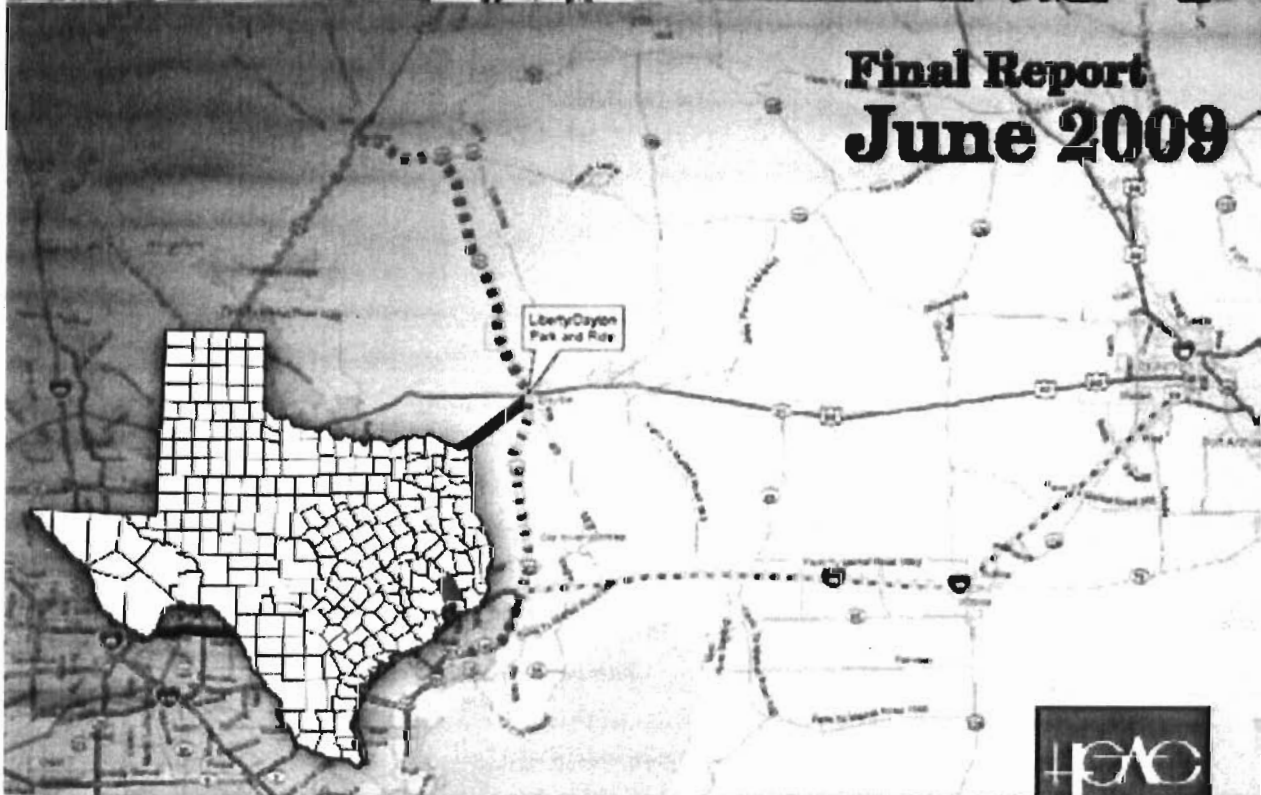


Liberty County

TRANSIT PLAN



**Final Report
June 2009**



LIBERTY COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN

Final Report

June 2009

For the Residents of Liberty County



Houston-Galveston Area Council

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DISCLAIMER

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

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

When a group of concerned citizens attended a recent public meeting about transit in Cleveland, Texas and presented a signed petition to bring a park-and-ride service to their city, it was a reminder of a notable quote by Margaret Mead; "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world". That event was significant because Cleveland is a city of about 7,000 people approximately 45 miles northeast of downtown Houston in Liberty County (the County).

During several public meetings that were held in Liberty County in the summer of 2008, more than 120 concerned citizens, business leaders and elected officials pointed out the transit related needs in their respective communities and within the County. The recommended services should also provide connections to other parts of the Houston-Galveston region for better access to jobs, educational opportunities, medical trips and social outings for those with limited mobility options today. The county judge, Honorable Phil Fitzgerald observed that at first he had doubts about the need for expanded public transportation services in Liberty County but as gasoline prices approached \$4.00 per gallon it became more apparent that many people would utilize such services. The advent of expanding employment opportunities in the Interstate-10 corridor near Baytown, Mont Belvieu and the Port Arthur and Beaumont industrial complexes *heighten the potential for successful transit operations in many directions.*

Subsequent follow-up meetings in 2009 highlighted the need to advance the recommendations for transit service expansions in the County particularly for the following items:

- Park and Ride and local transit services connecting the City of Cleveland with the METRO Park and Ride lot on U.S. 59, access to educational facilities and job opportunities in Montgomery County and transit connections to Dayton and Liberty from Cleveland.
- Replacement vehicles for the senior citizen centers in the County.
- Coordination of the various public transportation service providers in the County including but not limited to Brazos Transit, the senior centers, the Indigent Care Program, the Veterans Administration and the Tri-County MHMR program.

Liberty County is home to more than 75,685 people (2006 ACS) and approximately 7.6 % of the 23,242 households in the County do not have automobiles (Census 2000). For the most part, the people in those households have to depend on friends, relatives and the limited public transportation services that are available to meet their daily transportation needs. Unfortunately some of them have to walk long distances to get where they need to go. A lifeline of VFW volunteer drivers have transported veterans for medical services to the VA Hospital in Houston for years and the availability of that volunteer service is being diminished with the increasing fuel costs.

