	HCTD Leadership	- Establish a Transit Advisory Committee (or committees, if separate ones are created for urban and rural HOP services) that includes representation from city and county staff from throughout The HOP's service area.
Deploy a Smart Phone application for The HOP that allows for digital fare payment, real-time location and schedule information, scheduling of demand response service, and integration with other transit and micromobility services	High	HCTD Leadership	- Finalize the agreement under development with The HOP's selected smart phone application provider. - Deploy the smart phone application and roll out a publicity campaign to encourage transit users to download and use the app when using The HOP services.
Reestablish universal ADA Paratransit services in the region	High	HCTD Leadership	- Prepare operating and capital cost estimates and identify potential interested funding partners (including cities and counties) for restoring ADA paratransit services. - Reestablish service as funding allows.
Coordinate with cities to plan safe and accessible facilities that support multi-modal connections to transit stops	High	HCTD Leadership	- Conduct or update a safety and accessibility assessment of all HCTD fixed-route transit stops. Develop a list of low-scoring transit stop locations. - Meet with city and regional staff to identify existing or potential last-mile and micromobility programs that could interface with transit services.
Provide access to regional transportation services, such as airport shuttle companies, Greyhound stations, and Amtrak stations	High	HCTD Leadership	- Review existing HCTD Rural District ridership data to identify general demand patterns for connecting to regional bus and train stations, and airports. Identify opportunities to augment existing services to reduce costs and other barriers for residents of rural portions of the region to connect to these services.
Increase activity on website, apps, and radio	High	CTCOG Leadership	- Identify opportunities to expand agency presence on social media outlets and apps, including through both advertising and agency posts.
Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, NEMT, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms	High	HCTD Leadership	- Analyze which public and private transportation service providers in the region have existing technological capabilities that would allow for potential app integration. Compile a list of desired integration features from this analysis. - Meet with HCTD's trip planning mobile app provider and website maintainer to identify and prioritize opportunities for integration of other services and public transportation information sources. Implement as funding and staff capacity allows.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Regionally Coordinated Transportation Plan (RCTP) is a planning report required by TxDOT to be updated every five years. This RCTP is prepared for the Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) and Central Texas State Planning Region 23 for the period of 2022 through 2026. This update complies with Texas Transportation Code, Title 6, Subtitle K, Chapter 461. The RCTP study area includes nine counties: Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Llano, Mason, Milam, Mills, and San Saba. Of these counties, each one except for Llano and Mason is part of Central Texas State Planning Region 23. Llano and Mason counties are included in the study because a transportation provider based in Bell County serves Llano and Mason counties as well.

The purpose of the regionally coordinated transportation planning effort is to provide more efficient and effective public transportation services, especially for priority populations including individuals with disabilities, individuals 65 and older, people with low incomes, veterans, children, and others. The RCTP provides strategies for meeting the public's transportation needs and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.

This RCTP has eight sections, including this first introduction section.

- **Section 2: Transportation Resources in the Region** includes information regarding the transportation providers in the region and all agencies responsible for transportation planning in the region.
- **Section 3: Comprehensive Transportation Needs and Gaps Analysis** includes a comprehensive assessment of the region's unmet needs and inefficiencies. This involves a geographic and demographic analysis as well as a list of all health and human services agencies and programs.
- **Section 4: Planning for Comprehensive Services** includes a description of how this plan integrates services of other programs.
- **Section 5: Integrated Planning Processes** includes a description of how this plan integrates with other metropolitan, rural, and statewide transportation plans.
- **Section 6: Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives** includes a description on each of those guiding items and how they will be met.
- **Section 7: Sustained Planning and RCTP Implementation** includes a description of the CTCOG region's capacity to sustain regional transportation planning activities.
- **Section 8: Performance Measures to Evaluate Effectiveness** includes a description of locally determined metrics for transportation services and how the agency will collect, maintain, and assess this information.

The development of this plan occurred from January through December 2021 and involved numerous opportunities for stakeholder engagement. Regional transportation and health and human service providers were asked to complete questionnaires about their services. Providers received a brief stakeholder survey, from which the project team learned more about each provider's type of service, service area, size, and type of fleet, as well as a short description of the provider's role in the region.

The project team also coordinated with transportation and health & human services providers to distribute surveys to transportation users in the region to learn about their household characteristics, transportation

preferences, typical daily trip destinations, and where they believe public transportation gaps exist in the CTCOG region. Supplemental one-on-one interviews were also conducted with select transportation service providers and service users to document a variety of perspectives of transportation in Central Texas. Users were asked about their household's characteristics, transportation preferences, typical daily trip destinations, and where they believe public transportation gaps exist in the CTCOG region.

In total, 36 participants responded to the initial questionnaire. As a follow-up activity, staff from the Hill Country Transit District (known locally as The HOP) conducted a follow-up questionnaire via on-board survey. This follow-up questionnaire resulted in an additional 222 responses. To supplement this outreach, data from 772 local 2-1-1 transportation dispatch interactions that occurred from 2017-2020 were also reviewed from. **Table 1** below summarizes the number of responses received from priority populations across each type of transportation service user outreach conducted as part of this RCTP update.

Table 1. Priority Population Outreach Summary

Priority Population Group	2-1-1 Logged Survey Interactions (772 total)	Onboard Survey Responses (222 total)	Online Survey Responses (36 total)	Transit User Interviews (2 total)
Individuals with Disabilities	86	83	2	2
Individuals 65 and Older	232	53	5	2
Persons with Low Incomes	47	144	2	1
Individuals Seeking Employment	1	39	N/A	0
Veterans of the Military	86	46	1	0
Individuals Representing Children	5	N/A	N/A	1

The Central Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Group (CTRTAG) served as the steering committee that guided the development of the RCTP update. The CTRTAG is composed of 15 voting members representing various organizations and user groups from priority populations within the CTCOG area that have an interest in the regional transportation network. Through its regularly scheduled quarterly meetings, CTRTAG members provided feedback on outreach efforts during spring 2021 and needs assessment efforts during summer 2021. CTRTAG members (including those representing users from priority populations) also reviewed and provided comment on the Draft RCTP from October-November 2021.

2. TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES IN THE REGION

The CTCOG region includes seven counties in central Texas with an estimated population of approximately 520,000 people. Bell County accounts for more than half the region's population. The area is currently served by multiple transportation providers, including both those offering public fixed routes as well as demand-response services. There are also providers offering services through private, non-profit, community-based organizations, health and human services agencies, and workforce agencies. This section summarizes the existing transportation service providers in the CTCOG region and the services they provide.

Transportation providers identified in this section received a brief stakeholder survey, with which each provider described its type of service, service area, size, and type of fleet, as well as a short description of the provider's role in the region. Providers were also asked to share how their transportation resources and fleets have changed over the past five years, especially given the impact of COVID-19. Select members of the Central Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Group (CTRTAG) also participated in stakeholder phone interviews, including representatives from Hill Country Transit District, Baylor Scott & White Health, Workforce Solutions, CTCOG Area Agency on Aging, Bell County Indigent Health Services, and United Way of Central Texas.

INVENTORY OF TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

Most of the transportation resources available in the CTCOG region are in Bell County, the most populous and connected county in Region 23 partially due to Interstate 35 bisecting the County. Fort Hood Army Base also is partially located in the western portion of Bell County. Transportation options for the public in the Killeen-Temple area, as well as the larger CTCOG region include national rail, public and private bus, and other on-demand providers. Other transportation providers, although more limited in availability, include veterans' services, health and human services, school districts, and faith-based organizations.

Table 2 identifies the transportation providers included in the 2021 RCTP update. The table provides an overview of each provider's service type, service area, and fleet inventory. Where applicable, the numbers in parentheses in the "Fleet" column describe the occupancy of each type of vehicle. CTCOG staff reviewed the transportation provider list for completeness to make sure that it included key transportation services from throughout the region.

Table 2. Transportation Providers/Stakeholders

Provider Name	Service Type	Service Area	Fleet*	Description
Aero-Nautical Services (ANS) Shuttle Service	Airport shuttles	Bell County, Coryell County, Lampasas County, Fort Hood, Waco Airport, ABIA	3 sedans (4, 4, and 6) 2 vans (11) 1 bus (14)	In addition to helping residents get to and from nearby airports, ANS also provides its services to military personnel, medical professionals, patients, and senior citizens through local organizations. ANS also partners with Atlas Airlines for rides.
American Automobile Association (AAA)	Roadside assistance (no direct transportation services)	National	No response provided	Not-for-profit organization providing roadside assistance and various member discounts nationwide, with offices located nearby in Fort Worth and Round Rock.
Amtrak	Public transportation (regional rail)	National	No response provided	Texas Eagle rail line serves Temple Station en route to Los Angeles, CA and Chicago, IL.
Arrow Trailways of Texas	Public transportation (regional bus)	Bell County and Mason County	No response provided	Regional charter bus services, often partnering with Amtrak to connect passengers to other train stations. Arrow operates out of Temple, Killeen, and Mason in the CTCOG area.
Baylor Scott & White	Emergency and Non-emergency medical transportation	Bell County, Coryell County, Llano County, Milam County, San Saba County, Fort Hood, and beyond	3 vans (5) Multiple ambulances (1)	System of medical facilities and services across the State of Texas. In the Central Texas area, 2,846 trips were provided or facilitated by Baylor, Scott, & White in 2020.
Draughon-Miller Central Texas Regional Airport	Air travel (pick up shuttle service)	Bell County (Temple)	No response provided	City-owned and operated regional airport with courtesy cars and commercial hangar availability for the public.
Driving Hope of Texas	Non-emergency medical transportation	Bell County, Coryell County, and Milam County (although willing to serve the rest of the region)	2 vans (3)	Faith-based, non-profit organization with agreements with the CTCOG Area Agency on Aging. Recently discovered that paid advertising caused demand to exceed capacity of service. Also contracts transportation services to CTCOG Area Agency on Aging.
ENDEAVRide Pilot Program	Private transportation and non-emergency medical transportation	Nolanville, TX	1 autonomous van	Free, autonomous van providing curbside telemedicine appointments and other non-emergency medical trips. Waves of 2-month free pilot programs in Nolanville, TX, facilitated by Texas A&M University and other local partners.
Greyhound Lines, Inc.	Public transportation (regional bus)	National	No response provided	Greyhound bus stations are located across the Central Texas region, including in Temple and Killeen.

Provider Name	Service Type	Service Area	Fleet*	Description
Hill Country Transit District (HCTD or "The HOP")	Public transportation (Rural on-demand, Urban fixed-route, Urban ADA complementary paratransit service, and Non-emergency medical service)	Bell County, Coryell County, Hamilton County, Lampasas County, Llano County, Mason County, Milam County, Mills County, San Saba County, and Fort Hood	5 sedans (3) 23 vans (7) 63 minibuses (12) 17 buses (35 to 39)	Regional transit system in Central Texas (covering 9 counties and over 9,000 square miles), largely dependent on federal funding. Municipalities currently contribute considerably less than the national average for transit agencies.
Killeen Express Shuttle	Airport shuttles	Killeen, Belton, and Austin	Multiple vans (7 to 10)	Customers can schedule shuttle trips between Belton and Austin, with prices ranging from \$45 per adult to \$12 per pet (one-way).
Lonestar Express Shuttle	Airport shuttles	Belton, Copperas Cove, Fort Hood, Harker Heights, Killeen, Temple, and Austin	No response provided	Customers can schedule shuttle trips to and from the Killeen and Austin airports in the CTCOG region. COVID-19 has caused them to only offer private trips at this time.
Medlift	Non-emergency medical transportation	CTCOG region, including Killeen and Temple	No response provided	Central Texas-based non-emergency medical transportation offering single trip purchases or monthly trip packages.
ModivCare (formerly LogistiCare)	Non-emergency medical transportation	National	No response provided	National facilitator of non-emergency medical transportation with regional offices in Dallas and Austin.

*Vehicle occupancies are shown in parentheses in the Fleet column

AERO-NAUTICAL SERVICES (ANS) SHUTTLE SERVICE

Aero-Nautical Services (ANS) Shuttle Service is an executive transportation and shuttle company based in Harker Heights, Texas. ANS provides transportation services to and from airports in Central Texas with a fleet of sprinter vans and larger buses. ANS' local service area includes Fort Hood, Killeen, Copperas Cove, and Harker Heights, although they also offer trips outside this area. Rides can be scheduled up to 24 hours in advance with no additional charges for children or luggage.

AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION (AAA)

The American Automobile Association, also known as AAA, is a national not-for-profit member association and service organization which provides a range of benefits for its members, including roadside assistance, discounts at various businesses, travel benefits and discounts, and assistance for medical trips and prescriptions. The nearest AAA club offices are in Round Rock and Fort Worth; however, their services are available throughout the country.

AMTRAK

Amtrak, or the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, operates more than 300 trains per day along 21,000 miles of railroad in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and three Canadian provinces. Amtrak

operates the Texas Eagle line, which runs from Chicago to Los Angeles via St. Louis, Little Rock, Dallas, San Antonio, and Tucson. The Texas Eagle also makes two stops in the CTCOG area in McGregor and Temple.

ARROW TRAILWAYS OF TEXAS

Trailways is the largest network of independently owned bus companies in North America, operating since 1936. Arrow Trailways of Texas is a regional charter bus provider serving the Killeen area, as well as Houston, Austin, and Waco. Arrow Trailways of Texas operates out of Temple, Killeen, and Mason in the CTCOG area.

BAYLOR SCOTT & WHITE

Baylor Scott & White is the largest non-profit healthcare system in Texas, established in 2013. Baylor Scott & White includes 52 hospitals, over 800 patient care sites, and over 49,000 employees. In the CTCOG region, Baylor Scott & White has facilities, in Temple, Belton, Killeen, Salado, Cameron, Copperas Cove, Gatesville, Llano, San Saba, and Kingsland.

DRAUGHON-MILLER CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL AIRPORT

Draughon-Miller Central Texas Regional Airport is a former Army Airfield which first began military training operations in 1942. In 1945, the military turned the airfield over to the City of Temple, who renamed the Airport after two Temple pilots who died in World War II. The Airport features two runways for general aviation and corporate aircraft operators. The Airport has a call out fee of \$100 to pick up customers, and courtesy cars are based on availability.

DRIVING HOPE OF TEXAS

Driving Hope of Texas is a non-profit organization that provides non-emergency transportation to medical facilities for ambulatory cancer patients and their caregivers, as well as patients with other noninfectious conditions. Driving Hope of Texas provides service in some of the counties in the CTCOG area, including Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Milam, and Mills.

ENDEAVRIDE PILOT PROGRAM

ENDEAVRide is a pilot program facilitated by Texas A&M University in Nolanville, Texas, providing free curbside telemedicine services for senior citizens, as well as other non-emergency transportation services. The ENDEAVRide pilot program began in December 2020, in part as a response to community needs in the face of COVID-19. The automated vehicles pull up to the curbs of customers to provide virtual medical appointments or take customers to destinations in town, including fixed telemedicine locations. The pilot program consisted of three two-month waves of testing, the latest ending in August 2021.

GREYHOUND LINES, INC.

Greyhound Lines, Inc. is the largest provider of inter-city bus transportation service across North America, operating since 1914. Greyhound bus services run along Interstate 35 through Temple and Belton, but

buses do not stop along this corridor between Round Rock and Waco. Greyhound does provide one stop in Mason.

HILL COUNTRY TRANSIT DISTRICT (“THE HOP”)

The Hill Country Transit District (HCTD), also known as “The HOP,” is the only regional public transportation system that operates in the CTCOG area. Its services include fixed-route buses, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit, and rural services for the nine counties. The fixed-route services are located predominantly in Bell County, operating buses within and between Temple, Killeen, and Belton. ADA paratransit services are on-demand as requested. Rural services provide trips to and from schools, as well as longer distance trips between the region’s cities. HCTD provided over 425,000 total trips in 2019 and 275,000 trips in 2020. HCTD attributes the decrease in trips in 2020 to the impact of COVID-19 on public transit demand.

Table 3 summarizes financial information from 2019 (the most recent year of data available where COVID-19 did not impact operations) for HCTD’s urban services in the Killeen urbanized area and the Temple urbanized area, as well as the rural services across HCTD’s nine-county area. Data shown is from the Texas Transit Performance Dashboard.

Table 3. Operational Comparison for HCTD Services

Metric (2019 data)	HCTD Urban Service – Killeen Area	HCTD Urban Service – Temple Area	HCTD Demand-Response Rural Service
Fare Information	Fixed-Route Service: \$1.00 regular fare \$0.50 reduced fare \$25.00 monthly pass Paratransit Service: \$2.00 per ride	Fixed-Route Service: \$1.00 regular fare \$0.50 reduced fare \$25.00 monthly pass Paratransit Service: \$2.00 per ride	General Public: \$1.00 base fare (for trips up to 5 miles), then \$0.50 additional every five miles (for trips up to 50 miles), then \$0.15 additional every mile Limited Eligibility Reduced Fare: \$2.00 per ride
Operating Schedule	Monday-Friday 5:25 AM – 6:45 PM	Monday-Friday 5:25 AM – 6:45 PM	Monday-Friday 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Revenue Fleet Size	50 vehicles	36 vehicles	62 vehicles
Unlinked Passenger Trips	303,877	132,691	91,845
Fiscal Year 2019 Revenue and Breakdown	\$4,255,329 68.5% Federal Funding 10.3% State Funding 14.5% Local Funding 6.7% Contract Funding	\$2,438,842 54.3% Federal Funding 14.0% State Funding 12.8% Local Funding 18.9% Contract Funding	\$2,623,963 37.1% Federal Funding 24.0% State Funding 3.6% Local Funding 35.2% Contract Funding
Fiscal Year 2019 Expenditures and Breakdown	\$4,255,329 59.2% Operating Costs 18.3% Maintenance Costs 10.8% Capital Costs 11.8% Admin. Costs	\$2,438,842 62.2% Operating Costs 18.0% Maintenance Costs 7.2% Capital Costs 12.6% Admin. Costs	\$2,623,963 69.4% Operating Costs 4.9% Maintenance Costs 3.3% Capital Costs 22.4% Administrative Costs
Operating Cost per Passenger	\$13	\$17	\$28
Fare Recovery Ratio	5.0%	4.7%	2.8%

Since 2017, HCTD has experienced reductions in services due primarily to financial impacts. Prior to 2014, HCTD had a contract with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to provide non-emergency medical transportation. In 2014, HHSC moved to a third-party broker system, significantly reducing the revenues received by HCTD through its contract. It was believed that this change would be temporary, so HCTD used surplus pre-2014 revenues to continue funding their services without asking for increases in local match funding from the communities served by HCTD. By 2016, HCTD determined it was necessary to begin making reductions to service to reduce operating expenses. Since 2017, the following services and routes have been impacted:

- 2017: Route 520 (Temple) discontinued
- 2018: Routes 7, 21, and 30 (Killeen) discontinued
- 2018: Service area for Complementary Paratransit (ADA) Service reduced to three-quarters of a mile from fixed route bus services
- 2018: Route 5 (Killeen) discontinued
- 2018: Saturday service (system-wide) discontinued
- 2018: Hours of operation reduced in Copperas Cove (by 1 hour) and Harker Heights (by 4 hours)
- 2020: Routes 4 and 100 were adjusted to increase geographic footprint

KILLEEN EXPRESS SHUTTLE

Killeen Express Shuttle is a transportation company providing daily shuttle trips to and from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. The Killeen Express Shuttle makes stops in Killeen, Belton, and the Austin-Bergstrom main terminal shuttle area. Each scheduled shuttle can fit 7 to 10 passengers with pricing ranging from \$45 per adult to \$12 per pet one-way. Customers can make reservations via phone or online.