The development of this Liberty County Transit Plan combines available data that was prepared in prior planning efforts including the *Gulf Coast Region Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan* (H-GAC, December 2006) the Pilot Project Workshop Summary (March 2007) and the Liberty County Park and Ride Facility-Advanced Planning Report that is being updated..

To gather input on the development of the 2006 regional transit coordination plan two (2) public meetings were held in Liberty County. After the submittal of the plan to TxDOT in December of 2006, a workshop was held in Liberty County (March 2007) to further develop the recommended pilot projects for the county. Four additional meetings were convened in 2008 with elected officials and the general public to receive more input and to refine the recommendations that were developed in 2006. As a public service a local radio station (KSHN-FM- hosted by Bill Buchanan) broadcast an online interview with Judge Fitzgerald and H-GAC staff regarding the development of the Liberty County Transit Plan to further inform the public about the planning process and to seek their input.

Justification for Liberty County Public Transportation Expansion

The following summary information provides the basis for the need for expanded transit service in Liberty County:

- Public Transportation is needed by special needs populations in the county,
 - According to the 2006 Census estimates, 18.8% of the population - 5 years of age and over report a sensory, physical, mental or self-care disability
 - 10.4% of Liberty County citizens are 65 and older
 - Transportation is needed by the special needs population for: daily essential errands such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, job training, college, employment
 - 7.6 % of the households in Liberty County (1,766 households) do not have automobiles.
- The increase in gas prices is beginning to force people to look for public transportation for work and essential errands,
 - Lower income families are affected most by the rise in gas prices as they have the least amount of disposable income with which to absorb the added expenses.
- The state has created a mandate to coordinate and consolidate health and human service transportation delivery for eligible members of the County which should create efficiencies and expand capacity through economies of scale,

- This presents a unique opportunity for the county to create an integrated system addressing diverse needs.
- Liberty County is currently expending local county funds that can be used to leverage more state and federal transportation dollars.

The recommended transit projects for Liberty County based on recent public input include the following short-term (1-2 years) and mid-term (3-5 years) projects. The long term recommended project is presented here for future consideration.

SHORT TERM

(1) Continue to refine the plans to implement a county-wide general public demand response (dial-a-ride) system. The development of a public transportation coordination Action Plan is recommended to guide that implementation process. One of the primary advantages of a coordinated county-wide system would be better efficiencies through centralized dispatching and resource sharing with the Brazos Transit District, the senior citizen centers and other transportation providers in the County. Projected ridership estimates are 95,000 annual trips for the countywide demand response and local circulator routes (combined) at maturity. Current ridership levels are about 62,000 annual trips. Approximately \$800,000.00 in additional funds would be needed for the county-wide demand response services which could be implemented incrementally at lower costs.

(2) Continue plans to implement the Park and Ride Service and transfer center in Dayton with commuter service to the Houston CBD (with an interim stop in eastern Harris County in the future). Projected ridership for that service was estimated between 400 and 600 daily riders in the year 2020 based on a demand analysis that was completed in 2003. ¹That demand analysis is being revisited due to higher growth projections for Liberty and adjacent counties. Funding for the construction of that park and ride facility has been committed and land acquisition is in process.

(3) Continuation of the Liberty County/University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) /BTD transit pilot project.

(4) Implementation of Commute Solutions Program strategies including but not limited to the development of an employee shuttle to the Wal Mart Distribution Center in Cedar Bayou and the formation of new vanpools, carpools (through the NuRide program) and the development of Telework programs by working with the major employers in Liberty County. The Telework programs would be most effective if higher speed internet services were available to the residents of Liberty County.

(5) Development of a car-ownership program similar to the Ways to Work Program. That program provides low interest loans to purchase used automobiles for low-income families to get to work and to share rides with other low income persons for work trips. That program could be a cost effective transportation option for a segment of the population in Liberty County.

¹ Liberty County Park & Ride Facility Advanced Planning Report, May 2003, The Goodman Corp.

MID -TERM

(6) **A Transit Feasibility Assessment (Phase 2-Transit Plan)** of a proposed park and ride route from Dayton/Liberty along SH 146 to IH 10 then eastward to Port Arthur and Beaumont.

(7) **A Transit Feasibility Assessment (Phase 2-Transit Plan) of a Park-and-Ride service in Cleveland, Texas** with connecting routes along US 59 North, southbound to the Townsend METRO Park and Ride lot and a cross-county connecting route to Dayton/Liberty along SH 321.

LONG TERM (5 or more years)

(8) **A Transit Feasibility Assessment of an Intermodal Transfer Center near the intersection of Interstate 10 and SH 146.** Based on the apparent need to enhance transit services in the IH 10 Corridor between Houston and Beaumont/ Port Arthur it would be prudent to explore the development of transfer capabilities between the local circulator routes in Liberty and Chambers counties that could connect with express bus routes and the Intercity bus carriers operating along IH 10 today. An Intermodal Center could become a strategic location to facilitate those transfers as well as provide space for the **future development of higher speed passenger rail services** in the IH 10 corridor. There could also be important economic development opportunities that would emerge in the vicinity of such a center.

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



Participants at one of the public meetings in Liberty County
in 2006, photo courtesy of The Goodman Corp.