LONE STAR EXPRESS

Lone Star Express is a transportation company providing daily shuttle trips to and from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport and Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport. Lone Star Express offers shared and private rides from Killeen to Austin-Bergstrom and Killeen-Fort Hood, although COVID-19 has resulted in Lone Star Express only offering private rides. While the shared rides go by a set schedule, private rides can be reserved whenever the customer needs it. Lone Star Express serves customers in Belton, Copperas Cove, Fort Hood, Harker Heights, Killeen, and Temple.

MEDLIFT

Medlift is an organization that provides non-emergency medical transportation to and from medical facilities, private residences, nursing homes, retirement centers, clinics, dentists, pharmacists, and more. Medlift has several different types of vehicles to cater to its customers, including four-door sedans,

ambulatory vehicles, wheelchair vehicles, and passenger vans. Medlift's main service areas in the CTCOG area include Killeen and Temple, although services are also provided throughout the region.

MODIVCARE

ModivCare, (formerly LogistiCare), is a leading national organization providing non-emergency medical transportation services for state government agencies and managed care organizations. ModivCare provides 64 million riders each year, serving 24 million members across the United States. Customers schedule rides through ModivCare's website, smartphone app, or via phone, email, or fax.

INVENTORY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCIES

CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (CTCOG)

Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) is a regional agency for Central Texas providing local municipalities with various resources, including housing assistance, emergency services, aging services, employment services, and regional planning. The CTCOG area consists of the following seven counties: Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, Mills, and San Saba counties. One of CTCOG's focus areas is regional transportation planning. Aside from updating the RCTP, CTCOG facilitates the Central Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Group (CTRTAG). This group is responsible for promoting efficient use of transportation resources throughout the region, made up of representatives from regional transportation service providers and transportation users. CTCOG also collaborates with other regional entities to explore rural transportation in Central Texas. CTCOG is also considered to be the Rural Planning Organization for Central Texas, overseeing the transportation planning processes for rural areas outside of the greater Killeen and Temple region.

KILLEEN-TEMPLE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (KTMPO)

Killeen-Temple Metropolitan Planning Organization (KTMPO) is the regional planning organization for Central Texas. KTMPO is responsible for establishing a comprehensive transportation planning process for the greater Killeen and Temple area. The KTMPO area consists of the entirety of Bell County, as well as parts of southern Coryell and eastern Lampasas counties, and portions of Fort Hood. KTMPO is comprised of a Transportation Planning Policy Board and a Technical Advisory Committee, both of which help inform the transportation planning processes in the region. KTMPO and CTCOG receive and facilitate federal and state funding for transportation projects throughout the region, working with cities and local agencies to identify priorities and needs.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (TXDOT)

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is the statewide transportation authority for Texas. TxDOT has 25 districts across the state. The RCTP study area is part of the Waco District (Bell, Coryell, and Hamilton counties), Brownwood District (Lampasas, Mills, and San Saba counties), Austin District (Llano and Mason counties), and Bryan District (Milam County). TxDOT owns and maintains the right of way in all major freeways and state highways in the state. Cities, counties, and regional entities must coordinate with TxDOT and the appropriate district to make improvements or other changes to any state-owned facilities. Interstate 35 and Interstate 14 are major state-owned freeways in the project study area that require multi-jurisdictional coordination, for example.

3. COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND GAPS ANALYSIS

Transportation needs and gaps were identified through existing transportation inventory review, stakeholder interviews, service provider surveys, transportation service user surveys, and several other readily available data sources.

The transportation resources inventory provided a snapshot of the existing transportation and health & human services providers in the region, each provider's roles and resources in the region, and where opportunities may exist for additional coordination of resources between providers. Online surveys were distributed to each of the identified service providers to populate these data points. Ten providers completed the survey. Stakeholder interviews were also conducted with six service providers to achieve a deeper understanding of their services and roles in the region. Interviewed providers included Hill Country Transit District, Baylor Scott & White Health, Workforce Solutions, CTCOG Area Agency on Aging, Bell County Indigent Health Services, and United Way of Central Texas.

The public outreach process provided insight as to how the region's residents utilize transportation and health & human services, respondent household characteristics, and where respondents believe gaps exist in current services. Online surveys were distributed with the help of the region's service providers, which led to 36 surveys being completed. An interactive map survey was also provided for the public to document needs and gaps, however only two responses were logged. To provide additional perspectives from transit service users, The HOP distributed paper surveys on some of their fixed route buses from July 20th through July 28th, yielding an additional 222 survey responses. Additionally, United Way of Central Texas was able to share data from their 2-1-1 HELPLINE response service, which shows where and why residents called for transportation assistance in the region.

Demographic data was also evaluated to identify potential spatial or group-based gaps in the region. Tract-level data was obtained from 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year estimates, and city-level data was obtained from 2020 Decennial Census data. General themes, as well as specific issues, were identified in this process to see where gaps may currently exist for certain demographic needs.

GEOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

The RCTP study area contains the seven CTCOG counties, as well as Mason and Llano counties. These additional counties are included in the study area due them being part of The HOP's rural service area. **Figure 1** shows the RCTP study area in context of the rest of the State of Texas. The RCTP study area sits between the Waco and Austin metropolitan areas and is a rapidly growing region in Central Texas. The study area is home to Fort Hood US Army Base, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Texas A&M University-Central Texas, three regional airports, and several lakes and other natural features.

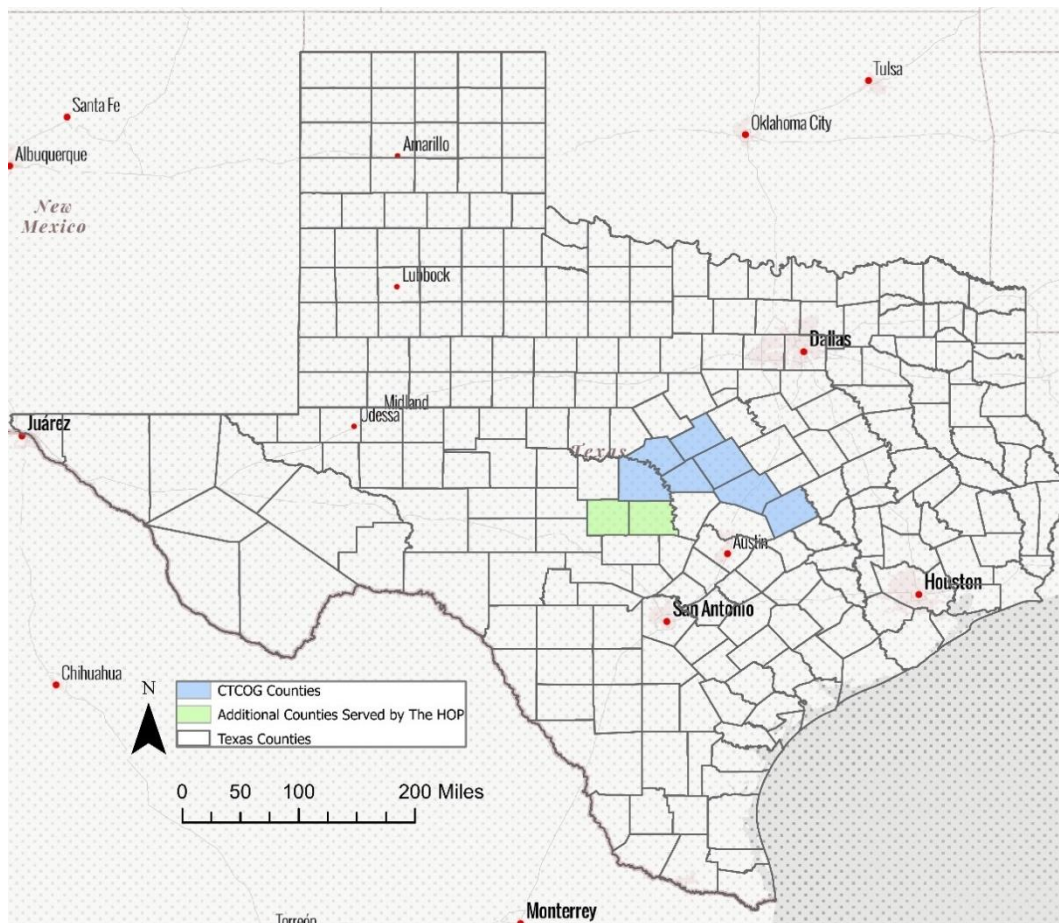


Figure 1: RCTP Study Area

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Feedback from the initial phases of the RCTP update was collected and reviewed to identify common themes from respondents. Several key themes from each phase of outreach conducted is summarized below.

SERVICE PROVIDER OUTREACH

Several of the most consistently mentioned takeaways from service provider outreach are summarized below.

Takeaway #1: Overall lack of funding towards transportation to meet the increasing demand.

Several transportation service providers expressed the need for additional funding for public transportation in the RCTP study area. Public transportation systems rarely make a profit from their

services, so it is essential for agencies to identify and secure funding to maintain effective service levels. Typical funding sources for public transportation agencies include member city contributions, fare revenues, advertisement income, and federal grants. Agencies can also partner with private businesses through public-private partnerships (P3s) to sponsor and contribute to new or improved services or facilities. Agencies can pursue P3s with local organizations, such as health and human services providers or faith-based groups. For health and human services providers, state and county agencies can allow providers wider discretion on what they spend their allocated funds towards, such as additional transportation infrastructure.

Takeaway #2: Rural transportation services are lacking in accessibility and convenience.

Most of the RCTP study area can be classified as rural, with most of the population living in the Temple-Belton-Killeen corridor. Public transportation services are scarce outside of this corridor, often requiring more rural residents to travel by car to their destinations. Populations without reliable access to private transportation, such as senior citizens and low-income households, would benefit from improved access to public transportation services from Central Texas' rural areas.

Takeaway #3: Creative solutions can help improve the state of transportation in Central Texas.

Aside from increasing member cities' contributions to The HOP, other creative funding solutions are available to help improve public transportation in the area. Texas A&M University is currently conducting a pilot study utilizing autonomous vans to provide curbside, non-emergency medical appointments for patients. Agencies could also partner with businesses or other organizations via public-private funding partnerships, sponsored services, or other cooperative efforts to improve access to transportation. Faith-based groups could also partner with transportation and health and human services providers to assist in providing trips with their own fleets.

Takeaway #4: Food deserts in western Bell County have become an emergent issue.

Access to grocery stores and other fresh food sources can be improved in the region through enhanced transportation services. Areas that lack this access to fresh food are known as food deserts. Food deserts are especially prevalent in low-income, more rural communities where public transportation is also sparse. Grocery store closures in western Bell County in 2019 reduced ease of access to groceries for citizens in the area. Transportation and health & human services providers can work together to improve access to fresh food sources throughout the region for their customers through new transit routes, increased service areas, and special partnerships with food providers.

Takeaway #5: Recreating 2019's Transportation Summit could be a catalyst for continued improvement of transportation in the region.

In 2019, stakeholders from around the region participated in a Transportation Summit to identify issues and discuss potential solutions to fill those transportation gaps. Representatives from The HOP, United Way of Central Texas, Baylor Scott & White, and other officials were present to consider creative transportation solutions, including partnerships with medical/health organizations to provide additional non-emergency medical transportation services. It would be beneficial for stakeholders in the region to establish an annual transportation summit to reassess and monitor progress on transportation issues and solutions.

PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Several of the most consistently mentioned takeaways from public stakeholder outreach are summarized below:

Takeaway #1: ADA Paratransit services should be restored to universal geographic coverage.

Through 2017, The HOP provided curb-to-curb ADA Paratransit services citywide (Temple-Belton-Killeen) for its customers'. In 2018, due to funding constraints, the Agency reduced its ADA Paratransit services from citywide to within 3/4-mile of any fixed route in the system. This change has resulted in a significant reduction in access to transportation for those who do not have access to private automobiles and/or individuals with disabilities. The HOP should pursue additional federal funding, public-private partnerships with local businesses or organizations, and/or request additional funding from member cities to restore its previous ADA Paratransit services

Takeaway #2: New fixed bus routes are needed to attract new riders and provide access to underserved areas of the region.

Since 2017, The HOP has discontinued 4 fixed routes, Saturday service, and reduced the ADA Paratransit service from citywide to within 3/4-mile of fixed routes. These reductions have decreased access to transit for many residents in Central Texas. One-third of respondents shared that more route options would make it more likely for them to use public/alternative transportations services in the region. Users have also identified grocery stores, barber shops, and growing employment centers as underserved areas in the region. New or improved transit services could help fill these gaps and restore a more accessible transit system in Central Texas.

Takeaway #3: Community meetings should take place at transit-accessible locations.

Community members have expressed frustration that previous community meetings, especially those regarding transportation, have not been located at transit-accessible venues. This barrier makes it difficult for users to provide their input on important issues, which negatively impacts the system overall. Future meetings could take place at senior centers, regional service provider facilities such as HOCTIL, or any public facility with a bus stop nearby. Meeting organizers should also consider advertising the events in a more comprehensive manner, utilizing newspapers, television, radio, phone blasts, or targeted flier at public facilities. By casting a wider net to the community, users of all ages and abilities will be able to share their experiences and improve services throughout the region.

2-1-1 HELPLINE DATA FINDINGS

Some notable takeaways from 2-1-1 HELPLINE response data are summarized below:

Takeaway #1: Almost two-thirds of requested needs were for transportation services related to medical appointments or disabilities.

From 2017 to 2020, 35% of 2-1-1 callers requested transportation services to medical appointments. 15% of calls were regarding senior ride programs. Another 14% of callers requested transportation services for disabled individuals or related general paratransit services. In the stakeholder interviews, representatives

from multiple agencies, including Baylor Scott & White and Bell County Indigent Services, expressed the need to reduce the number of missed medical appointments due to a lack of transportation access. These barriers can be potentially life threatening if appointments or treatments are missed. Partnerships between healthcare providers and other transportation service providers could help fill the gap of medical transportation access.

Takeaway #2: 11% of requested needs were not able to be fulfilled, for various reasons.

Out of the 772 calls received by 2-1-1 between 2017 and 2020, 89% of the callers were provided the adequate information or resources to fulfill their need. The largest unmet need in the region was requests for bus fares, which accounted for almost 40% of the unmet needs. Transportation services for medical appointments was the second highest unmet need at 15%. For the requests that were unable to be met, the most common documented reason was that the service did not exist. Other documented reasons included a disconnected call, a client that was ineligible for a certain service, or that the client refused the recommended referral. Low-income transportation vouchers, regional partnerships, and other programs could help address the lack of affordability for transportation services in the region, thus helping more of these needs get fulfilled.

Takeaway #3: Central Texas women are not being provided adequate transportation or health & human services.

A majority of 2-1-1 callers in the region (76%) were female between 2017 and 2020, illuminating a significant need to address women's services and access to resources in the region. This is especially true for those living in Killeen, where 52% of all 2-1-1 calls originated. Targeted programs and partnerships can be formed to help reduce the disparity in resource requests between men and women in the region.

ON-BOARD SURVEY FINDINGS

Some major takeaways from the 222 on-board survey responses are summarized below:

Takeaway #1: Priority populations are riding public transportation, mostly out of necessity.

The on-board surveys captured many respondents who identified as members of one or more priority populations specifically defined in the RCTP process. Priority populations face greater barriers to transportation access, creating the need to address these services intentionally to welcome riders of all ages and abilities. Of the 222 surveys that were submitted:

- 79% of respondents indicated they (or someone in their household) are dependent on public transportation.
- 65% of respondents indicated they have an annual income of less than \$50,000.
- 37% of respondents indicated they (or someone in their household) are living with a disability.
- 24% of respondents indicated they (or someone in their household) are 65 years of age or older.
- 21% of respondents indicated they (or someone in their household) are a military Veteran.
- 18% of respondents indicated they (or someone in their household) are seeking employment.
- 13% of respondents indicated that English is not their household's primary language.

Takeaway #2: Transit riders are utilizing public transportation for all aspects of daily life.

According to the responses received by The HOP bus riders, respondents confirmed that public transportation is being used for more than just work trips. It is important to ensure that transportation and health & human services provide access for residents to and from a variety of destinations. Of the 222 surveys that were collected:

- 65% of respondents indicated one of their main purposes for using public transportation is for running errands (shopping, laundry, childcare, etc.).
- 48% of respondents indicated one of their main purposes for using public transportation is for work trips.
- 43% of respondents indicated one of their main purposes for using public transportation is for medical services.
- 19% of respondents indicated one of their main purposes for using public transportation is for entertainment.

Takeaway #3: Ridership could increase with new and improved routes and services.

Like the online surveys, the on-board survey asked riders what changes, if any, would make it more likely for them to use transit more often. These improvements can be addressed by The HOP, as well as through collaboration with other transportation and health & human services providers in the region. Of the 222 surveys that were collected, the most desired improvements included:

- New/more routes (53% of respondents indicated this was a desired improvement).
- Earlier and/or later service hours, including weekend service (43% of respondents indicated this was a desired improvement).
- More frequent service (41% of respondents indicated this was a desired improvement).

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic data for the RCTP study area was summarized at the Census tract level, where possible. Overall demographic data is summarized below, in addition to demographic summaries of priority populations identified in this study.

OVERALL POPULATION DENSITY

The RCTP study area is largely rural, with most of its population residing in Bell County. According to the 2020 US Census data, Killeen is the most populated city in the region with 153,095 residents, followed by Temple with 82,073 residents. Between 2010 and 2020, Killeen's population grew by 20% and Temple's population grew by 24%, according to 2020 Census data. Figure 2 shows the region's population density per square mile for each census tract, according to 2019 ACS 5-year estimate data. (At the time of this study, tract-level data from the 2020 Census was not yet available.) The region's most densely populated areas are in Killeen, Temple, and Copperas Cove. Considering this data, it is logical for the region to focus most of its resources and services in the more populated areas. However, the less-dense areas should also be accommodated to the extent possible.