Chapter 2

STUDY AREA PROFILES

This chapter presents summary profiles of Liberty County in order to understand the general population features, the distribution of major concentrations of origins and destinations and the connecting corridors between them, to get a better idea of potential transit travel patterns and potential transit needs in the county. This chapter includes the following topics:

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

Geographic Profile

Liberty County is located northeast of Harris County, with the cities of Liberty (County seat), Ames, Dayton, and Cleveland constituting the larger population centers within the county. SH 146 and SH 321 provide north south access through the county, U.S. 90 provides access to the Houston CBD via I-10 East, and SH 105 provides east-west mobility.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of Liberty County reveals strong growth from 1990 to 2000 (33%), with more moderate growth between 2000 and 2006 (9.6%). With an estimated total population of 75,685 (2006), Liberty County remains relatively rural within the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning region. Population per square mile is approximately 60 persons. Approximately 14 percent of the population falls below the poverty line, 19 percent of persons have a disability, and 10.3 percent are over 65 years of age. Liberty County has a higher percentage of elderly and disabled persons than the 13-county region. This is an important factor in determining transit solutions for the county. Table 1 below shows the demographic profile within Liberty County as compared to H-GAC's 13-county profile.

Table 1 - Demographic Profile

| | Liberty County | 13-County Area |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2000 Population | 70,154 | 4,854,454 |
| 2006 Population Estimate | 75,685 | 5,318,437 |
| 2000-2006 Change | 7.9% | 9.6% |
| 1990-2000 Change | 33.1% | 24.6% |
| Persons over 65 (2006) | 10.4% | 7.9% |
| Persons under 5 (2006) | 7.1% | 8% |
| Persons with a disability | 13,516 | 801,436 |
| Persons with a disability (%) | 18.8% | 16.5% |
| Non-English Spoken at Home | 12.3% | 29% |
| Persons Hispanic or Latino | 14% | 28.6% |
| Households | 23,242 | 1,702,792 |
| Median Household Income (2004) | \$39,120 | \$41,515 |
| Persons below poverty line (2004) | 16% | 13.5% |
| Households without an automobile (2000) | 7.6% | 7.4% |
| Land Area (square miles) | 1,160 | 12,312 |
| Density (persons per square mile) | 60.5 | 394.3 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The population density map for Liberty County (see **Figure 1**) shows a few areas with more than 2,000 people per square mile (in red) specifically in the cities of Liberty and Cleveland. Those areas have sufficient population densities today to support fixed route transit services based on METRO's Service Standards for fixed route services in moderate density census tracts in the Houston urbanized area.²

In the year 2035 if the current population projections become reality, there will be an expanded area of moderate population density in those cities as well as in some other locations throughout the county as shown in Figure 1.

The current and projected employment densities in Figure 2 show concentrations of more than 500 jobs per square mile primarily in Liberty, Dayton and Cleveland.

For Census 2000, the Census Bureau classifies as "urban" all territory, population, and housing units located within an urbanized area (UA) or an urban cluster (UC). It delineates UA and UC boundaries to encompass densely settled territory, which consists of:

- core census block groups or blocks that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and

² Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas, METRO Service Standards, 1999.

- surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile

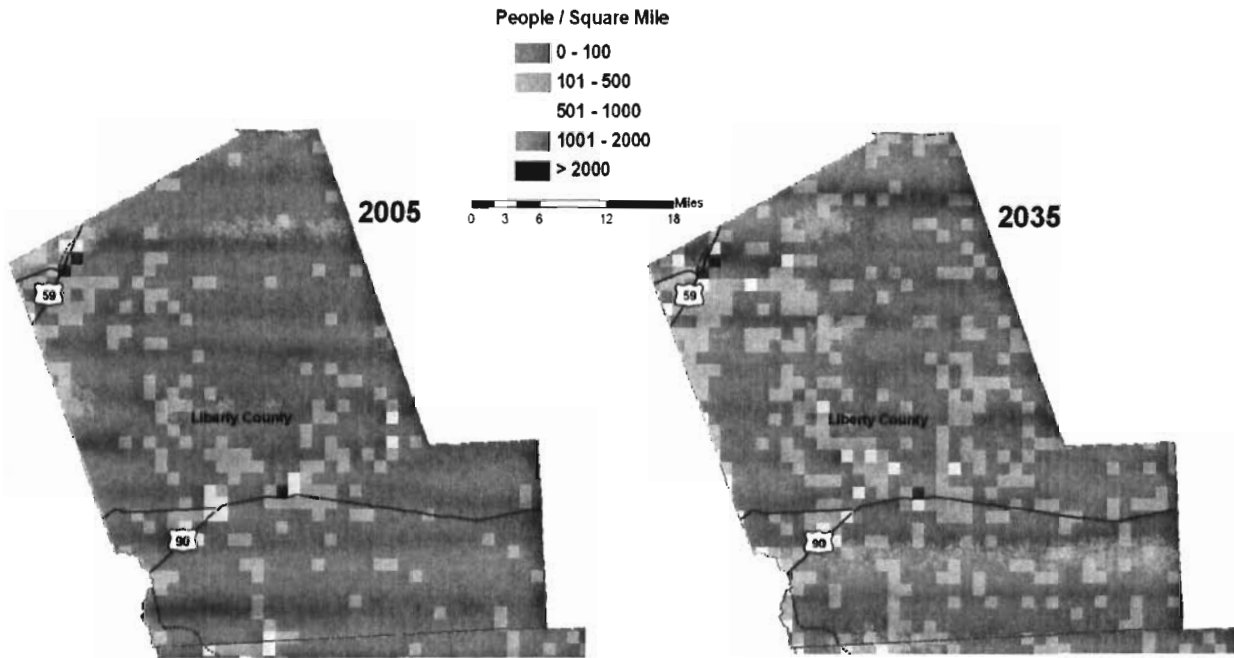
In addition, under certain conditions, less densely settled territory may be part of each UA or UC.

The Census Bureau's classification of "rural" consists of all territory, population, and housing units located outside of UAs and UCs.

In this respect Liberty County is currently divided into three urbanized areas located within the largest cities within Liberty County. The cities of Dayton, Liberty and Cleveland are the core areas within the county. **Figure 3**³ identifies the city boundaries and higher populated areas within Liberty County.

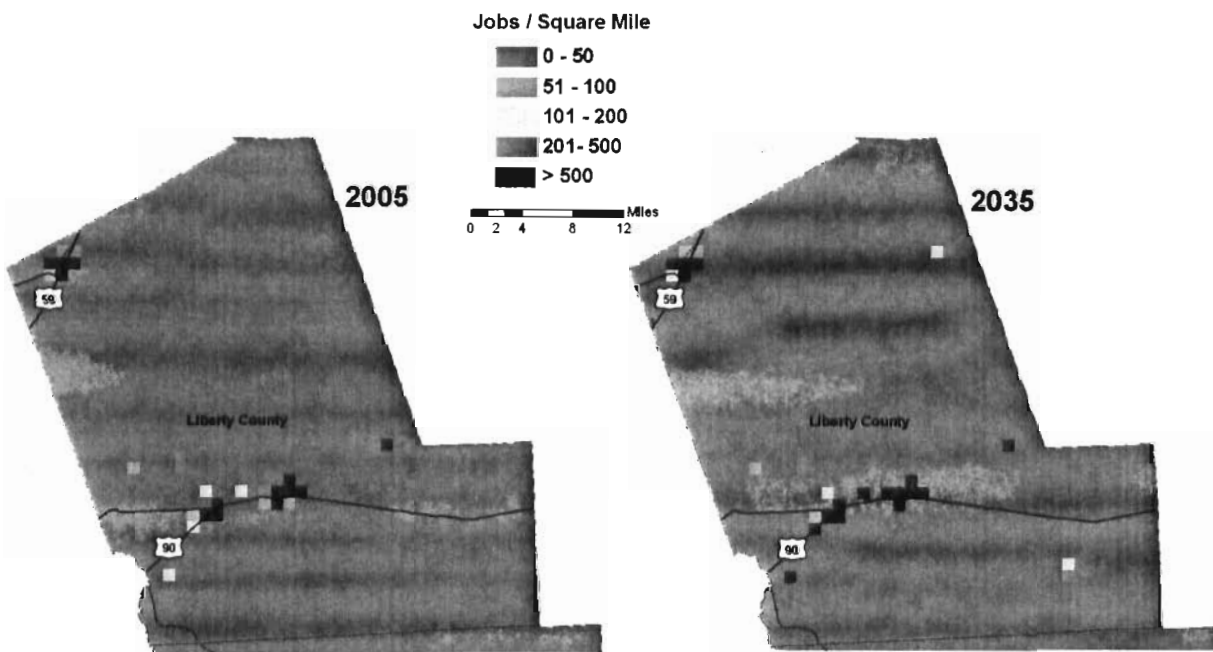
³ The Census definition of an urbanized area is greater than 50,000 population, as it relates to funding opportunities through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Texas Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

Figure 1: Population Densities in Liberty County for 2005 and 2035 (Projected)



Source: H-GAC

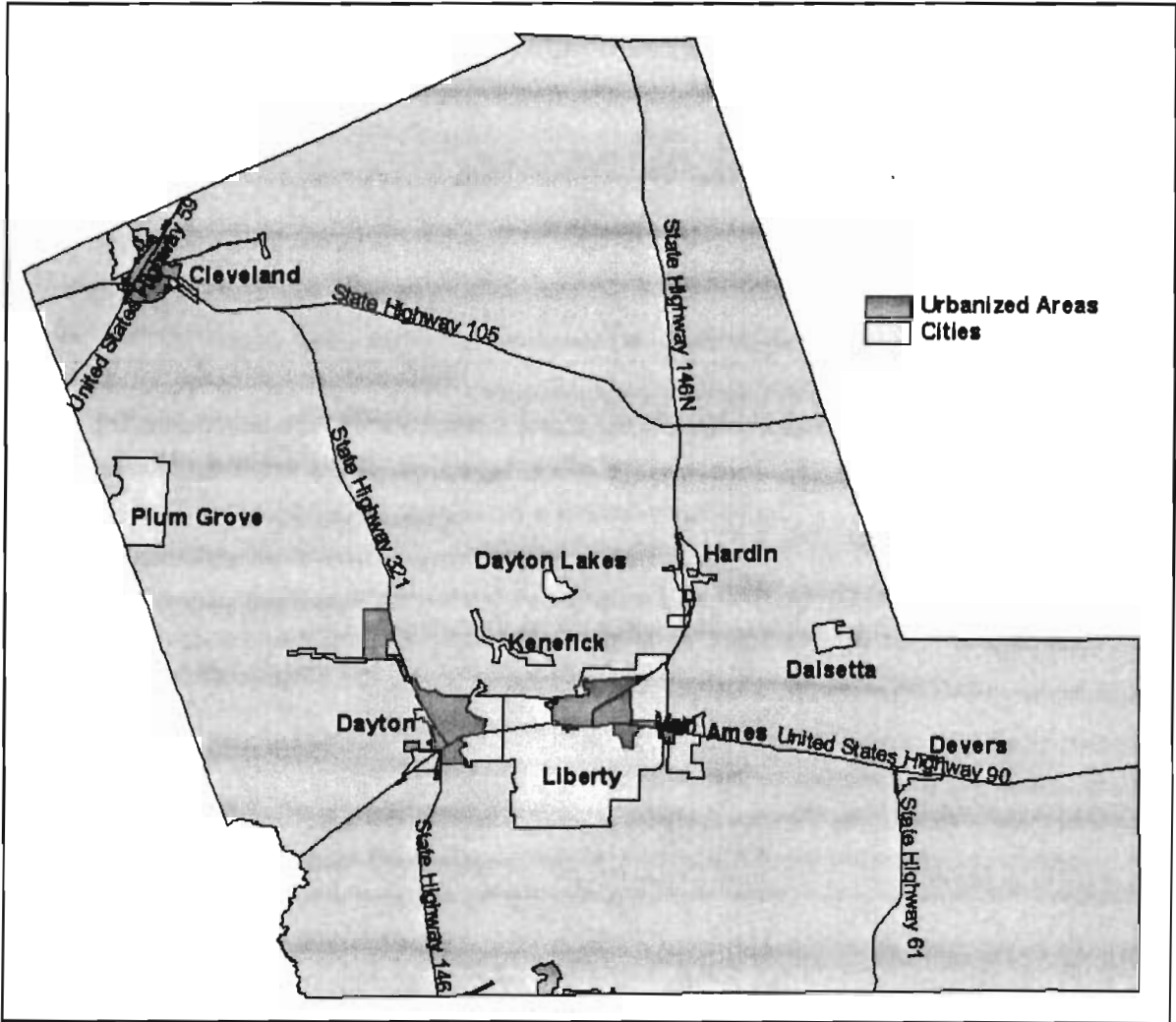
Figure 2: Employment Densities in Liberty County for 2005 and 2035 (Projected)