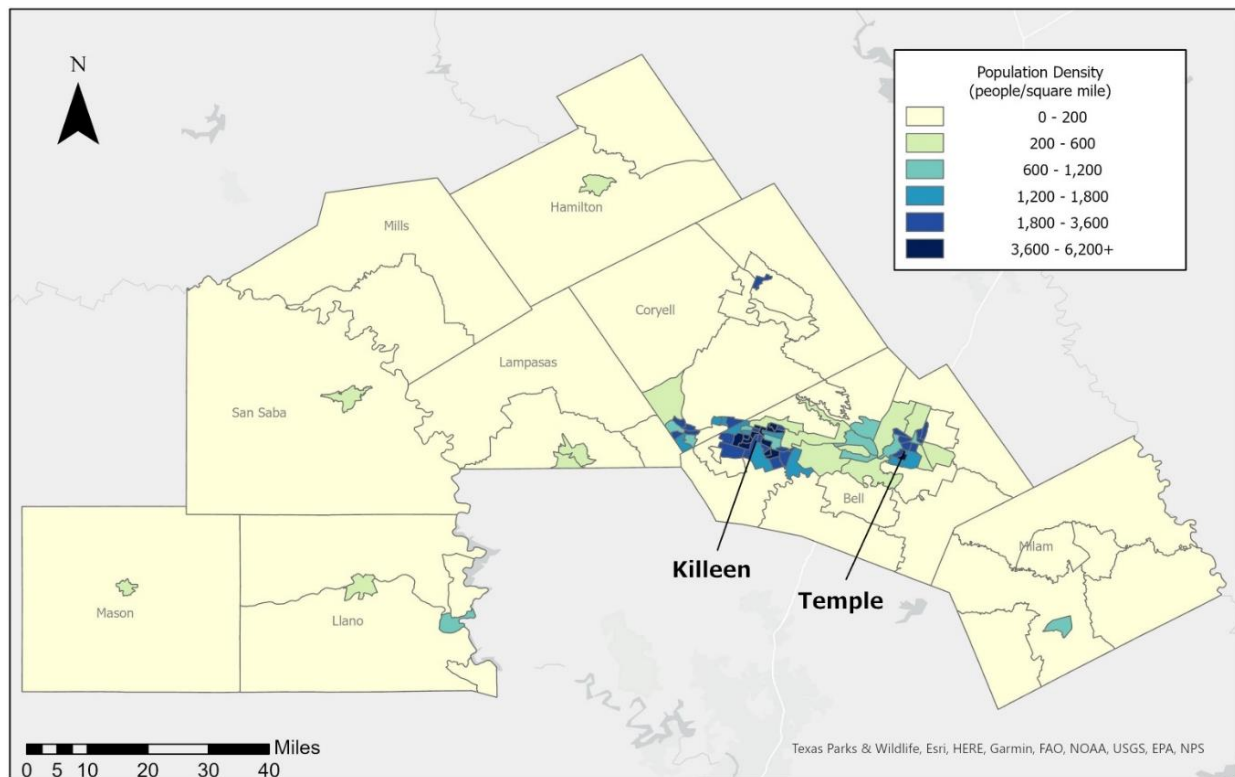


Figure 2: Population Density by Census Tract

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY POPULATIONS ACROSS THE REGION

Residents of the RCTP study area are largely proficient in speaking, reading, and writing in the English language. While there is not currently a large demand for multi-lingual services or materials in the region, Texas is becoming increasingly diverse, and municipalities should begin preparing for bilingual audiences soon. Currently, Killeen has some higher density pockets of Limited English Proficiency households (Figure 3). This is expected for any fast-growing city, especially one like Killeen with over 150,000 residents. According to US Census data, almost 25% of households speak a language other than English at home in Killeen and 16% in Temple.

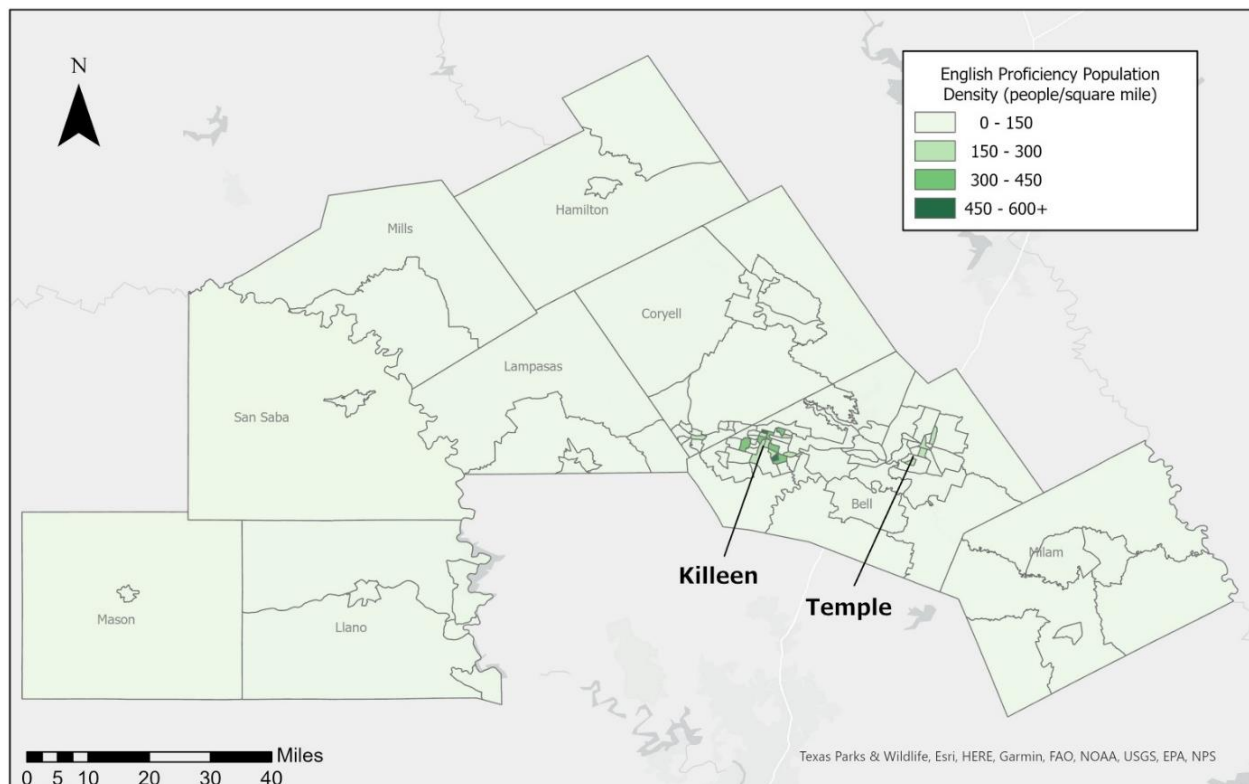


Figure 3: Density of Limited English Proficiency Populations by Census Tract

MINORITY POPULATIONS ACROSS THE REGION

As mentioned previously, the RCTP study area is growing quickly and becoming more diverse. This is especially true in Killeen. According to 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, Killeen is 44% White, 40% Black, and 27% Hispanic. Figure 4 shows the minority population density for the RCTP study area. Minority populations in this analysis are considered all non-white populations from the US Census data. Killeen has the most diverse and dense areas of non-white populations. Historically, non-white populations have had less access to transportation and health & human services throughout the United States. It is important to ensure residents of these areas are receiving the same access to these services as the rest of the region.

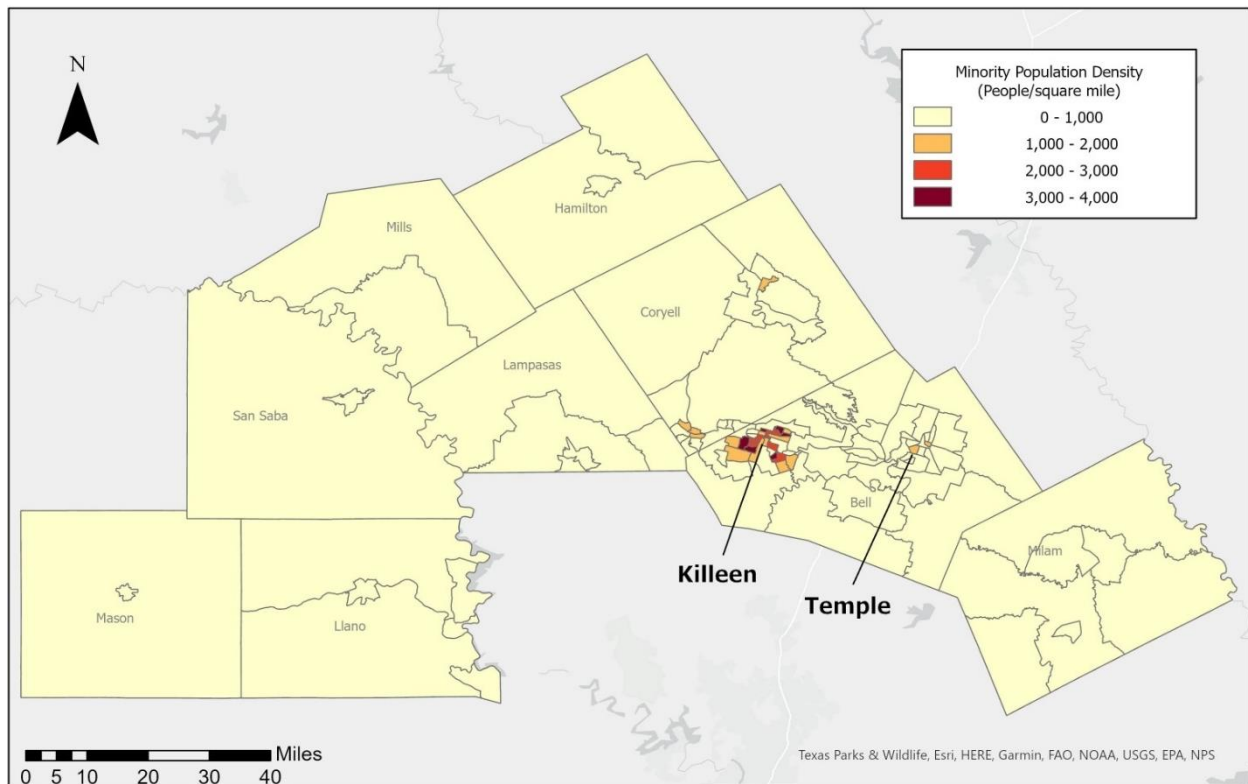


Figure 4: Density of Minority Populations by Census Tract

ZERO-VEHICLE HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS THE REGION

Zero-car households are those that do not have direct access to their own personal vehicle. These households are often dependent on public transportation, bicycles, walking, or other modes besides automobiles for their daily commutes or other trips. While some of these households choose to live without vehicles, many of them cannot afford their own car and are forced to rely on other transportation modes. Figure 5 illustrates the density of zero-car households in the RCTP study area. Areas of central and northern Killeen and central Temple display the highest densities of zero-car households, some of which also have higher densities of minority populations. It is important to ensure these areas are provided with ample transportation resources and services to operate their daily lives without access to their own cars.

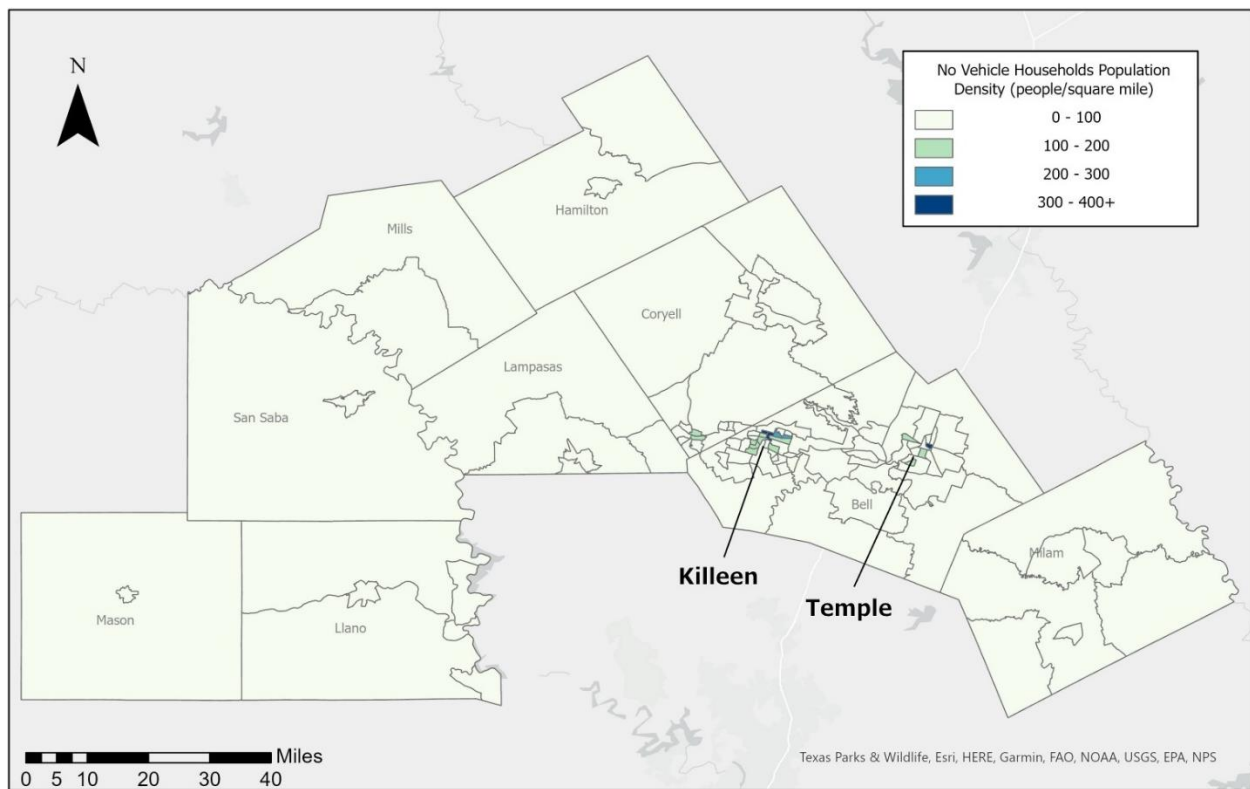


Figure 5: Density of Zero-Car Household Population by Census Tract

YOUTH POPULATION ACROSS THE REGION

Age distributions in the RCTP study area are relatively young compared to national averages. For the largest cities in the region, the percent of individuals aged 18 or younger range from 26% to 30%, compared to 22% nationally. The higher proportion of younger citizens increases the need to ensure adequate transportation access to schools, childcare facilities, libraries, and other community assets that are important to child development. Figure 6 shows that Killeen has dense areas of youth populations (defined as those aged 5 to 17 for the most recent Census tract-level data that was available), as well as some sections of central and northern Temple. In general, many of these densely populated areas of young people correlated with schools, such as Killeen Elementary School, Trimmer Elementary School, and Brookhaven Intermediate School.

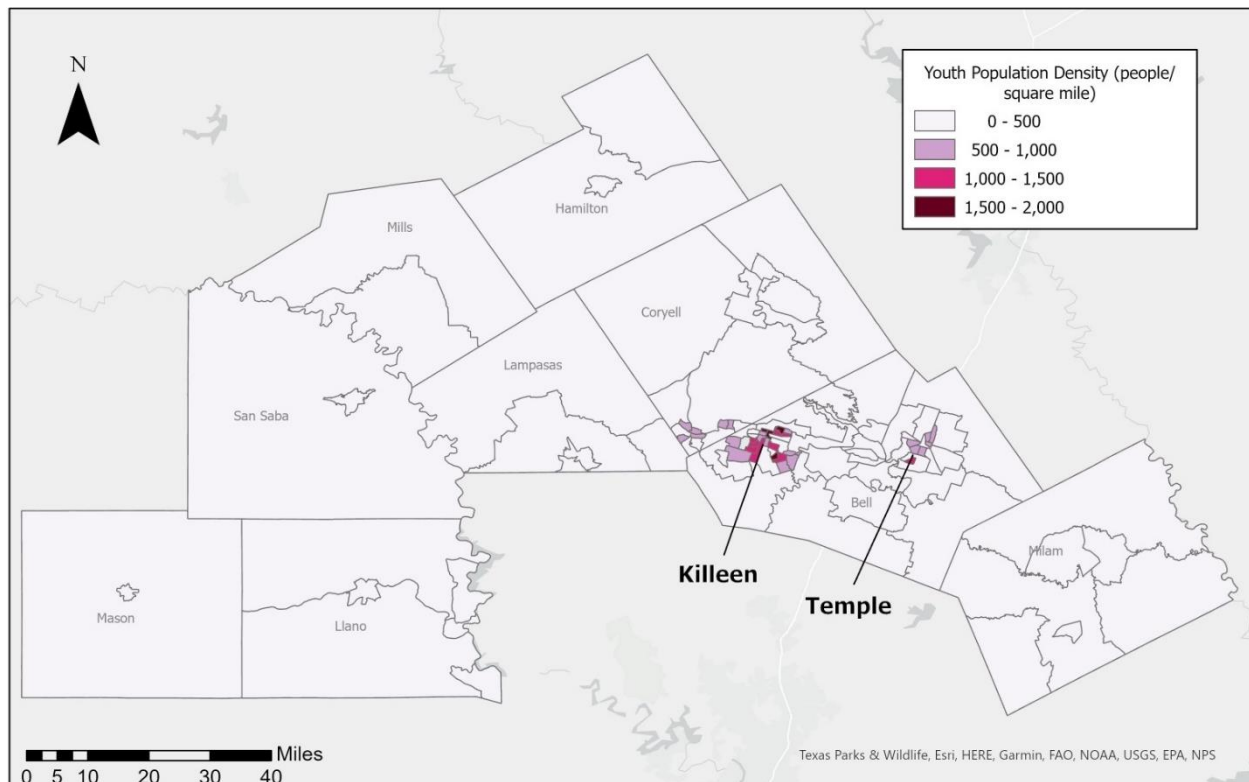


Figure 6: Density of Youth Population (Aged 5-17) by Census Tract

POPULATIONS LIVING IN POVERTY ACROSS THE REGION

The US Census Bureau monitors poverty thresholds for all areas of the country while also accounting for various factors such as household size, home ownership versus renting, and others. These thresholds measure the minimum level of resources that are adequate for households to meet their basic needs. According to US Census data, the RCTP study area's largest cities have higher percentages of households living in poverty than the national average of 10.5%. Temple and Belton both have 16.1% of their residents living in poverty, and Killeen has 14.7%. As a region, poverty rates continue to be higher than the national average. Rural communities in the region range from 10.8% (Llano County) to 20.7% (San Saba County) of residents living in poverty. Figure 7 shows that Killeen's distribution of households in poverty is more concentrated in the central and northern areas of town. These same areas also feature higher densities of minority populations, zero-car households, and youth populations. Health & human service providers, as well as transportation providers, must be intentional in offering their services to these communities so that their access to necessary services is not impeded.