Source: H-GAC

When the population densities are considered with the nearby employment densities (as shown in **Figure 2**) the potential for county-wide and cross-county commuting using public transportation is greater. However, the need for county wide transit becomes much more evident when the population of disabled and elderly in the county are taken into consideration.

Figure 3: Urbanized Areas and City Boundaries in Liberty County



Source:

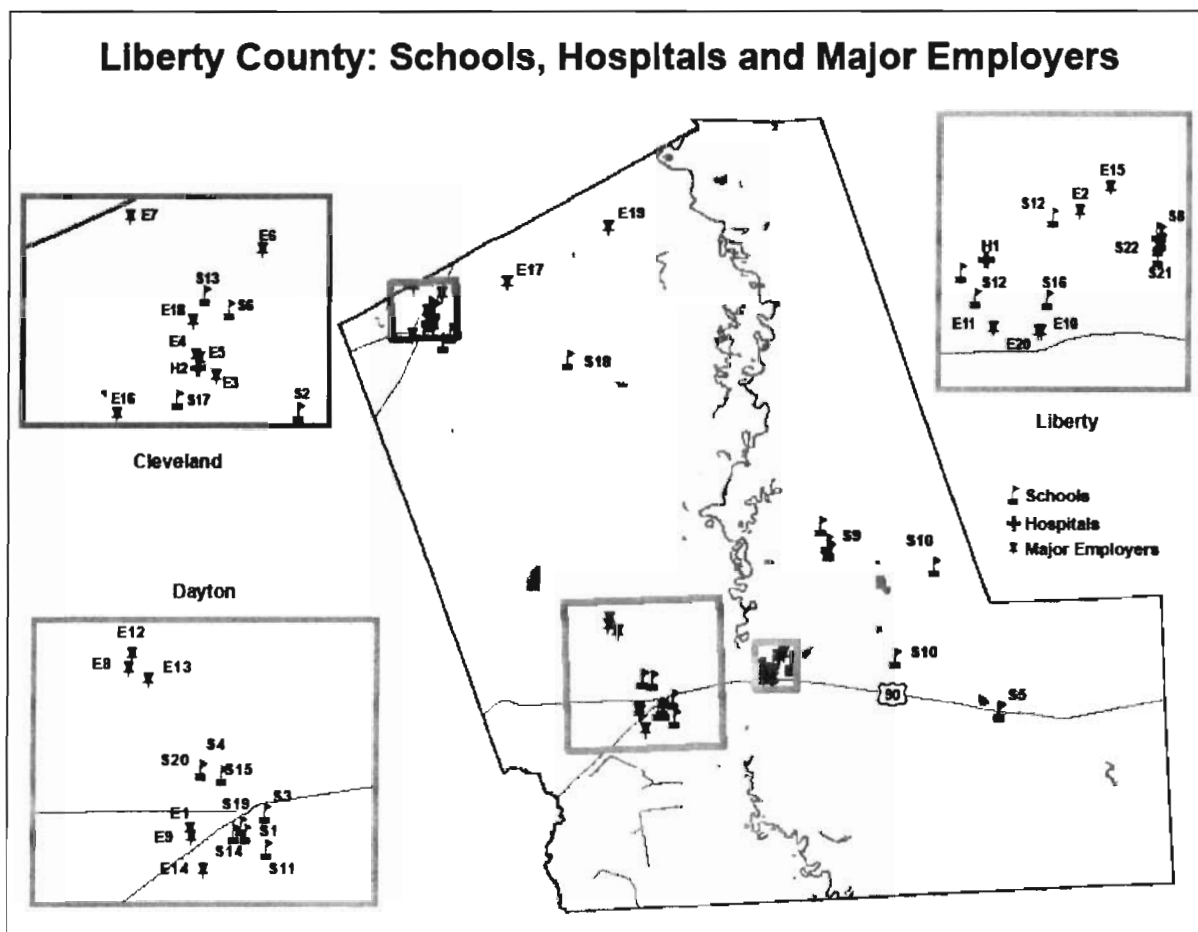
H-GAC

Transit Attractors and Generators

The locations of major employers, schools and hospitals shown in Figure 4 point out some areas that have some *clustering of activities*, where multiple trip purposes could be served within close proximity that would provide the best opportunities for connecting countywide public transit services in the future as shown in the urbanized areas in the cities of Liberty, Dayton and Cleveland.

A listing of the major employers, hospitals and schools that are represented in Figure 4 is provided in Appendix B.

Figure 4 Major Employers, Hospitals and Schools⁴



⁴ The insets are for the larger cities, Cleveland, Dayton and Liberty. See appendix B for the number of employees and students at the locations identified.

Transit Needs Index (TNI)

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

The model results are shown in **Figure 5** and indicate some localized areas of relatively higher transit need; however, the majority of the Liberty County area would be considered as having moderate transit needs according to the TNI.

Table 2 – Transit Needs Index Weights

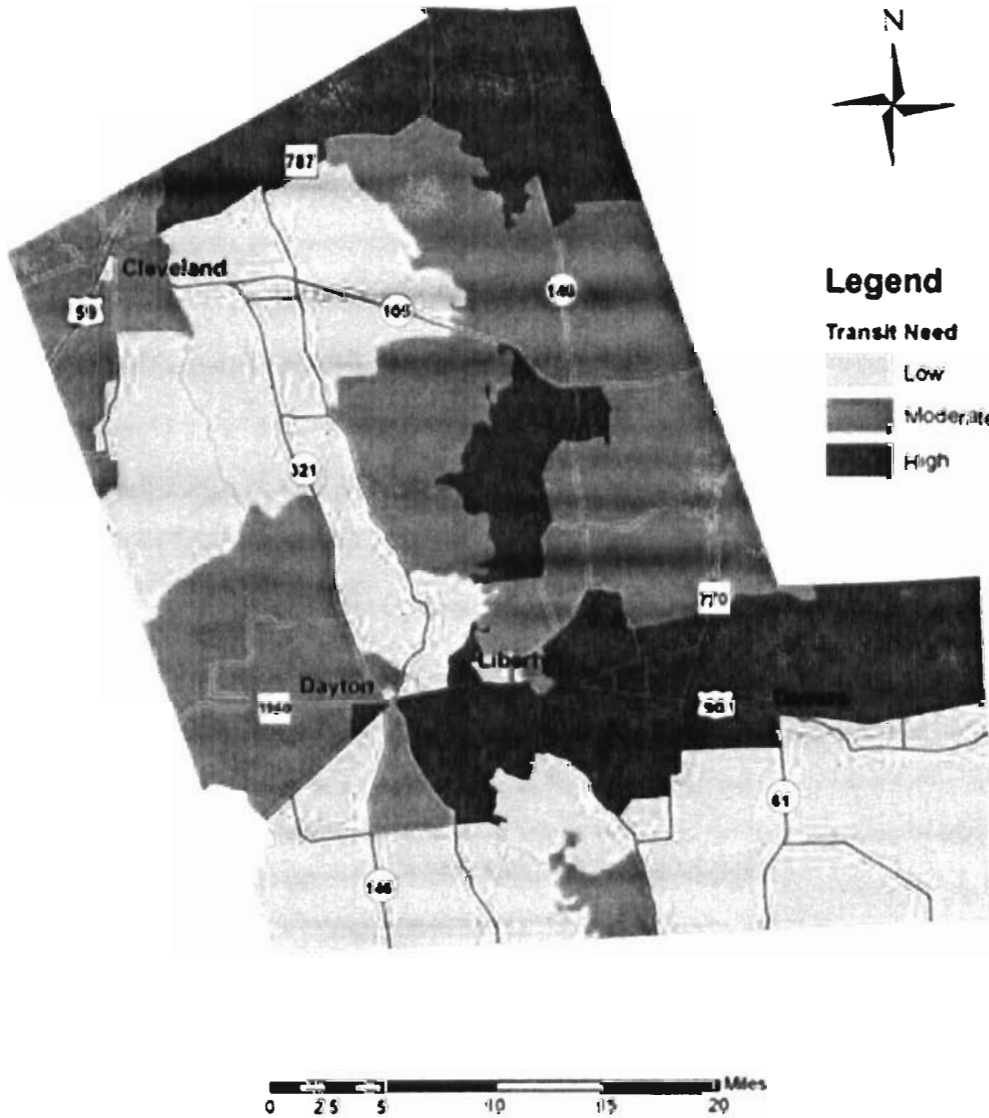
| Need Characteristic | Urban (Fixed Route) | Rural (Demand/Response) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Population density | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| Median household income | 3.5 | 2.5 |
| Minority population | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| Zero car households | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| Senior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

See **Appendix C** for more details about the model formulation for the TNI Methodology⁵.

As shown in **Figure 5** higher transit needs exist in the Liberty, Dayton and Cleveland areas, and throughout portions of the more rural parts of the county. The broad nature of the rural transit needs in Liberty County, and the overall geographic size of the county underscore the need for such services.

⁵ The TNI is derived from the Brazoria County Transit Feasibility Study Report, April 6, 1995 developed by LKC Consulting Services Inc. as reported in the Gulf Coast Region Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan, 2006.