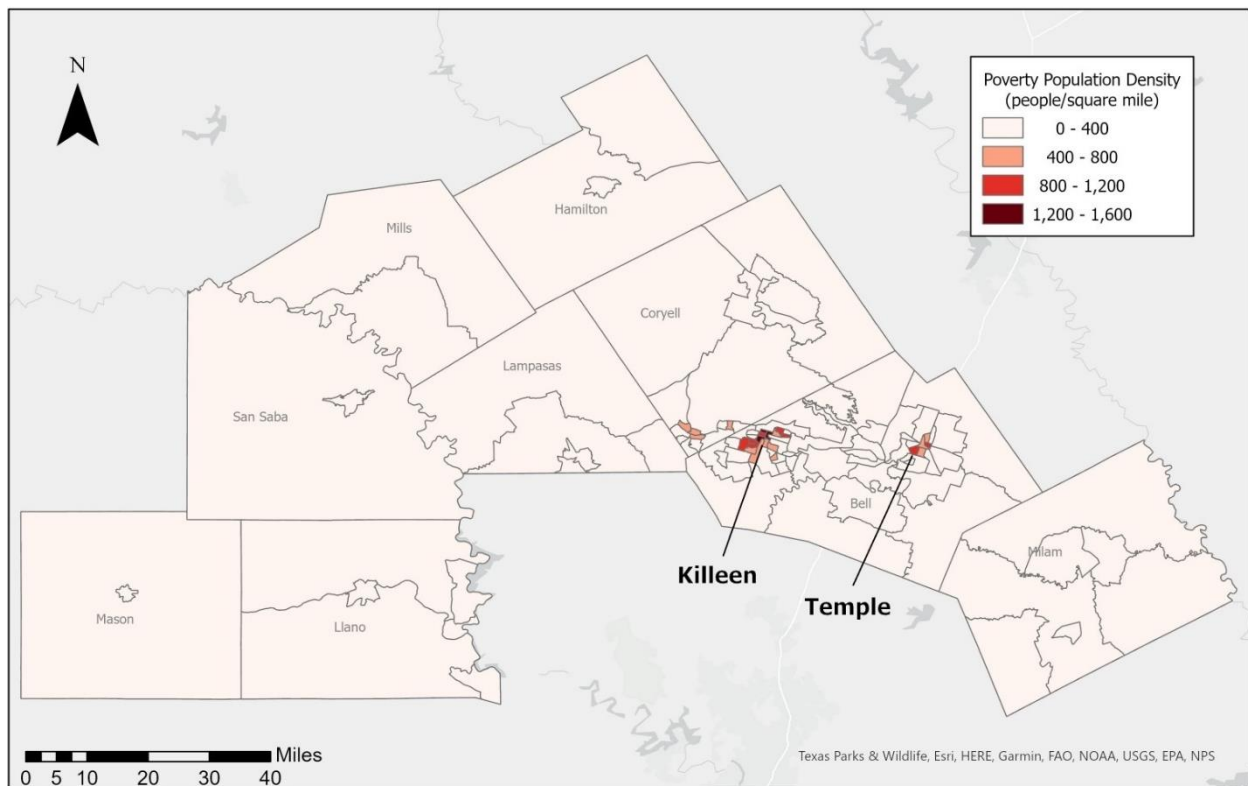


Figure 7: Density of Individuals Living Below the Poverty Level by Census Tract

SENIOR POPULATION ACROSS THE REGION

As mentioned before, the RCTP study area's larger cities are generally younger than the national average, according to US Census data. Nationwide, approximately 16.5% of individuals are aged 65 or older. While Temple's senior population is near that number (15%), Killeen's population only features 6.2% of individuals aged 65 or older. In the region's more rural counties, the proportion of individuals aged 65 or older varies from 10.6% (Coryell County) to 37.3% (Llano County). Nationally, this age group is growing as the Baby Boomer generation continues to age. Approximately half of the Baby Boomer generation is now aged 65 or older, with the group currently aged between 57 and 75 years old. Figure 8 shows the senior population densities for the RCTP study area. Central Temple has some senior housing facilities that are located in the census tracts with the highest population density of seniors.

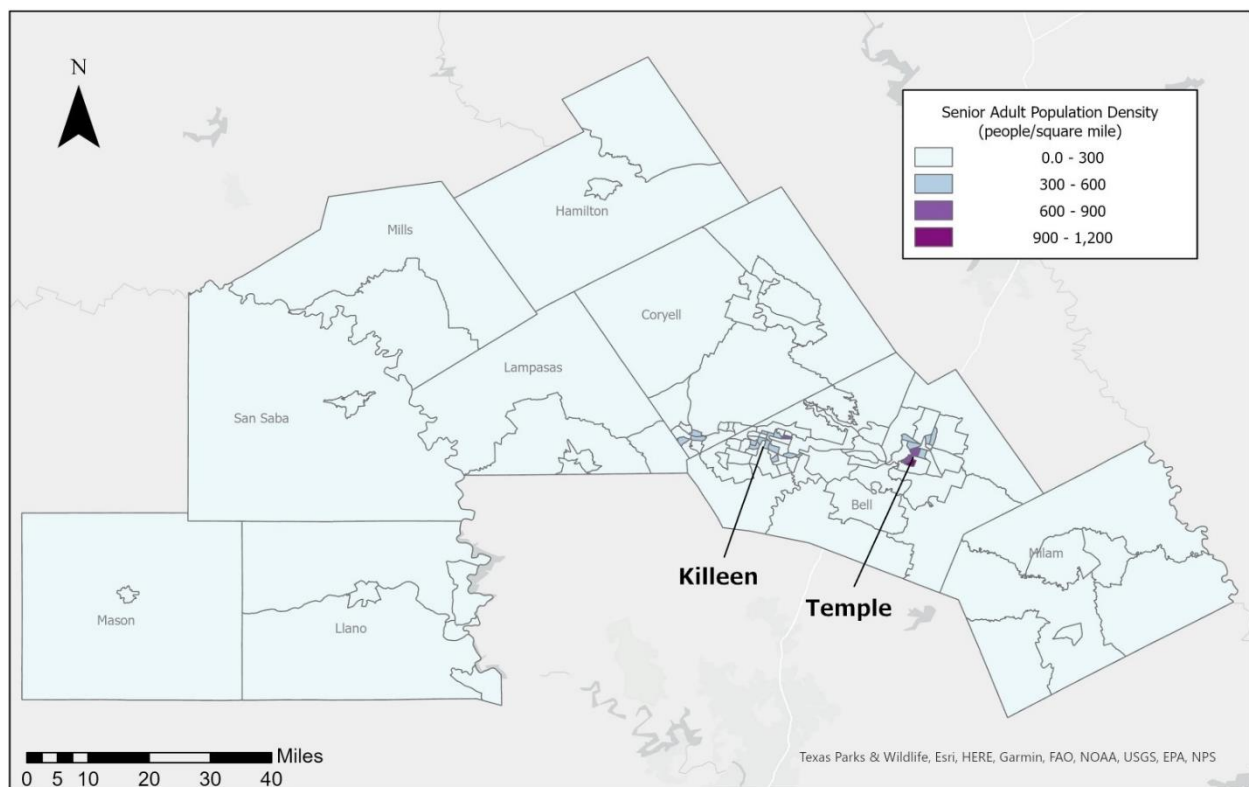


Figure 8: Density of Senior Population (Age 65 and Older) by Census Tract

VETERAN POPULATION ACROSS THE REGION

Fort Hood US Army Base is in northwest Killeen, meaning that many who live in the area are current members of the military or are Veterans. Figure 9 shows the Veteran population densities in the RCTP study area, which are largely concentrated in Killeen and Harker Heights. Veterans often have additional health & humans services needs to treat various injuries, disabilities, or other medical conditions. Fort Hood also creates a high transportation need for the region as one of the largest employers and activity centers.

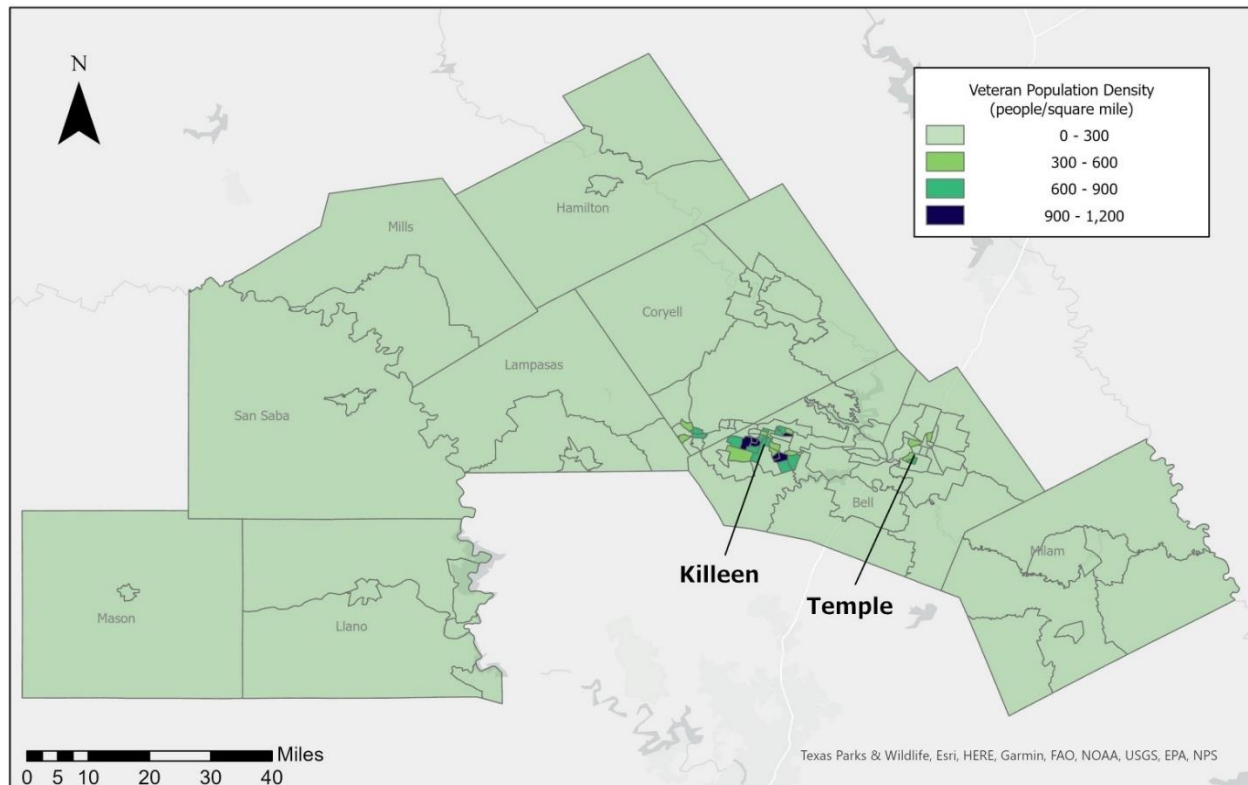


Figure 9: Density of Veteran Population by Census Tract

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACROSS THE REGION

Given the high number of Veterans' facilities and medical campuses in the region, there are also higher numbers of individuals living with disabilities. According to US Census data, each major city in the region has a higher percentage of individuals under age 65 living with a disability than the national total of 8.6%. Copperas Cove leads the region with 13.7% of its population under 65 living with disabilities, followed by Temple with 12.7% and Killeen with 11.8%. Figure 10 shows the population densities in the region for individuals under age 65 living with disabilities. The higher concentrations exist in the same areas of Killeen and Temple that are also experiencing high densities of minority populations, zero-car households, households living in poverty, and senior populations. Individuals living with disabilities must be accommodated with accessible transportation and health & human services. This is especially true for those in more rural areas of the region where resources are particularly scarce and difficult to access.

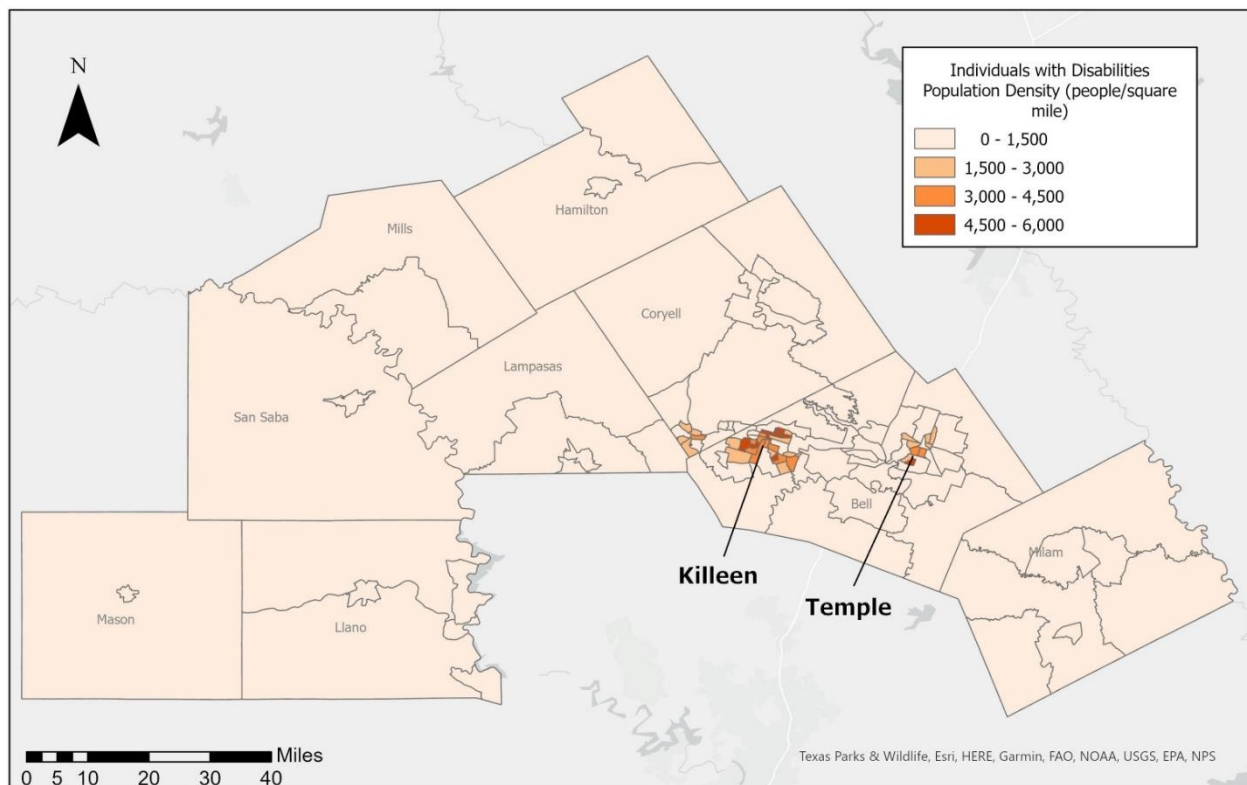


Figure 10: Density of Individuals with Disabilities by Census Tract

INVENTORY OF OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS (NON-TRANSPORTATION)

Table 4 identifies the veterans' and health and human services providers included in the 2021 RCTP update. The table provides an overview of each provider's service type, service area, and a description of services provided. CTCOG staff reviewed the veteran and health & human services provider list for completeness to make sure that it included key providers from throughout the region.

Table 4. Veteran and Health & Human Services Providers/Stakeholders

Provider Name	Service Type	Service Area	Description
The Arc of Bell and Milam Counties	Medical support services (no direct transportation services)	Bell County and Milam County	Organization providing resources and assistance for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Area Agency on Aging of Central Texas	Non-emergency medical support services (no direct transportation services)	Bell County, Coryell County, Hamilton County, Lampasas County, Milam County, Mills County, and San Saba County	The Agency pays transportation vendors to provide rides to clients, allocating a certain amount of funding for each person per fiscal year depending on their medical needs. The Agency has an agreement with Driving Hope of Texas.
Bell County Indigent Health Services	Non-emergency medical support services (no direct transportation services)	Bell County	This County department provides basic healthcare services through local community clinics, while also providing eligible customers with bus passes.
Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Texas	Community support services (no direct transportation services)	Lampasas, Gatesville, Copperas Cove, Nolanville, Harker Heights, Killeen, and other schools in the region	Founded in 1964 to provide activities and resources for families across Central Texas, with 25 sites in 8 different communities.
Cedar Crest Hospital	Medical support services (no direct transportation services)	Belton and Killeen	Hospital and residential treatment center for mental health and addiction with locations in Belton and Killeen.
Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS)	Veterans' health care services (no direct transportation services)	39 counties in Central Texas, including the CTCOG region: (Bell County, Coryell County, Hamilton County, Lampasas County, Milam County, Mills County, San Saba County, and Fort Hood)	Veterans' health care assistance and services with several facilities across the CTCOG area, especially in Temple and Killeen.

Provider Name	Service Type	Service Area	Description
Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOCTIL)	Medical support services (no direct transportation services)	Bell County, Coryell County, Hamilton County, Lampasas County, Milam County, Mills County, San Saba County, and Fort Hood	Promote independence for persons with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses to live and work in their communities through advocacy, information and referral, peer support, transition, and training.
Hill Country Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities Center	Medical support services (no direct transportation services)	19 counties across the Hill Country, including Llano County and Mason County	Operates 14 mental health clinics and 8 developmental disability centers across the Hill Country.
United Way of Central Texas	Support services through 2-1-1 (no direct transportation services)	UWCT – Bell County 2-1-1 – Bell County, Coryell County, Hamilton County, Lampasas County, Milam County, Mills County, and San Saba County	2-1-1 dispatch services operate through United Way of Central Texas, providing referrals and information about transportation resources for clients.
Workforce Solutions of Central Texas	Employment and training services (no direct transportation services)	Bell County, Coryell County, Hamilton County, Lampasas County, Milam County, Mills County, San Saba County, and Fort Hood	Organization providing employment and training services to eligible customers and career center services to the public in Central Texas. Bus vouchers and monthly passes are provided for eligible customers.

THE ARC OF BELL AND MILAM COUNTIES

The Arc is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and serving them and their families. The Arc provides support in a wide range of initiatives, including education, employment, health, criminal justice, and transportation. The Arc has local chapters throughout the country, including chapters in Bell and Milam counties in the CTCOG area.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF CENTRAL TEXAS

Area Agency on Aging of Central Texas assists individuals 60 years of age and older and their families with facilitating daily needs such as financial support services, housing and care options, healthcare, and demand-response trips for non-emergency medical needs. The Agency partners with Driving Hope of Texas and Integrity Care to provide transportation for its customers, most of which reside in Bell County. The Agency's local office is in Belton, but services are available for all residents in the CTCOG area.

BELL COUNTY INDIGENT HEALTH SERVICES

Bell County Indigent Health Services is a division of Bell County that focuses on providing basic healthcare services for lower income individuals. This division offers a Navigator service, assisting customers in finding primary physicians, applying for social security, and with other non-emergency medical services. Funded by the Bell County Commissioner's Court, transportation funding has been

limited since 2019 due to the Court's categorizing of transportation as an optional service. Customers can access these services in person at the department's Killeen office or via phone.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF CENTRAL TEXAS

Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Texas was founded in 1964 to enable all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. The Club has grown to over 25 sites in 8 communities across Central Texas, including Killeen, Harker Heights, Nolanville, Copperas Cove, Gatesville, Lampasas, Manor, and several other schools in the CTCOG area.

CEDAR CREST HOSPITAL

Cedar Crest Hospital & Residential Treatment Center is the leading provider of mental health and addiction concerns in children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and military personnel. Cedar Crest Hospital is in Belton, and they also operate an outpatient clinic and counseling center in Killeen. The facilities feature walking trails, picnic areas, an outdoor swimming pool, a full-size gym, and state-of-the-art exercise equipment.