Figure 5: Liberty County Transit Needs Index



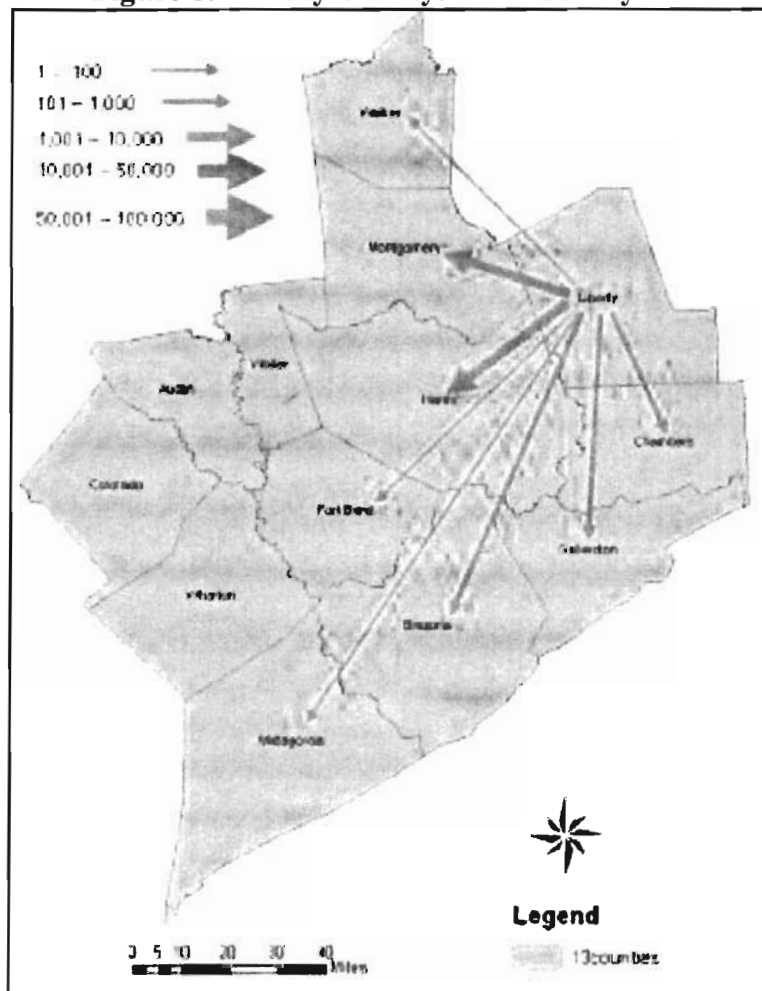
Source: H-GAC

Travel Patterns – Journey-to-Work (JTW)

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

Figure 6 depicts the Journey-to-Work Flow from Liberty County. There are 12,095 intra-county commutes within Liberty County, while work trips from Liberty to Montgomery County (1,498) and Harris County (9,760) constitute the majority of trips outside the county, with much smaller numbers of trips to counties such as Fort Bend, Chambers, Walker, Brazoria, and Matagorda counties. Liberty County lacks trip flows to Waller, Austin, Colorado, and Wharton counties. The proposed Liberty County Park-and-Ride may help address at least a portion of the nearly 10,000 trips to Harris County each day. Even if only 2% of those commuters opted to take park-and-ride services, it would equate to 200 commuters per day. JTW data was not evaluated for commuters traveling to employment destinations outside of the H-GAC transportation management area, including Jefferson County.

Figure 6: Liberty County: Inter-County JTW Flow, 2000



Source: H-GAC

Updated travel pattern data for Liberty County indicates more than 6,400 commuter work trips each morning (peak period) circulating within the county and close to 1,000 trips to the east side of Harris County. The four major employment centers in Harris County attract about 550 work trips each morning from Liberty County. These travel patterns indicate that the priorities for enhanced transit services should address internal circulation first (within the County), then nearby trips to eastern Harris County and the major employment centers of Downtown Houston, the Medical Center, Uptown and Greenway Plaza. There is also a noticeable travel flow towards Montgomery County with 240 morning commute trips (Source; H-GAC Travel Demand Modeling Group, 2008).

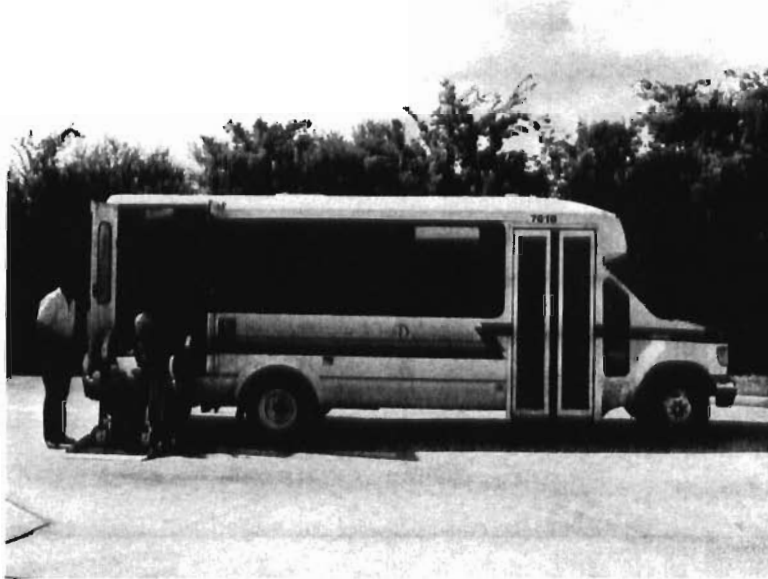
The emerging growth in industrial employment along the IH-10 Corridor towards Port Arthur and Beaumont will add to the moderate flow of work trips into that region from the Houston-Galveston region as indicated in Table 3 below. The total of more than 3,700 work trips based on the 2000 Census data has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

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

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

Chapter 3

EXISTING AND RECOMMENDED TRANSIT SERVICE



Existing Transit Services

The Brazos Transit District (BTD) is the designated public transportation provider for Liberty County. BTD currently operates its public transportation services in Liberty County under contract with TxDOT for the 5311 Rural Transit program. BTD provides the following services in Liberty County:

- Local Community Circulator in the Cities of Liberty and Dayton (**Figure 7**)
- Liberty/Dayton Express (**Figure 7**)
- Liberty to Ames (**Figure 7**)
- Fixed Route Circular in Cleveland (**Figure 8**)
- Demand/Response service in Cleveland.