CENTRAL TEXAS VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (CTVHCS)

The Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS) is an expansive network of services tailored to veterans across 39 counties in Central Texas. CTVHCS operates several different facilities and services in the CTCOG area, including one medical center (Temple), one community living center (Temple), one domiciliary (Temple), one Veterans' Affairs (VA) Clinic Annex (Temple), one VA/Department of Defense Joint Sleep Center (Killeen), and one Vet Center (Harker Heights/Killeen). The CTVHCS campus in Temple is approximately 25 miles from Fort Hood. CTVHCS serves a veteran population of more than 252,000, covering over 35,000 square miles and 11 congressional districts in its 39 counties.

HEART OF CENTRAL TEXAS INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (HOCTIL)

The Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOCTIL) is a local non-profit organization that provides tools and training to persons of all ages and income with disabilities and chronic illnesses so that they may live independently. HOCTIL services are designed to promote abilities, expand options, and develop self-management skills and responsibilities. Programs include connecting to peers, assistive technology, transitioning to independent living, advocacy, information, and resources. HOCTIL has an office in Belton, as well as Waco.

HILL COUNTRY MENTAL HEALTH & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES CENTER (MHDD)

Hill Country Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities Center (MHDD) provides services for adult and child behavioral health, intellectual development disability, substance abuse, crisis care, and justice involved services. Hill Country MHDD Centers serve 19 counties in the greater Hill Country region, including Llano and Mason counties in the CTCOG area. Hill Country MHDD operates 14 mental health clinics and 8 developmental disability centers throughout the 19-county area.

UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL TEXAS

United Way of Central Texas is a locally governed non-profit organization that focuses on improving lives in Central Texas through providing support services for education, financial stability, health, and basic needs. United Way of Central Texas' Community Hub, in partnership with Baylor Scott & White, is a cooperative program that identifies and connects patients to resources relating to housing, food, transportation, utilities, child/eldercare, employment, family/community support, birth certificates, home modifications, and other needs.

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS OF CENTRAL TEXAS

Workforce Solutions of Central Texas helps customers to find and keep employment in the CTCOG area. This mission has become increasingly important since the impact of COVID-19 in early 2020. Workforce Solutions provides customers with multi-ride vouchers from Hill Country Transit District, as well as daily gas cards. The organization also helps seniors gain access to non-emergency medical care, connects families and their children to available childcare services, and connects persons with disabilities to available paratransit services.

NEEDS AND GAPS ANALYSIS SUMMARY

This section synthesizes the breadth of information that has been collected as part of the 2021 5-Year RCTP into identified transportation-related needs, opportunities, barriers, and recommendations for the Central Texas region. Each recommendation is an achievable action that stakeholders in the region can feasibly implement and pursue over the next five years and beyond. A narrative description of each of the seven needs is described below, and **Table 5** includes a comprehensive table of needs and recommendations.

Needs Statement #1: Regional transportation and health & human service providers need increased funding to provide certain services desired by citizens.

Throughout the outreach process, several stakeholders expressed the need for additional funding to fully provide the services their customers desire. For example, The HOP has been forced to remove routes and reduce other services due to a reduction in funding. Approximately 11% of revenues for The HOP come from local contributions, which is significantly lower than peer agencies, according to the Texas Transit Performance Dashboard's 2019 data. Most of The HOP's funding comes from Federal funds, and other sources include TxDOT funds, farebox revenues, service contracts, and local contributions, in order of largest to smallest contributions. Additionally, Bell County Indigent Services, a stakeholder supporting those in poverty in the region, cannot subsidize any transportation-related resources for its clients due to the County categorizing transportation as a non-essential service. Regional transportation and health & human services providers can better serve their customers in part by improving relationships with representatives from municipalities, county agencies, and state departments and demonstrating specific needs for services.

Some opportunities to address this need include reassessing the current funding sources for the HOP, as well as other regional transportation services, to identify new funding strategies. Pursuing state and national grant programs, especially non-traditional grants, will be one avenue for additional funds. Some barriers to securing additional funding include the requirements that must be met for some grants, and the fact that some funding sources are often tied to population formulas rather than demonstrated need. Securing funding for transportation projects that are not automobile-focused can be difficult, so creative solutions will need to be explored to fill that need.

- **Recommendations:**
 - **1a. Pursue new grants, including Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM), Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI), and others.**
 - **1b. Improve communication of service needs and successes with local leaders and elected officials throughout the region.**
 - **1c. Secure increased local contributions for needs that elected officials and citizens resonate with most.**

Needs Statement #2: New fixed routes and other improved services are needed in the region to connect citizens to their destinations.

Once additional funding is secured, The HOP and other transportation providers can invest those funds into new and improved services throughout the region. This is a need that was clearly identified through the public outreach effort. According to the on-board survey respondents, individuals expressed interest in more fixed route options (53.2%), earlier or later trips each day along fixed routes (43.2%), and more frequent bus service along fixed routes (40.5%). Most respondents also expressed interest in The HOP providing weekend transit services. Existing transportation providers (as identified in Task #1) include The HOP, airport shuttle companies, Amtrak, Greyhound, Arrow Trailways of Texas, and Driving Hope of Texas. Although The HOP is the primary transportation provider in the RCTP study area, these other providers, as well as health & human service providers that maintain vehicle fleets, can assist in filling these needs.

Some opportunities to address this need include adding weekend services, increasing trip frequencies on fixed route services, providing longer daily hours of services to accommodate non-traditional work schedules, and expanding services to key destinations in the region, such as the North Temple industrial area and grocery stores in western Bell County. Some barriers to fulfilling this need include a current lack of sustained operational and capital funding for additional services and infrastructure, as well as fluctuating ridership and demand due to COVID-19.

- **Recommendations:**

- **2a. Adjust or add service to connect residents to grocery stores in order to address food desert issues in north Killeen and east Temple.**
- **2b. Provide new service to the Industrial Blvd./Wendland Rd. industrial corridor in northern Temple.**
- **2c. Provide improved public transportation service to other key destinations including regional medical facilities and universities.**
- **2d. Improve fixed-route bus frequencies to 30 minutes on higher ridership routes.**
- **2e. Expand service hours to accommodate non-traditional work schedules.**
- **2f. Provide weekend services on higher ridership routes, such as Route 4 and Route 53.**
- **2g. Deploy a flex-route service at targeted times of day and geographic areas to accommodate the first- and last-mile transportation needs of seniors and students.**

Needs Statement #3: The region needs to explore and utilize creative partnerships where possible to fill funding and service gaps.

Transportation and health & human service providers in the region have explored the potential for unique partnerships in the past, however there are opportunities to better utilize strategic collaborations to deliver improved services to residents across Central Texas. Through the existing inventory exploration, there appeared to be opportunities for various agencies and organizations around the region to share their resources (vehicle fleets, facilities, etc.) amongst each other to better provide transportation services as a region. Stakeholder interviews also illuminated several instances of major employers in the region approaching The HOP about cost-sharing for new services, however these partnerships have not yet come to fruition.

One creative solution is the ENDEAVRide self-driving pilot program in Nolanville, Texas. ENDEAVRide offers unlimited taxi service for Nolanville residents and free virtual doctor visits at their curb. Volunteer driver programs also currently exist through Central Texas Veterans Health Care Services, Driving Hope of Texas, and some local faith-based organizations. Workforce Solutions of Central Texas and the CTCOG Area Agency on Aging partner with providers to connect clients to transportation services with monthly transit vouchers or other resources.

Some opportunities to fill this need include existing interest in potential partnerships between transportation providers and major employers or destinations, such as the north Temple industrial area, H-E-B, hospitals, and universities. Larger employers could also help subsidize vanpools or bulk transit vouchers for their employees, encouraging them to use alternative modes for their commute. Lastly, as mentioned before, agencies and organizations with underutilized vehicle fleets can share their infrastructure with other providers to fill service gaps. Some barriers to these creative partnerships include the need for incentives to get larger private businesses involved, as well as the logistical challenges and liabilities that come with sharing vehicle fleets and infrastructure. Additionally, the volunteer driver programs are currently experiencing a shortage of drivers in the region, in part due to COVID-19.

- **Recommendations:**

- **3a. Explore public-private partnerships (P3s) and employer-subsidized transportation opportunities by engaging with representatives from the northern Temple industrial area, hospitals, universities, Fort Hood, grocery stores, and other partners for which documented service gaps exist.**
- **3b. Partner with faith-based groups, medical organizations, universities, cities, and other entities to share resources, especially underutilized buses or vans.**
- **3c. Support and publicize volunteer driving programs and seek to increase the quantity and geographic diversity of these services.**

Needs Statement #4: More regular regional coordination is needed to provide improved transportation services.

Regional transportation and health & human services must be well-coordinated to adapt and provide the best service possible throughout the region. Regular, intentional coordination amongst stakeholders and providers should be the norm for Central Texas. Stakeholders shared that the Transportation Summit held in 2019 between The HOP, United Way of Central Texas, Baylor Scott & White, and others to candidly discuss transportation issues in the region and identify solutions was a successful event. This created momentum amongst the stakeholders to work together on addressing service-based challenges until COVID-19 hit the following spring. Transit user interviews also revealed a lack of direct input from transit users to the decision makers in the region. Current opportunities for coordination through recurring meetings include the Central Texas Regional Transportation Advisory Group (CTRTAG), KTMPO and CTCOG Board meetings, and The HOP Advisory Group meetings and Board meetings.

One major opportunity for additional coordination is the establishment of an annual transportation summit with providers, stakeholders, and users. Additionally, regional transportation updates can be better communicated to cities, counties, chambers of commerce, and other entities in the region. CTRTAG could also increase their footprint by extending invitations to new members, including more transit users. Some barriers to improved regional coordination efforts include coordinating schedules to involve as many stakeholders as possible, accommodating those who cannot regularly attend activities, and maintaining accountability for action items assigned to participants.

- **Recommendations:**

- **4a. Establish regular communications between cities, counties, chambers of commerce, CTCOG, KTMPO, The HOP, Fort Hood, and other regional stakeholders.**
- **4b. Hold an annual Transportation Summit (similar to the one held in 2019) to identify issues and find solutions related to regional transportation needs.**
- **4c. Continue to provide virtual engagement options for coordination meetings to accommodate those unable to attend in person.**
- **4d. Provide newsletter summaries of coordination activities via email or other media to share outcomes with those who were not present.**
- **4e. Regularly seek input as part of advisory group meetings and surveys from public transportation service users (and non-users), especially those who represent priority populations.**
- **4f. Create a Transit Advisory Committee to improve communication and coordination between local entities and the Hill Country Transit District Board.**
- **4g. Deploy a Smart Phone application for The HOP that allows for digital fare payment, real-time location and schedule information, scheduling of demand response service, and integration with other transit and micromobility services.**

Needs Statement #5: Priority populations experience greater barriers to transportation access in the region and need accommodations to overcome those barriers.

Priority populations include individuals with disabilities, individuals aged 65 or older, individuals age 17 or younger, minority populations (non-White), individuals seeking employment, Veterans, low-income households, limited-English proficiency households, and individuals dependent on public transportation. Historically, priority populations and the communities they live in tend to be overlooked and underserved. The need for improved services for these populations has been revealed through the 2-1-1 HELPLINE dispatch data and on-board surveys, as discussed in previous sections. Existing organizations that focus part or all their efforts on serving priority populations includes the Killeen Elderly Transportation Program, United Way of Central Texas, Area Agency on Aging, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, Bell County Indigent Services, and several other health & human services providers.

One common opportunity for this need that was expressed throughout the outreach process was the increasing availability of ADA paratransit services. The HOP's paratransit service area was reduced to three-quarters of a mile from fixed routes in 2018, and individuals who live beyond that service area have found it more difficult to coordinate transportation services since. Other opportunities include pursuing specific grants for priority populations, improving fleet vehicles to be more ADA friendly, and partnering with medical facilities to reduce the frequency of missed appointments due to lack of transportation. Barriers to addressing this need include the recently reduced paratransit services, public meetings being held at locations without transit access, and higher costs of operating these transportation services.

- **Recommendations:**

- **5a. Identify and pursue grant opportunities, such as ITS4US, that fund programs for transportation needs of priority populations.**
- **5b. Reestablish universal ADA Paratransit services in the region.**
- **5c. Retrofit or procure new fleet vehicles to be more ADA-friendly.**
- **5d. Coordinate with cities to plan safe and accessible facilities that support multi-modal connections to transit stops.**
- **5e. Encourage regional entities to hold community meetings at transit-accessible locations and encourage attendees to use transit.**
- **5f. Explore programs to make transit more affordable for low-income households.**

Needs Statement #6: Citizens living in rural areas need better access to the regional transportation system.

Outside of the major cities of the region (Killeen, Temple, Belton, and Copperas Cove), transportation and health & human service options quickly become more difficult to access, especially without a vehicle. This need was reaffirmed through the provider and user outreach process, where stakeholders noted that rural access to transportation services is an ongoing issue. Rural and less developed suburban areas of the region also have fewer options for nearby goods and services. For example, west Temple currently has a food desert, or area lacking access to fresh food and groceries. Existing resources to serve rural populations includes The HOP's rural transit services, Medicaid services, and rideshare providers, to name a few.

Some opportunities to improve services to rural areas include exploring creative solutions and partnerships with other providers and jurisdictions, conducting public outreach to identify underserved areas, and eventually providing enough services to remove the need for rural residents to drive their car into town for every trip. Some barriers to addressing this need include limited funding for more expensive rural services, scheduling efficient routes and services across a large area, and counties failing to categorize transportation as essential services.

- **Recommendations:**
 - **6a. Explore new or improved transportation services between major towns and counties, especially between Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties.**
 - **6b. Provide access to regional transportation services, such as airports, Greyhound stations, and Amtrak stations.**

Needs Statement #7: Citizens in the region need improved awareness of their transportation options and resources.

People live busy lives with set routines. In terms of transportation, these routines often involve getting in a car and driving to one's typical destination and back. Many people are simply not aware of what transportation alternatives are available to them. Others are aware of HCTD's services but do not realize how those services integrate with other public transportation services to allow for complete trips throughout the region. If given the option, some individuals may choose to commute or travel differently than they currently do, especially if it costs less and is less stressful. Currently, people can learn about transportation services in Central Texas through their city or county website, The HOP's website, or the 2-1-1 HELPLINE, to name a few resources. The HOP is also developing a new mobile app (to be completed late 2021) that will allow users to purchase bus fares, track buses in real time, and plan their trips.

Some opportunities to educate the public about available public transportation services include additional advertising through various transportation providers, health & human service providers, and private businesses; promoting trip planning resources such as Google Maps; and cities encouraging their citizens to utilize alternative modes and providing information about available resources. Public education campaigns should emphasize that citizens can use multiple services to complete a trip, and that resources such as the 2-1-1 HELPLINE exist to help citizens identify available public transportation resources. Some barriers to getting this information to residents include getting materials to elderly or low-income individuals that may have limited access to technology, engaging households with limited English proficiency, and a lack of interest in changing the daily habits of residents.

- **Recommendations:**

- **7a. Target advertisements and information specific to priority populations, including bilingual materials.**
- **7b. Increase activity on website, apps, and radio.**
- **7c. Encourage partner cities to educate their citizens on available transportation options and how they integrate with one another.**
- **7d. Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, non-emergency medical transportation, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms.**

Table 5. Summary Table of Regional Transportation Needs and Recommendations

#	Need Statement	Opportunities	Existing Resources	Barriers	Recommendations	Additional Justification
1	Regional transportation and health & human service providers need increased funding to provide certain services desired by citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reassessment of funding sources for The HOP and other regional transportation services• Pursuit of state and national grant programs to increase system funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal funds, TxDOT funds, Farebox revenues, service contracts, and Local contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Securing funding is difficult, and funds are often tied to specific requirements or uses• Funding sources are often assigned based upon population formulas rather than demonstrated need	<p>1a. Pursue new grants, such as Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM), Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI), and others</p> <p>1b. Improve coordination with local leaders and elected officials</p> <p>1c. Secure increased local contributions for needs that elected officials and citizens resonate with most</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approx. 11% of The HOP revenues come from local contributions, much lower than the industry norm, according to the Texas Transit Performance Dashboard.• Overall revenues have also decreased over the past 5 years, according to the Texas Transit Performance Dashboard.• Interviews and surveys by The HOP staff have revealed a lack of funding to be the main source of service reductions.
2	New fixed routes and other improved services are needed in the region to connect citizens to their destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved weekend service and increased frequency of fixed route service• Longer daily hours of service to accommodate different work schedules• Expansion of service to key destinations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northern Temple industrial area• Western Bell County (food desert areas)• Hospitals and other medical facilities in Temple and Killeen• Universities• Fort Hood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The HOP (Rural on-demand, Urban fixed-route, ADA paratransit, NEMT)• Airport shuttles (ANS Shuttle Service, Killeen Express Shuttle, Lonestar Express Shuttle)• Amtrak/Greyhound• Arrow Trailways of Texas• Driving Hope of Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of sustained funding to support the operation of new routes and services• Lack of funding to purchase new capital infrastructure• Fluctuations in ridership and demand	<p>2a. Adjust or add service to connect residents to grocery stores in order to address food desert issues in north Killeen and east Temple</p> <p>2b. Provide new service to Industrial Blvd./Wendland Rd. industrial corridor in northern Temple</p> <p>2c. Provide improved public transportation service to other key destinations including regional medical facilities and universities</p> <p>2d. Improve fixed-route bus frequencies to 30 minutes on higher ridership routes</p> <p>2e. Expand service hours to accommodate non-traditional work schedules</p> <p>2f. Provide weekend services on higher ridership routes, such as Route 4 and Route 53</p> <p>2g. Deploy a flex-route service at targeted times of day and geographic areas to accommodate the first- and last-mile transportation needs of seniors and students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to on-board surveys, individuals expressed interest in more route options (53.2%), earlier/later trips (43.2%), and more frequent trips (40.5%).• Most respondents also expressed interest in weekend transit service.

#	Need Statement	Opportunities	Existing Resources	Barriers	Recommendations	Additional Justification
3	The region needs to explore and utilize creative partnerships where possible to fill funding and service gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding or operational partnerships with large employers, hospitals, universities, nonprofits, and other activity centers Utilizing vehicle fleets and infrastructure of other organizations Employer-subsidized vanpools or bulk transit vouchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer driver programs through CTVHCS, Driving Hope, and some local churches ENDEAVRide pilot program Workforce Solutions of Central Texas transit vouchers and monthly passes for eligible customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships may require incentives for private entities to secure their continued support Currently not enough volunteer drivers to meet demand for services Sharing vehicle fleets and infrastructure requires formal agreements and can be hampered by logistical challenges 	<p>3a. Explore public-private partnerships (P3s) and employer-subsidized transportation opportunities by engaging with representatives from the northern Temple industrial area, hospitals, universities, Fort Hood, grocery stores, and other partners for which documented service gaps exist</p> <p>3b. Partner with faith-based groups, medical organizations, universities, cities, and other entities to share resources, especially underutilized buses or vans</p> <p>3c. Support and publicize volunteer driving programs, and seek to increase the quantity and geographic diversity of these services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation and health & human service providers can provide their fleet for other agencies to meet transportation demands, such as the airport shuttle services, non-emergency medical transportation providers, faith-based organizations, Veterans' agencies, and city/county agencies. During stakeholder interviews, The HOP mentioned private employers have approached them in the past to share costs for new transportation services.
4	More regular regional coordination is needed to provide improved transportation services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisiting the format of the 2019 annual transportation summit and hosting a similar summit within the next year Increasing the footprint of the CTRTAG by extending invitations to new members Regular communication of regional transportation updates with member cities, counties, chambers of commerce, and other entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTRTAG and other committee meetings KTMPO and CTCOG Board meetings The HOP Advisory Group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating schedules to involve as many stakeholders as possible Involving those who cannot regularly attend activities Accountability for action items and deliverables 	<p>4a. Establish regular communications between cities, counties, chambers of commerce, CTCOG, KTMPO, The HOP, Fort Hood, and other regional stakeholders</p> <p>4b. Hold an annual Transportation Summit, similar to 2019, to identify issues and find solutions related to regional transportation needs</p> <p>4c. Continue to provide virtual engagement options for coordination meetings to accommodate those unable to attend in person</p> <p>4d. Provide newsletter summaries of coordination activities via email or other media to share outcomes with those who were not present</p> <p>4e. Regularly seek input as part of advisory group meetings and surveys from public transportation service users (and non-users), especially those in priority populations</p> <p>4f. Create a Transit Advisory Committee to improve communication and coordination between local entities and the Hill Country Transit District Board</p> <p>4g. Deploy a Smart Phone application for The HOP that allows for digital fare payment, real-time location and schedule information, scheduling of demand response service, and integration with other transit and micromobility services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder interviews revealed that the 2019 Transportation Summit encouraged transportation and health & human services providers to coordinate and evaluate transportation in the region. This effort created energy and momentum around improving transportation before the impact of COVID-19.

#	Need Statement	Opportunities	Existing Resources	Barriers	Recommendations	Additional Justification
5	Priority populations experience greater barriers to transportation access in the region and need accommodations to overcome those barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing availability of ADA paratransit services Availability of grants and funding programs specifically targeting transportation services for priority populations Improving agency vehicle fleets to be more ADA friendly Leveraging existing community partnerships to address gaps and find solutions Increasing accessibility to providers of special services (community offices, indigent services offices, grocery stores, etc.) Improved service reliability to reduce missed appointments due to lack of transportation access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Human Service Providers, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Way of Central Texas / 2-1-1 Helpline Baylor Scott & White Boys & Girls Clubs Driving Hope of Texas Medlift ModivCare Arc of Bell/Milam Counties Area Agency on Aging Indigent Health Services Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS) Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center (HOCTIL) Hill Country Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities Center Workforce Solutions of Central Texas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently reduced ADA Paratransit services Public meetings at locations without public transit access Cost of transit and other transportation services for low-income households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5a. Identify and pursue grant opportunities, such as ITS4US, that support transportation needs of priority populations 5b. Reestablish universal ADA Paratransit services in the region 5c. Retrofit or procure new fleet vehicles to be more ADA-friendly 5d. Coordinate with cities to plan safe and accessible facilities that support multi-modal connections to transit stops 5e. Encourage regional entities to hold community meetings at transit-accessible locations and encourage attendees to use transit 5f. Explore programs to make transit more affordable for low-income households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to 2-1-1 Dispatch Data, the region has a high need for paratransit services, especially in Temple. According to the on-board surveys, approx. 58% of customers in east Temple have individuals in their households living with a disability. According to 2-1-1 Dispatch Data, bus fare was the highest unmet need for indigent individuals.
6	Citizens living in rural areas need better access to the regional transportation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public outreach to identify underserved areas Removing the need for rural residents to drive into town for every trip Exploring creative transportation solutions for non-urban service areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HOP's rural transit services Private and nonprofit ridesharing services Services available to Medicaid program members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited funding for more expensive rural services Some counties consider transportation to be an optional resource, limiting available funding Identifying most efficient way to meet demand and schedule services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6a. Explore new/improved transportation services between major towns and counties, especially between Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties 6b. Provide access to regional transportation services, such as airport shuttle companies, Greyhound stations, and Amtrak stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider interviews and surveys noted that lack of transportation access for rural citizens is an increasing issue. According to the on-board surveys, 100% of respondents in southern Killeen and western rural Bell County are dependent on public transportation.
7	Citizens in the region need improved awareness of their transportation options and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising transportation services and options through service providers and other public and private partners Educating the public on the benefits of public transportation Providing the public with tools and resources that support their own trip planning efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HOP mobile app and website 2-1-1 Helpline Existing agency advertising budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging senior and low-income individuals can be challenging, especially when engagement is technology-dependent Limited English proficiency can reduce the reach of messaging unless materials are prepared in multiple languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7a. Target ads and info to priority populations, including bi-lingual materials 7b. Increase activity on website, apps, and radio 7c. Encourage partner cities to educate their citizens on available transportation options and how they integrate with one another 7d. Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, NEMT, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HOP is currently developing a mobile app that will feature real-time tracking, ridership data, and electronic fare. Almost 20% of survey respondents indicated that additional information/communication would increase their likelihood of using transit.

4. PLANNING FOR COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

The CTRTAG includes participation from stakeholders representing transit and transportation service providers, health and human service providers, workforce solution providers, and others. As a result, the CTCOG 2022 RCTP includes recommendations that integrate the services of these providers. Many of these providers carry out their efforts through federal, state, and local funding programs. These programs, along with how they are incorporated into the plan, are described in greater detail in this section.

INTEGRATION OF FTA-FUNDED PROGRAMS

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides several formula-based grants to support transit and public transportation needs. States and regions receive funding based upon demographic information such as population. Three of the main formula-based funding sources for public transportation programs are known as Section 5307, Section 5310, and Section 5311.

URBANIZED AREA FORMULA PROGRAM (SECTION 5307)

Section 5307 is a formula grant program specifically for urbanized areas. As the FTA's primary transit assistance program, the program provides capital, operating, and planning assistance for mass transportation. The program funds are apportioned to urbanized areas using a formula that is based on population, population density, and other factors associated with transit service and ridership.

Section 5307 urbanized area formula funds are available for transit improvements for urbanized areas with population over 50,000. For urbanized areas over 200,000 in population, funds flow directly to the designated recipient. For areas that are under 200,000, the funds are apportioned to the government of each state for distribution.

As the local transit service provider, HCTD receives Section 5307 funding in support of fixed route and ADA paratransit operations in the urbanized areas of Bell County. Since there are no other urbanized areas with at least 50,000 in population within the CTCOG region outside of Bell County, no other parts of the region receive Section 5307 funding.

Beyond sustaining its existing operations, HCTD could also use future Section 5307 funding allocations to support several high-priority recommendations made in this RCTP, including:

- **2a. Adjust or add service to connect residents to grocery stores in order to address food desert issues in north Killeen and east Temple**
- **2b. Provide new service to Industrial Blvd./Wendland Rd. industrial corridor in northern Temple**

ENHANCED MOBILITY OF SENIORS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES (SECTION 5310)

Established in 1975 as a discretionary capital assistance program, Section 5310 provides funding to states for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups to meet the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities. These funds are allocated based on the state's population for each of

these two groups. The program works to improve mobility for seniors and disabled individuals by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding mobility options.

Some of the traditional project examples include buses and vans, wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securement devices. Projects may also involve transit-related information technology systems, including scheduling/routing/one-call systems and mobility management programs. Funds may also support the acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement.

As the local transit service provider, HCTD receives Section 5310 funding in support of ADA paratransit operations in the urbanized areas of Bell County. Outside of Bell County, TxDOT distributes allocated Section 5310 funding to local agencies and non-profit organizations. HCTD and other agencies in the rural portion of the CTCOG region could use future Section 5310 allocations to support several recommendations made in this RCTP, including:

- **2g. Deploy a flex-route service at targeted times of day and geographic areas to accommodate the first- and last-mile transportation needs of seniors and students**
- **4g. Deploy a Smart Phone application for The HOP that allows for digital fare payment, real-time location and schedule information, scheduling of demand response service, and integration with other transit and micromobility services**
- **5b. Reestablish universal ADA Paratransit services in the region**
- **5c. Retrofit or procure new fleet vehicles to be more ADA-friendly**

NON-URBANIZED AREA FORMULA PROGRAM (SECTION 5311)

The formula grants Non-Urbanized Areas is a formula-based rural program that provides funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in rural areas with population of less than 50,000. Section 5311 enhances access within non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, employment training, public services, and recreation. The program is also intended to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in non-urbanized areas. As part of the Section 5311 program, federal law also requires a set aside at least 15 percent of FTA rural program funds to support intercity bus service, unless it certifies that intercity bus mobility needs have been met.

HCTD's rural transit service receives Section 5311 funds that are used for administering and operating its rural demand-response transportation services. Beyond sustaining its existing operations, HCTD could also use future Section 5311 funding allocations to support several recommendations made in this RCTP, including:

- **6a. Explore new/improved transportation services between major towns and counties, especially between Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties**
- **6b. Provide access to regional transportation services, such as airport shuttle companies, Greyhound stations, and Amtrak stations**

INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

Several key health and human services programs exist in the CTCOG region that interface with public transportation services. The largest public department in the region providing these programs is the Bell County Indigent Health Services Department (BCIHSD). The department provides basic healthcare services to Bell County residents who cannot afford them on their own. BCIHSD assists its clients with transportation needs related to accessing medical or healthcare appointments, both through a phone line designed to share resources with clients and through the distribution of HCTD bus passes and tokens. In the past, BCIHSD has worked with customers to set up door-to-door transit services for appointments, but that program is currently on pause due to a lapse in funding.

The CTCOG Area Agency on Aging provides similar transportation services to elderly residents (mostly in Bell County). In the past, the agency had partnered with the HCTD to provide demand-response service for elderly clients. More recently, however, the agency has instead partnered with Driving Hope, a local nonprofit, to provide this service. Separately, the City of Killeen operates an Elderly Transportation Program for its residents aged 62 or older who have lower annual income and limited transportation access. The City of Killeen program accepts clients based upon demonstrated need as funding allows, and clients can choose whether they want to receive subsidized fixed-route HCTD service, subsidized HCTD paratransit service, or limited and subsidized curb-to-curb taxi service.

Baylor, Scott & White Health (BS&W) is the largest medical provider in the CTCOG region. Their network of facilities includes several hospitals and many other medical clinics and centers in Bell County. BS&W partners with a private third-party service to connect patients with non-emergency transportation services through an online platform. Trips provided through this service are limited by distance to 25 miles each way in urban areas and 75 miles each way in rural areas. BS&W also seeks to direct transit-dependent patients to HCTD resources as well, but there are often challenges with getting patients to appointments via transit due to existing hours of operation that may not coincide with medical appointment times.

A recent pilot program has provided those without access to personal transportation with a way to receive in-driveway telemedicine visits from medical professionals. The ENDEAVRide program currently operates one autonomous vehicle that also can provide taxi services as needed. The pilot is currently operating only in the City of Nolanville, but operators have shown interest in expanding the program if funding and interested partners are identified. HCTD has donated a bus to support program expansion.

The existing health and human service programs in the region can lend their support to several recommendations made in this RCTP, including:

- **3b. Partner with faith-based groups, medical organizations, universities, cities, and other entities to share resources, especially underutilized buses or vans**
- **5a. Identify and pursue grant opportunities, such as ITS4US, that support transportation needs of priority populations**

INTEGRATION OF WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Workforce Solutions of Central Texas is the local workforce program administrator in the CTCOG region. The agency uses a portion of its funding to provide its clients with transportation resources, including multi-ride, weekly, and monthly HCTD transit passes for those who use transit. For those with access to a personal vehicle, Workforce Solutions provides daily gas cards worth \$10 each. Workforce Solutions also works with local chambers and commerce and other representatives from local business to identify opportunities for partnership in support of public transportation options for those trying to get to work.

Workforce Solutions of Central Texas can lend its support to several recommendations made in this RCTP, including:

- **2b. Provide new service to Industrial Blvd./Wendland Rd. industrial corridor in northern Temple**
- **2e. Expand service hours to accommodate non-traditional work schedules**
- **5f. Explore programs to make transit more affordable for low-income households**

INTEGRATION OF OTHER INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS

Several other initiatives and programs could either provide support to transportation initiatives or provide services that benefit from partnerships with other existing public transportation services in the CTCOG region. United Way of Central Texas has an important role in community support within the region that often contributes to transportation service availability. Other opportunities related to public-private partnerships and non-typical grant programs have been explored in the past or are currently being considered and could potentially be utilized to expand the availability of transportation services.

INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVES

United Way of Central Texas (UWCT) is one of the CTCOG region's key community resource coordinating agencies, focused on needs related to education, financial stability, health, and basic needs (including transportation). UWCT awards grants to local organizations who provide these services. In the past five years, UWCT has spearheaded two separate initiatives that have impacted public transportation services in the region.

In October 2017, UWCT assumed management responsibilities of the CTCOG region's 2-1-1 HELPLINE. UWCT's HELPLINE fielded more than 91,000 calls in 2020 alone, and hundreds of these calls were from citizens seeking transportation assistance. HELPLINE staff refer callers to available transportation resources based on information that helps to determine which programs a caller would be eligible for. UWCT also maintains this data to assist with planning and identification of unmet needs.

In 2019, UWCT coordinated a regional transportation summit that involved stakeholders from throughout the CTCOG region, including several CTRTAG members. The summit focused on identifying solutions to improve accessibility to healthcare resources through enhanced transportation options, including HCTD route modifications and partnerships that would allow for resource scheduling of available vans and

paratransit vehicles for the purpose of medical transportation. Several action items came from the summit that were paused as the coronavirus pandemic began.

UWCT can lend its support to several recommendations made in this RCTP, including:

- **3b. Partner with faith-based groups, medical organizations, universities, cities, and other entities to share resources, especially underutilized buses or vans**
- **4b. Hold an annual Transportation Summit, similar to the one in 2019, to identify issues and find solutions related to regional transportation needs**

INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

Over the past five years, several representatives from private businesses in the CTCOG region have approached transportation service providers seeking to partner with the aim of providing improved transportation services to connect the region's citizens to employment destinations and basic services such as grocery stores.

Potential partnerships have included BS&W seeking ways to support non-emergency medical transportation services for patients who did not have access to Medicaid, UWCT and industrial park tenants seeking opportunities to provide transportation services to the industrial park in North Temple, and grocery store representatives seeking to provide transportation services to connect residents to other stores in locations where grocery stores had recently closed. These potential partnerships could support several recommendations made in this RCTP, including:

- **2a. Adjust or add service to connect residents to grocery stores in order to address food desert issues in north Killeen and east Temple**
- **2b. Provide new service to Industrial Blvd./Wendland Rd. industrial corridor in northern Temple**
- **3a. Explore public-private partnerships (P3s) and employer-subsidized transportation opportunities by engaging with representatives from the northern Temple industrial area, hospitals, universities, Fort Hood, grocery stores, and other partners for which documented service gaps exist**

INTEGRATION OF COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS

Competitive grant programs represent opportunities for transportation service providers and their other regional partners to secure funding to pilot new programs or to expand existing pilots into fully fledged regional services. Competitive grant opportunities that could support recommendations included in this RCTP are included in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Potential Competitive Grant Programs

Grant Program	Program Description	Relevant RCTP Recommendations	Website Link
TxDOT Flex Funding	Each year, TxDOT flexes \$7.5M in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program funds to finance replacement of transit vehicles. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to rural and small urban transit programs.	<p>5c. Retrofit or procure new fleet vehicles to be more ADA-friendly</p> <p>6a. Explore new/improved transportation services between major towns and counties, especially between Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties</p>	No Link Available
TxDOT Rural Transit Asset Replacement and Modernization Program	Rural public transportation grants program helps people in rural areas access healthcare, shopping, education, employment, and recreation. Funds may be used for capital, planning, operation, and administrative costs. Minimum local matches range from 10% to 50% depending on the project.	<p>2c. Provide improved public transportation service to other key destinations including regional medical facilities and universities</p> <p>6a. Explore new/improved transportation services between major towns and counties, especially between Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties</p>	https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/public-transportation/local-assistance/rural-public-transportation.html
TxDOT Transportation Development Credits	Federal transportation funding tool through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) used to meet federal funding matching requirements. TxDOT authorizes up to \$15M in credits to provide the required local match for federal transit programs that require it.	1c. Secure increased local contributions for needs that elected officials and citizens resonate with most	https://www.txdot.gov/governance/programs/local-financing/transportation-development-credits.html
ITS4US	\$40M multimodal effort to identify ways to provide more efficient, affordable, and accessible transportation options for underserved communities.	5a. Identify and pursue grant opportunities, such as ITS4US, that support transportation needs of priority populations	https://www.its.dot.gov/its4us/index.htm
Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment (ATCMTD)	Established by the FAST Act to make competitive grants for the development of model deployment sites for large scale installation and operation of advanced transportation technologies to improve safety, efficiency, system performance, and infrastructure return on investment. At least 50% local match required. \$60M awarded in FY 2020.	7d. Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, NEMT, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms	https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/factsheets/advtranscongmqmtfs.cfm
Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI)	Program from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that examines how new service models, technologies, and other solutions can be brought together to support complete trips for all. Three focus areas: Mobility on demand, Transit automation, and Mobility payment integration. \$20.3M awarded in FY 2019.	<p>1a. Pursue new grants, such as Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM), Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI), and others</p> <p>7d. Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, NEMT, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms</p>	https://www.transit.dot.gov/IMI/

Grant Program	Program Description	Relevant RCTP Recommendations	Website Link
Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) Pilot Program	Established by the FAST Act to improve the coordination of non-emergency medical transportation for persons who are transportation disadvantaged through capital projects. At least 20% local match required. Grantees have 18 months to complete the project. \$3.5M awarded in FY2020.	<p>1a. Pursue new grants, such as Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM), Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI), and others</p> <p>2c. Provide improved public transportation service to other key destinations including regional medical facilities and universities</p>	https://www.transit.dot.gov/research-innovation/fy2020-pilot-program-innovative-coordinated-access-and-mobility-annual-report
Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program	FTA program making federal resources available to states and direct recipients to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities. At least 20% local match required, with some exceptions. \$464M awarded in 2020.	<p>5c. Retrofit or procure new fleet vehicles to be more ADA-friendly</p> <p>5d. Coordinate with cities to plan safe and accessible facilities that support multi-modal connections to transit stops</p>	https://www.transit.dot.gov/bus-program
Mobility for All Pilot Program Grants	FTA program to improve mobility and access to public transportation for older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals of low income. At least 20% local match required. \$3.5M awarded in 2020.	<p>5b. Reestablish universal ADA Paratransit services in the region</p> <p>5f. Explore programs to make transit more affordable for low-income households</p>	https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/grant-programs/mobility-all-pilot-program-grants
Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration Program – Section 5312	FTA program studying how to creatively leverage a range of mobility options from bike- and car-sharing systems to demand-responsive bus services. The program integrates payment systems as part of a suite of concepts, technologies, and solutions with the potential to advance FTA's vision of complete trips for all. At least 20% local match required. \$8M awarded in 2016.	7d. Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, NEMT, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms	https://www.transit.dot.gov/research-innovation/mobility-demand-mod-sandbox-program
Public Transportation Innovation – Section 5312	FTA program providing funding to develop innovative products and services assisting transit agencies in better meeting the needs of their customers.	7d. Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, NEMT, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms	https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/public-transportation-innovation-5312

5. INTEGRATED PLANNING PROCESSES

The recommendations in this RCTP update reflect other planning activities in the region. Recently completed and ongoing transportation planning processes in the CTCOG region are described in this section, and where applicable outcomes from these other planning processes are discussed in the context of the RCTP.

EXISTING REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESSES

KTMPO METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), also known as [Mobility 2045](#), is the 25-year, long-range transportation planning document that outlines the state of current transportation, projects future needs, and offers projects and other methods for keeping the people and freight in the KTMPO region moving efficiently. The MTP encompasses all aspects of transportation planning as well as transportation projects within the KTMPO region. Each local entity submits projects within their jurisdiction for possible inclusion into the MTP, and the Transportation Planning Policy Board (TPPB) prioritizes these projects based on the needs of the region. This plan is required to be updated every five years. The current version was approved and made effective in May 2019.

KTMPO TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The [Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP) is the four-year, short-term transportation planning document that includes a detailed listing of projects reasonably expected to begin construction within a four-year period. The TIP is updated every two years. Projects included in the TIP must also be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and are chosen based on regional priority and available funding. The current TIP covers FY21-FY24 and was approved in May 2020. KTMPO last amended the current TIP in January 2021.

KTMPO REGIONAL MULTIMODAL PLAN (RMP)

The [Regional Multimodal Plan](#) (RMP) is KTMPO's planning document that seeks to incorporate and integrate multiple modes of travel into the current transportation system that has historically been automobile dominant. The plan looks at how to better adapt to the changing modes of transportation and shift the focus from primarily automobiles to all modes of travel. KTMPO adopted the Regional Multimodal Plan in September 2018. The RMP evaluates potential projects across the KTMPO region for every mode of transportation, including automobiles, bicycles, buses, trucks, rail, and pedestrians.

TEXAS VETERANS NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2020

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) sponsored the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) to conduct its legislature-mandated [Needs Assessment](#) (sec 434.017 of the Texas Government Code) of Texas veterans and their families. This work was conducted to help establish the resource allocation priorities for TVC's Funds for Veteran Assistance (FVA) grants by identifying the priority needs and barriers for the Texas veterans and their families. In the Central Texas region (TVC FVA Region 6), the top grant needs include employment support, clinical counseling, short-term financial assistance, integrative therapies, and home modification assistance. Healthcare support was also identified as a high need in the region, as

well as the state. Regarding service barriers for veterans and their families, knowing where to get help and transportation assistance were both identified as significant obstacles. The Texas Veterans Needs Assessment was completed in March 2021.

TXDOT WACO DISTRICT PLANS

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) [Waco District](#) has three counties in the RCTP study area: Bell, Coryell, and Hamilton counties. Interstate 35, the most significant roadway in the region, runs through Bell County and is under TxDOT jurisdiction. TxDOT has identified Interstate 35 as a priority corridor throughout the Waco District. TxDOT is planning to reconstruct and widen Interstate 35 in Bell County from Interstate 14 to State Loop 363. Currently, TxDOT is widening US Highway 190 in eastern Bell County. State Highway 190 will also be reconstructed and widened in Temple in the future.

TXDOT BROWNWOOD DISTRICT PLANS

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) [Brownwood District](#) has three counties in the RCTP study area: Lampasas, Mills, and San Saba counties. Major TxDOT highways in these counties include US Highway 183, US Highway 84, and State Highway 16. TxDOT has identified US Highway 183 and US Highway 84 as priority corridors throughout the Brownwood District. TxDOT is planning to widen US Highway 281 throughout Lampasas County.

HILL COUNTRY TRANSIT DISTRICT GOVERNANCE STUDY

HCTD conducted a governance study that was published in 2021. The study evaluated the transit system's existing rural and urban system operations and identified potential scenarios for reorganization of these services. The study included recommendations relating to the participation of representatives from cities and counties across the HCTD service area in the governance, funding, and management activities of the transit agency.

RCTP INTEGRATION WITH OTHER EXISTING PLANNING PROCESSES

The input generated and recommendations made in this RCTP are reflected in other planning documents that have been prepared by stakeholders in the CTCOG region. The KTMPO MTP includes a large section on public transportation investments and recommendations, and as the MTP is updated every four to five years the then-current version of the RCTP is reviewed to identify relevant input and project recommendations to include in the MTP. For example, the 2045 KTMPO MTP includes an eight-page section focused on the 2017 RCTP update within the plan's public transportation chapter. Similarly, the KTMPO TIP includes a section that provides a four-year outlook of projected expenditures and funding sources for HCTD capital, planning, operating, and other costs. Funding in each of these areas can be used to support activities identified as recommendations in the RCTP.

KTMPO's 2018 RMP establishes a functional classification for infrastructure that supports the region's public transportation network, specifying different classes of amenities for bus stations and stops as well as different roadway treatments that could be used to support traffic operations and user safety in the vicinity of bus stop locations. Several RCTP recommendations include the identification of potential new fixed transit routes. If these routes are implemented, the KTMPO RMP should be used to identify

necessary investments in bus stop and roadway design features that support the operation of buses on roadways that would be used on newly created routes.

The Texas Veterans Needs Assessment published in 2020 identified lack of access to transportation as a key barrier to services for veterans in Central Texas. Most often, lack of transportation was described as a barrier within the context of veterans accessing medical appointments and other healthcare services. As a result, while no recommendations in this RCTP specifically mention veterans, many of the recommendations and needs in this RCTP related to healthcare service access conform with the takeaways from the Texas Veterans Needs Assessment.

Existing TxDOT Waco District and Brownwood District road construction plans are developed in consultation with stakeholders from throughout the region. For Waco District projects that occur in Bell County or Coryell County, and for Brownwood District projects that occur in Lampasas County, TxDOT staff should consult with HCTD planners to determine whether construction projects are occurring on roads that currently serve or are planned to begin serving fixed route transit. In places where planned road construction will occur along fixed transit routes, bus route functional classification elements from the KTMPO 2018 RMP should be considered and incorporated into the project design.

Several HCTD governance study recommendations were also included as recommendations in the RCTP update following discussions with stakeholders. RCTP needs statements and recommendations related to local agency funding of public transportation improvements and extending CTRTAG outreach activities to key city and county staff also appear in the HCTD governance study document.

6. VISION, MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The RCTP Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives serve as guiding statements that help to shape regional transportation policies, priorities, and investments. These items are crafted by the CTRTAG and were updated to what is listed below during a virtual workshop held in October 2021.

RCTP VISION AND MISSION

A vision statement describes the desired future position of a group or region. The CTRTAG Vision Statement for transportation services in the CTCOG region is as follows:

The Central Texas area will have a safe, equitable, dependable, cost-effective, and a seamless transportation network that provides mobility, an improved quality of life, and a stimulus for economic development.

A mission statement describes an organization's purpose and approaches that the organization takes to achieve that purpose. The CTRTAG Mission Statement for transportation services in the CTCOG region is as follows:

The CTRTAG remains committed to the mobility of all Central Texans as we coordinate transportation services, identify resources, develop partnerships, and seek new sources of funding. We will intentionally address unmet transportation needs and break down barriers to transportation resources.

RCTP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals are general statements that explain desired outcomes or what a system should achieve, whereas objectives define specific strategies or steps for implementation that would allow for the attainment of each goal. The CTRTAG goals and objectives for transportation services in the CTCOG region are listed below in **Table 7**.

Table 7. CTRTAG Goals and Objectives

RCTP Goal	Related RCTP Objectives
Monitor and maximize service and operation efficiencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Measure and report both federal and agency-specific transportation performance metrics.- Allocate available resources to remedy instances where performance metrics are not meeting agency goals.
Provide a seamless public transportation experience for all users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop transportation systems and support programs that will provide all users with the opportunity to make a complete trip using public transportation.- Analyze the equity of transportation services regularly across geographical regions and across the public transportation user base to identify disparities in service and attempt to correct them.
Strengthen partnerships among stakeholders and with the Central Texans we serve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Foster partnerships among regional stakeholders that make it easier to implement a seamless public transportation experience for Central Texans.- Seek input from Central Texans and maintain representation from all priority groups during the development of regional public transportation services.
Embrace opportunities for innovation within public transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Acknowledge opportunities for innovation that would allow the region to improve its public transportation services or use its resources more efficiently.- Invest in innovative programs that make sense in Central Texas, and market them to increase the likelihood of securing public support and additional resources for expanded deployment.

7. SUSTAINED PLANNING AND RCTP IMPLEMENTATION

The RCTP includes 32 recommendations that each address one of the seven regional public transportation need statements introduced in this document. This section provides implementation guidance for each recommendation as well as an approach for encouraging continued stakeholder engagement from agency representatives and citizens as the plan is implemented.

ONGOING RCTP IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

Table 8 organizes implementation guidance for the 32 recommendations made as part of this RCTP update. The following guidance is provided for each recommendation as part of the implementation table:

Need Statement: Recommendations are grouped and numbered by relevant RCTP need statement.

Priority Level: A priority level of high, medium, or low is given for each recommendation. Priority level was determined based upon feedback from stakeholders and is reflective of the magnitudes of various needs and priorities identified through public engagement conducted as part of this plan update.

Timeframe: An implementation timeframe of short-term, mid-term, or long-term is given for each recommendation. Short-term recommendations are currently ready for implementation, while long-term recommendations likely would not be implemented until the end of the five-year planning horizon. Mid-term recommendations potentially could be implemented within the next couple of years.

Implementation Lead: The implementation lead is responsible for navigating the implementation of a given recommendation based on the guidance provided in the RCTP update and in other planning documents published by agencies throughout the CTCOG service area.

Partners: Partner agencies can assist the implementation lead with the implementation of each recommendation, potentially through fiscal support, staffing support, or policy support. Partner agencies should be included in implementation discussions to determine each partner's role.




Level of Cost: For each recommendation, a semi-quantitative anticipated level of cost is provided. Recommendations with one dollar sign will likely require no new dedicated funding. Recommendations with two dollar signs will likely require a one-time funding investment, potentially with a small ongoing investment. Recommendations with three dollar signs will likely require a sustained funding increase.

Level of Staff Effort: For each recommendation, a semi-quantitative anticipated level of staff effort is provided. Recommendations at the low-effort end of the spectrum will likely require changes to existing staff processes but will not require additional staff effort. Recommendations in the middle of the spectrum will likely require existing staff to take on additional responsibilities. Recommendations at the high-effort end of the spectrum may require the hiring of additional staff or significant reorganization of staff roles.




Measures of Progress: Measures of progress are quantifiable data that implementation leads can review to track impacts of specific recommendations as they are implemented.







First Steps: Suggested tangible initial actions for each recommendation are provided for implementation leads as they begin to implement each recommendation from the RCTP.

Table 8. RCTP Recommendations Implementation Table





Need Statement	#	Recommendation	Priority Level	Timeframe	Implementation Lead	Partners	Cost Level	Staff Effort	Measures of Progress	First Steps
1. Regional transportation and health & human service providers need increased funding to provide certain services desired by citizens.	1a	Pursue new grants, such as Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM), Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI), and others	Medium Priority	Short-Term	CTRTAG Director	Dependent upon projects, but likely would include HCTD, CTCOG, KTMPO, and City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of grant applications submitted - Value of grants awarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop brief conceptual outlines of projects that could be funded, including project partners, needed capital, anticipated impacts, and any committed match funding. - Set up account on grants.gov website and enable notifications for target grants to receive information about when applications open.
	1b	Improve coordination with local leaders and elected officials	High Priority	Short-Term	CTRTAG Director	CTRTAG members, City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instances of local leader participation in public transportation coordination meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify relevant points of contact from each city and county in the CTCOG region that should receive public transportation information and requests. - Modify CTRTAG meeting agendas to feature a rotating Local Agency Update item that allows for staff from a different city or county each meeting to provide an update on public transportation needs and efforts.
	1c	Secure increased local contributions for needs that elected officials and citizens resonate with most	Medium Priority	Mid-Term	CTRTAG Director	HCTD, KTMPO, City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total local funding contribution for services - Quantity of programs or services funded in part through local contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange meetings with elected officials from throughout the CTCOG region to identify each official's needs and priorities related to public transportation. - When meeting with local officials to discuss funding agreements for new or expanded services, prepare to discuss multiple service level options to increase the likelihood that compromise can be achieved on funding.

Need Statement	#	Recommendation	Priority Level	Timeframe	Implementation Lead	Partners	Cost Level	Staff Effort	Measures of Progress	First Steps
2. New fixed routes and other improved services are needed in the region to connect citizens to their destinations.	2a	Adjust or add service to connect residents to grocery stores in order to address food desert issues in north Killeen and east Temple	High Priority	Short-Term	HCTD Leadership	Killeen City Staff, Temple City Staff, Grocery Store Representatives, Bell County Indigent Health Services	\$\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data - Boarding and alighting data at grocery stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define food desert boundaries in both cities to create target locations for potential fixed-route service. - Revive conversations with private business representatives to explore appetite for funding transit services.
	2b	Provide new service to Industrial Blvd./Wendland Rd. industrial corridor in northern Temple	High Priority	Mid-Term	HCTD Leadership	Temple City Staff, Temple Chamber of Commerce, Industry Representatives, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas	\$\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data - Boarding and alighting data at industrial corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with business owners in northern Temple industrial corridor to better understand home-to-work trip origin data and travel mode preference data for current and prospective employees. - Based on user feedback, develop public transportation scenarios that include fixed-route transit service, carpool and vanpool, and private shuttle service program options.
	2c	Provide improved public transportation service to other key destinations including regional medical facilities and universities	Low Priority	Long-Term	CTR TAG Director	Baylor Scott & White Health, Other Medical Service Providers, Local Universities, HCTD	\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data - Boarding and alighting data at key destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with medical facility and university representatives to identify existing transit service shortcomings, such as unserved portions of large campuses or instances of transit-dependent users needing extended service hours. - Adjust service to reflect the needs of large transit trip generators. Implement service improvements as funding allows.
	2d	Improve fixed-route bus frequencies to 30 minutes on higher ridership routes	Medium Priority	Mid-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare operating and capital cost estimates and identify potential interested funding partners for each route for which improved service is considered. - Implement service improvements as funding allows.
	2e	Expand service hours to accommodate non-traditional work schedules	Medium Priority	Long-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data - Fixed-route missed trips and percent on-time trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare operating and capital cost estimates and identify potential interested funding partners for each route for which extended-hours service is considered. - Implement service improvements as funding allows.
	2f	Provide weekend services on higher ridership routes, such as Route 4 and Route 53	Low Priority	Long-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare operating and capital cost estimates and identify potential interested funding partners for each route for which weekend service is considered. - Implement service improvements as funding allows.
	2g	Deploy a flex-route service at targeted times of day and geographic areas to accommodate the first- and last-mile transportation needs of seniors and students	High Priority	Short-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare operating and capital cost estimates and identify potential funding partners for each flex-route zone. - Implement service improvements as funding allows.

Need Statement	#	Recommendation	Priority Level	Timeframe	Implementation Lead	Partners	Cost Level	Staff Effort	Measures of Progress	First Steps
3. The region needs to explore and utilize creative partnerships where possible to fill funding and service gaps.	3a	Explore public-private partnerships (P3s) and employer-subsidized transportation opportunities by engaging with representatives from the northern Temple industrial area, hospitals, universities, Fort Hood, grocery stores, and other partners for which documented service gaps exist	High Priority	Short-Term	HCTD Leadership	Local chambers of commerce, local business representatives, private sector transportation providers	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of representatives engaged - Number of P3 partnerships established - Total funding contribution from private entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a review of desired public transportation service improvements to identify those which would directly or indirectly benefit regional partners, such as business owners or large campus institutions, including Fort Hood. - Meet with regional partners to gauge interest in their supporting public transportation investments. Identify opportunities for direct funding, other resource sharing, or strategic partnership on grant applications.
	3b	Partner with faith-based groups, medical organizations, universities, cities, and other entities to share resources, especially underutilized buses or vans	Medium Priority	Short-Term	CTR TAG Director	HCTD, Local shuttle companies, CTVHCS, Local faith-based groups, City and County staff, University staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of agencies represented in resource inventory - Frequency of resource inventory maintenance - Number of calls to dispatch for resource coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build upon and maintain the resource inventory conducted as part of this RCTP update by creating and actively maintaining a database of agencies, vehicle fleets, asset management information, and use schedules. This activity could be conducted by a newly formed subcommittee of the CTR TAG. - Similar to the existing 2-1-1 services dispatch, create a centralized dispatching service for resource scheduling among the region's agencies and non-profits. United Way of Central Texas could incorporate this capability as part of its existing role as 2-1-1 dispatcher.
	3c	Support and publicize volunteer driving programs, and seek to increase the quantity and geographic diversity of these services	Low Priority	Long-Term	CTCOG Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff, local faith-based groups, local business representatives	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of volunteer driving programs seeded - Combined geographic coverage of programs - Number of trips provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach out to city and county contacts from throughout the CTCOG Region to assemble a list and map of existing community-based volunteer driving programs. - Conduct outreach with volunteer coordinators to learn about how existing programs are managed and how to seed new programs in locations that do not currently have them.

Need Statement	#	Recommendation	Priority Level	Timeframe	Implementation Lead	Partners	Cost Level	Staff Effort	Measures of Progress	First Steps
4. More regular regional coordination is needed to provide improved transportation services.	4a	Establish regular communications between cities, counties, chambers of commerce, CTCOG, KTMPO, The HOP, Fort Hood, and other regional stakeholders	High Priority	Short-Term	CTR TAG Director	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of partners engaged - Frequency of partner communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify relevant points of contact from each city, county, and other regional stakeholder in the CTCOG region that should receive public transportation information and requests. - Send summaries of CTR TAG meetings and other regional public transportation coordination meetings to regional points of contact.
	4b	Hold an annual Transportation Summit, similar to the one in 2019, to identify issues and find solutions related to regional transportation needs	High Priority	Mid-Term	United Way of Central Texas Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual summit attendance - Number of stakeholders represented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a recurring time of year and meeting space that can accommodate desired Transportation Summit activities. Develop a comprehensive list of stakeholders to invite (see Recommendation 4a). - As part of each summit, dedicate time to review progress on regional priorities related to public transportation, including those in this table.
	4c	Continue to provide virtual engagement options for coordination meetings to accommodate those unable to attend in person	High Priority	Short-Term	CTCOG Staff	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percent of meetings held with virtual engagement option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain a virtual video-in or call-in option for all public transportation coordination meetings.
	4d	Provide newsletter summaries of coordination activities via email or other media to share outcomes with those who were not present	Medium Priority	Short-Term	CTCOG Staff	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of partners engaged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a brief summary of outcomes following each CTR TAG meeting and a newsletter-style summary following each annual transportation summit. Send summaries to all invited stakeholders as well as local elected officials. Provide a point of contact for those with questions about included information.
	4e	Regularly seek input as part of advisory group meetings and surveys from public transportation service users (and non-users), especially those in priority populations	Medium Priority	Short-Term	CTR TAG Director	CTR TAG members, City and County staff, CTCOG, KTMPO, HCTD	\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of outreach events regionwide - Number of unique citizen engagements, regionwide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review findings and recommendations from KTMPO public engagement methods study once it is completed. Modify or enhance public outreach methods based on relevant study findings and recommendations.
	4f	Create a Transit Advisory Committee to improve communication and coordination between local entities and the Hill Country Transit District Board	High Priority	Short-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff, CTCOG, KTMPO	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance records of committee meetings - Frequency of committee meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a Transit Advisory Committee (or committees, if separate ones are created for urban and rural HOP services) that includes representation from city and county staff from throughout The HOP's service area.
	4g	Deploy a Smart Phone application for The HOP that allows for digital fare payment, real-time location and schedule information, scheduling of demand response service, and integration with other transit and micromobility services	High Priority	Short-Term	HCTD Leadership	Private sector transportation providers	\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of application downloads - Number of instances of app use across different functions (such as fare payment or scheduling of services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalize the agreement under development with The HOP's selected smart phone application provider. - Deploy the smart phone application and roll out a publicity campaign to encourage transit users to download and use the app when using The HOP services.

Need Statement	#	Recommendation	Priority Level	Timeframe	Implementation Lead	Partners	Cost Level	Staff Effort	Measures of Progress	First Steps
5. Priority populations experience greater barriers to transportation access in the region and need accommodations to overcome those barriers.	5a	Identify and pursue grant opportunities, such as ITS4US, that support transportation needs of priority populations	Medium Priority	Mid-Term	CTR TAG Director	Dependent upon projects, but likely would include HCTD, CTCOG, KTMPO, and City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of grant applications submitted - Value of grants awarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop brief conceptual outlines of projects that could be funded, including project partners, needed capital, anticipated impacts, and any committed match funding - Set up account on grants.gov website and enable notifications for target grants to receive information about when applications open
	5b	Reestablish universal ADA Paratransit services in the region	High Priority	Long-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTCOG, KTMPO, City and County staff	\$\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ADA Paratransit ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data - ADA trip duration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare operating and capital cost estimates and identify potential interested funding partners (including cities and counties) for restoring ADA paratransit services. - Reestablish service as funding allows.
	5c	Retrofit or procure new fleet vehicles to be more ADA-friendly	Low Priority	Long-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff	\$\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percent of vehicle fleet that is ADA compliant, by agency and by region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As part of developing the regional transportation resource database (see Recommendation 3b), note ADA-accessibility status of each vehicle in inventory. Identify non-accessible vehicles and replacement dates scheduled for each vehicle. From this data, build a regional asset replacement schedule that includes annual estimated expenditures for fleet replacement. - Use database and asset replacement schedule information to support grant applications for TxDOT Flex Funding and FTA Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program.
	5d	Coordinate with cities to plan safe and accessible facilities that support multi-modal connections to transit stops	High Priority	Short-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTCOG, KTMPO, City and County staff	\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percent of fixed route transit stops that are ADA compliant - Percent of fixed route transit stops with amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct or update a safety and accessibility assessment of all HCTD fixed-route transit stops. Develop a list of low-scoring transit stop locations. - Meet with city and regional staff to identify existing or potential last-mile and micromobility programs that could interface with transit services.
	5e	Encourage regional entities to hold community meetings at transit-accessible locations and encourage attendees to use transit	Low Priority	Short-Term	CTCOG Leadership	KTMPO, HCTD, City and County staff	\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percent of community meetings held in transit-accessible settings (including location and time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review HCTD fixed-route service to identify public meeting places and other community spaces in Bell County communities that are served by existing transit. - Share list of places and spaces, as well as transit service operating hours, with agency contacts that are responsible for coordinating public outreach.
	5f	Explore programs to make transit more affordable for low-income households	Medium Priority	Mid-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, HCTD, Bell County Indigent Health Services	\$\$		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridership feedback data from low-income households - Quantity of subsidized low-income fares issued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a financial impact analysis of providing full-fare transit subsidies for several different income thresholds. Present findings to regional boards to gauge political feasibility of fare subsidies.

Need Statement	#	Recommendation	Priority Level	Timeframe	Implementation Lead	Partners	Cost Level	Staff Effort	Measures of Progress	First Steps
6. Citizens living in rural areas need better access to the regional transportation system.	6a	Explore new/improved transportation services between major towns and counties, especially between Bell, Coryell, and Milam counties	Low Priority	Long-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTCOG, KTMO, City and County staff	\$\$		- Rural transit service ridership, vehicle-hours/miles, and operating expense data	- Review existing HCTD Rural District ridership data to identify general geographic patterns in intercity and interregional ridership. Prepare scenarios for establishing occasional scheduled, fixed-route intraregional service between destinations with high existing ridership. - Implement service improvements as funding allows.
	6b	Provide access to regional transportation services, such as airport shuttle companies, Greyhound stations, and Amtrak stations	High Priority	Mid-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTCOG, KTMO, City and County staff, regional transportation service providers	\$\$		- Boarding and alighting data at regional transportation hubs	- Review existing HCTD Rural District ridership data to identify general demand patterns for connecting to regional bus and train stations, and airports. Identify opportunities to augment existing services to reduce costs and other barriers for residents of rural portions of the region to connect to these services.
7. Citizens in the region need improved awareness of their transportation options and resources.	7a	Target ads and info to priority populations, including bi-lingual materials	Medium Priority	Mid-Term	CTCOG Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff, KTMO	\$\$		- Number of advertising campaigns targeting priority groups - Percent of advertising budget targeting priority groups	- Review existing advertising materials and informational handouts and create separate document versions in Spanish if not yet available. Consider creating versions in other languages as needed. - Include funding in agency budgets for advertising and outreach material that is specifically geared towards priority populations.
	7b	Increase activity on website, apps, and radio	High Priority	Mid-Term	CTCOG Leadership	CTR TAG members, City and County staff, KTMO	\$		- Number of campaigns or posts on new media platforms - Number of interactions on new media platforms	- Identify opportunities to expand agency presence on social media outlets and apps, including through both advertising and agency posts.
	7c	Encourage partner cities to educate their citizens on available transportation options and how they integrate with one another	Medium Priority	Short-Term	CTR TAG Director	City and County staff, HCTD	\$		- Number of education events hosted - Number of unique citizen engagements at events	- Work with city and county staff to prepare agency-specific handouts that detail available community transportation options. These handouts can be made available both at facilities within the community and at regional facilities that serve multiple communities, such as Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, HCTD offices, or regional transportation hubs.
	7d	Explore partnership between The HOP and other regional service providers to integrate additional transportation services (2-1-1, NEMT, etc.) into its trip planning mobile app and other platforms	High Priority	Mid-Term	HCTD Leadership	CTR TAG members, private sector transportation providers	\$\$		- Number of transportation services integrated into mobile platform, into website platforms - Number of uses of mobile platform or interactive website trip planning tools	- Analyze which public and private transportation service providers in the region have existing technological capabilities that would allow for potential app integration. Compile a list of desired integration features from this analysis. - Meet with HCTD's trip planning mobile app provider and website maintainer to identify and prioritize opportunities for integration of other services and public transportation information sources. Implement as funding and staff capacity allows.

ONGOING RCTP STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT GUIDANCE

From **Table 8**, several recommendations are specifically focused upon sustaining meaningful engagement with regional stakeholders. Some of these recommendations apply to engagement with regional transportation agency stakeholders, while others apply to engagement with users of public transportation services in the study area.

PARTNER AGENCY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The recommendations listed below outline specific actions that can be taken to sustain partner agency stakeholder engagement as the plan is implemented:

- 3a. Explore public-private partnerships (P3s) and employer-subsidized transportation opportunities by engaging with representatives from the northern Temple industrial area, hospitals, universities, Fort Hood, grocery stores, and other partners for which documented service gaps exist.
- 4a. Establish regular communications between cities, counties, chambers of commerce, CTCOG, KTMPO, The HOP, Fort Hood, and other regional stakeholders.
- 4b. Hold an annual Transportation Summit, similar to the one in 2019, to identify issues and find solutions related to regional transportation needs.
- 4c. Continue to provide virtual engagement options for coordination meetings to accommodate those unable to attend in person.
- 4d. Provide newsletter summaries of coordination activities via email or other media to share outcomes with those who were not present.

Establishing regular communication between the various transportation agency stakeholders is important to keeping partners aware of implementation activities. This regular communication already exists in the form of quarterly CTRTAG meetings, but those meetings currently do not regularly include certain stakeholders, such as chamber of commerce representatives, that could provide valuable implementation assistance. Therefore, as specific recommendations of this plan are identified for implementation, the implementation lead should reach out to the partners identified in **Table 8** above to involve those partners in implementation discussions. Public-private partnerships may help generate the momentum needed for certain recommendations, and implementation leads should consider involving private sector partners when they anticipate there could be shared interest in implementation.

CTRTAG meetings themselves should continue as well. Maintaining a virtual participation option in those and other coordination meetings will allow for a greater number of partners to remain involved, even if certain partners are unable to attend the meeting in person. Finally, sharing summaries of CTRTAG meetings and other key public transportation working group meetings with city, county, and regional agency stakeholders and public officials can provide another opportunity for partners who cannot or choose not to attend the meetings to remain aware of ongoing RCTP implementation efforts.

One consistently mentioned piece of feedback among regional public transportation agency stakeholders was the productivity and momentum generated because of the regional transportation summit held in 2019 that involved partners in transit, healthcare services, and non-profit and public human service organizations. Conducting a summit like this on an annual basis and expanding the list of invited

participants to include city and county officials as well as other private sector regional partners could regenerate and sustain planning momentum for public transportation coordination.

LOCAL CITIZEN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The recommendations listed below outline specific actions that can be taken to sustain stakeholder engagement from local citizens, including those representing priority populations, as the plan is implemented:

- 4e. Regularly seek input as part of advisory group meetings and surveys from public transportation service users (and non-users), especially those in priority populations.
- 5e. Encourage regional entities to hold community meetings at transit-accessible locations and encourage attendees to use transit.
- 7a. Target ads and info to priority populations, including bi-lingual materials.
- 7b. Increase activity on website, apps, and radio.
- 7c. Encourage partner cities to educate their citizens on available transportation options and how they integrate with one another.

CTRTAG meetings already include several transit users that represent priority populations and advise stakeholder agency representatives on feedback they gather from other users of public transportation. CTRTAG membership could be modified to include a greater number of transit users, selected so that they collectively represent a greater number of priority groups and a greater geographic diversity of inputs (both urban and rural). Beyond CTRTAG, both regional entities and cities that are seeking stakeholder feedback on public transportation initiatives should conduct stakeholder events at locations and at times of day that will allow for potential attendees to use transit to access those meetings if they need to do so.

Enhancing advertising and outreach for stakeholder engagement opportunities represents another opportunity for the region to improve its ability to sustain engagement from public transportation system users and other citizens as the RCTP is implemented. Outreach efforts can be customized so that they are more easily received by priority populations, either by publishing materials in multiple languages or across several media platforms including 'new media' platforms such as websites and social media accounts. Partnering with the cities and counties across the region so that their staff can publicize public transportation outreach opportunities can also help increase the number of citizens that are aware of surveys and events as they become available.

8. PERFORMANCE MEASURES TO EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS

As part of the RCTP update process and subsequent implementation, TxDOT requires that lead agencies for state planning regions collect, maintain, and assess data to evaluate effectiveness of the coordinated public transit / human services transportation planning effort. To comply with this requirement, lead agencies need to collaborate with stakeholders to develop and include in the coordinated plan a metric for each identified gap in transportation service or local service priority. Each metric should objectively measure the extent to which each priority was met, or gap filled. All lead agencies for Texas planning regions must also report specific data to TxDOT related to statewide performance metrics.

This section includes both locally developed and statewide performance metrics, along with how data can be collected and analyzed to support the measurement of each metric.

LOCALLY DETERMINED PERFORMANCE METRICS

Performance metrics related to each RCTP recommendation are shown in **Table 8** in the Measures of Progress column. Many of these measures of progress relate to numbers of stakeholders or citizens that are engaged in public transportation coordination and planning processes, or the frequency of these contacts with partners and engagement opportunities with the public. Other measures of progress are related to the amount of funding obtained as well as the number of projects that are supported by local funding sources or through non-traditional grant sources. These measures are typically self-explanatory in how they should be collected, tallied, and counted.

Other measures of progress are more closely related to public transportation operations, and several of them are described in greater detail below that includes guidance on how the measures are collected, analyzed, and reported. These metrics are currently collected and reported by HCTD for the services that agency operates.

VEHICLE-HOURS

Vehicle-hours measure the time from when a public transportation vehicle leaves the starting location to go into service until the time that the vehicle returns after completing service. Vehicle-hours therefore include deadhead time needed to travel to the first pick-up location and from the last drop-off location back the starting location. Vehicle-hours do not include any charter service, vehicle operator training, or vehicle maintenance testing. Vehicle-hours also do not include any scheduled time off for the operator such as a formal lunch break.

Vehicle-hours data are obtained from vehicle operator manifests. The manifest should be configured so that the operators report the actual times that they leave their starting location and the time that they return to the starting location at the end of their driving shift, referred to as “pull-in”. The manifest should also be configured so that the operators report their scheduled time off, such as lunch breaks, both the starting and ending times of their break, or any other time that they are formally not providing or available to provide transportation. Any scheduled time off, when the operator is not providing or available to provide transportation, needs to be deducted to determine total vehicle-hours.

VEHICLE-MILES

Vehicle-miles include the miles from when the public transportation vehicle leaves the starting point to go into service until the time that the vehicle pulls in after completing service – “pull-out to pull-in.” Vehicle-miles included deadhead miles needed to travel to the first pick-up location and from the last drop-off location, but do not include any miles for charter service, vehicle operator training, or vehicle maintenance testing. Vehicle-miles are the miles traveled while the vehicle is accumulating vehicle-hours.

Vehicle-miles data are obtained from vehicle operator manifests. These manifests should be configured so that the operators report odometer readings when leaving their starting point and the time that they return at the end of their driving shift. The manifest should also be configured so that any miles operated during formal lunch breaks or any other time that they are formally not providing or available to provide transportation are tracked. These miles, traveled when the operator is not providing or available to provide transportation, need to be deducted to determine total vehicle-miles.

PASSENGER TRIPS AND RIDERSHIP

Passenger trips (or ridership) is a count of the number of passengers who board the public transportation vehicle, with passengers counted each time they board a vehicle. If a passenger travels with children or a Personal Care Attendant (PCA), these other riders are also counted as passenger trips. PCAs and companions are counted as passengers if they are not employees of the transit system. Attendants and companions are included regardless of whether they are fare-paying passengers.

Passenger trip data is obtained from driver manifests, which should be designed so that vehicle operators record the number of passengers boarding at each pick-up location. Transit system employees are not counted as passengers if they are performing work duties that require traveling on the vehicles and are being paid while traveling. Examples of these work duties include observing vehicle operations and serving as an on-board aide or assistant for the passengers. However, transit system employees are counted as passengers if they are traveling for personal reasons including commuting to and from work.

OPERATING EXPENSES

Total operating expense or total operating costs include those costs needed to operate and administer transit services day to day. These costs include salaries and wages, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, insurance, taxes, and outside services such as cleaning and utilities. These are the costs used for the day-to-day expense of operating and maintaining vehicles; maintaining other equipment, buildings, and grounds; and general administration costs including marketing and customer support, finance, and procurement, planning and service development, and legal costs.

Total operating costs also include equipment lease and rental costs. Operating costs include depreciation of capital and the interest paid on loans for capital purchases. Importantly, operating costs exclude the purchase of capital such as vehicles, equipment, or facilities. The transit agency's accounting system maintains records and reports operating expenses.

PERCENT ON-TIME TRIPS

On-time trips are those trips where the public transportation vehicle arrives at the scheduled pick-up location within the agency's definition of on-time. Trip timeliness is perhaps the single most important measure of service quality from the rider's perspective and provides an assessment of the system's reliability.

For fixed-route transit services, vehicle arrivals at timepoints along each HCTD routes can be noted and compared to published route schedules. For demand-responsive services, agencies should ensure that operators record on their manifests the time that they arrive at the pick-up location (not the time the rider boards, but the time when they have pulled up to the scheduled location). They should also record the time when they arrive at the drop-off location (again, the time once they have pulled up at the destination).

TRIP LENGTH AND TRIP DURATION

Trip length is the distance measured in miles from the passenger pick-up to drop-off location. The cumulative sum of all passengers' trip lengths is referred to as passenger-miles. Measuring trip length is particularly useful for demand-responsive trips where an agency wants to track and monitor the longer distance trips that it may serve and to assess the impacts of those long trips on overall agency performance regarding other performance measures.

Similarly, trip duration is the time in minutes measured from the time when the passenger is picked up to when the passenger is dropped off. Trip duration is used most often as a metric in demand-responsive services, including rural transit services in the region. Trip duration is closely related to percent on-time trips as a metric for rural demand-responsive transit. On-time trips occur when the projected trip duration is equal or greater than the actual trip direction.

STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE METRICS

The TxDOT Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning Guidebook specifies that lead agencies for state planning regions collect, maintain, and provide data on specific statewide performance measures. These statewide performance metrics are listed in **Table 9**. Information on data sources that could be used to assess each metric are provided. CTCOG reports this data annually to TxDOT, and the CTRTAG Chair leads the effort to annually review the listed data sources to provide CTCOG with a performance update regarding each listed performance metric.

Table 9. Statewide Performance Metrics Required by TxDOT

Metric Number	Metric Title	Data Sources	Reporting Champion
3.1	Number of active, formal partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Existing memorandums of understanding- Existing programmatic contracts in place	CTRTAG Chair
3.2	Number of persons engaged in transportation planning & education activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- CTRTAG meeting attendee lists- Regional transportation planning meeting attendee lists- Attendee lists for transportation education events and activities	CTRTAG Chair

Metric Number	Metric Title	Data Sources	Reporting Champion
3.3 (a)	Number of gaps & inefficiencies identified in the coordinated plan, including those concerning priority population groups	- Completed RCTP update	CTCOG Staff
3.3 (b)	Number of recommended actions in the coordinated plan for resolving these gaps & inefficiencies	- Completed RCTP update	CTCOG Staff
3.4	Number of items in the plan that move from a planning to implementation phase	- Standing discussion items at quarterly CTRTAG meetings	CTRTAG Chair
3.5 (a)	Number of activities identified in the coordinated plan that are underway, but not completed	- Standing discussion items at quarterly CTRTAG meetings	CTRTAG Chair
3.5 (b)	Number of activities identified in the coordinated plan that are completed	- Standing discussion items at quarterly CTRTAG meetings	CTRTAG Chair