It is estimated that 34 % of Liberty County's population is within the urbanized clusters that are served by the BTD services. Those services carry about 48,000 passenger trips annually. The BTD has delayed transit expansion plans in Liberty County for several years due to reduced state funding levels. An advanced planning study of a proposed Park and Ride lot in Liberty County (near Dayton) is being revised this year to reflect the need for more spaces than previously planned. The Texas Transportation Commission recently authorized \$250,000 in State matching funds in Transportation Development Credits (TDCs) for the development of that park and ride lot/transfer facility which is also included in the Houston-Galveston Area Council's (H-GAC) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for implementation in FY 2009. The County is also considering alternate sites for transfer terminals and other park and ride locations.

Local elected officials have demonstrated their commitment to provide expanded transit services in the past by providing more than \$26,000 in local funds annually that could be counted as local match dollars to leverage more federal funds. Those funds have been used to fund a portion of the local match required for the local circulator routes and paratransit services.

Additional transportation services are provided by the senior citizens programs in Liberty and Cleveland and the County's Indigent Care program. Together they carry more than 4,900 trips each year. Those transportation services help many of the elderly and disabled persons in Liberty County to maintain some levels of independence and allows them to be active members of the community which is vital to their well being and to the betterment of society in general.

The Medical Transportation Program (MTP) which provides non-emergency medical transportation to medicaid eligible clients who don't have other means of transportation carried almost 8,700 trips in FY 2007.

In summary over 61,600 passenger trips are carried each year in Liberty County by various organizations that are not coordinating their services today. It is likely that through service coordination more efficient services would be provided and the opportunities for transit expansion would be realized sooner.

If the two key recommendations of this transit plan are implemented: 1) countywide demand response service and 2) a park and ride service from Dayton/Liberty to the Houston CBD, the estimated transit ridership would be double the current levels in Liberty County.

Table 4 below shows the current annual splits for each agency in Liberty County. For Brazos Transit all 48,000 trips were assumed to be Urban. For the remaining agencies the split was based on the Urban/Rural population split of 34/64, respectively.

Table 4 Current Transit Ridership Summary

| Agency | Urban Annual Trips | Rural Annual Trips | Total Annual Trips | Comments |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Brazos Transit | 48,000 | - | 48,000 | Local circulators + Demand Response. |
| Medical Transportation Program | 3,132 | 5,568 | 8,700 | Non-emergency Medicaid. |
| Cleveland Senior Citizens | 972 | 1,728 | 2,700 | Demand Response |
| Liberty Co. Project on Aging | 720 | 1,280 | 2,000 | Demand Response |
| Indigent Care Program | 78 | 139 | 217 | Demand Response |
| Liberty County Veterans Office | 112 | 200 | 312 | Demand Response |
| Hardin Senior Citizens | - | - | | TBD |
| TOTAL RIDERSHIP | 53,014 | 8,915 | 61,929 | |

Recommended Transit Services-Short Term (1-2 years)

Through various reports the following projects have been identified as potential pilot projects that would greatly benefit Liberty County stakeholders:

- 1. Liberty County Demand/Response** – Liberty County, despite having three local city circulators and a local demand/response system, currently lacks a developed countywide demand/response service, which most rural counties need. Participants at the Liberty County Pilot Project Workshop (February 17, 2007) identified key markets for this service. In order of priority, these include the following:
 - a. Non emergency medical trips to hospitals, doctors appointments, and pharmacies
 - b. Access to basic services, such as shopping and human service agencies
 - c. Intra-county work trips
 - d. School and college trips
 - e. Senior services related trips

Table 5 represents a proposed timeline for the implementation of the demand/response service.

- 2. Liberty County Park-and-Ride Operations** – Full development of the park-and-ride transfer facility in Dayton is recommended. Based on recent public meeting comments and feedback, five preliminary routes were developed that would serve the citizens of Liberty County. Though these routes have not yet been finalized, they serve as a good base for future discussion. The preliminary Park-and-Ride Routes are shown in **Figure 9**.

The recommended facility would serve a range of public and private transportation providers and passenger vehicles. Successful development of this facility would require the implementation of inter-county transit services for the general public. In addition, employer sponsored transportation services (such as vanpools and shuttles) should be pursued to begin operations to and from the facility. Representatives for the Medical Center (Houston) are also encouraged to use the park-and-ride facility as a location to pick up patients and take them to the medical facilities.

Key markets for this service are as follows:

- a. Commuters to Baytown or Houston
- b. Persons making medical trips to Houston
- c. Persons making educational trips to schools, colleges and job training programs
- d. Shopping, recreational, and social service trips
- e. Persons making regional trips on private carriers

An advanced planning study has already been completed for a Park & Ride facility in Dayton, and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds have already been programmed for construction of the facility. Although most park-and-ride operations

eventually are very cost effective, they may need more initial subsidy to get them off the ground. As long as the local and/or county governments in Liberty County are willing to participate financially, the use of three years of CMAQ operating funds through H-GAC would provide sufficient seed subsidy to operate the facility.

Table 6 represents a proposed timeline for the implementation of the regional transfer facility and park-and-ride lot.

3. Liberty County/UTMB/BTD Pilot Project – The Liberty County/UTMB transportation pilot program provides transportation service with a current average cost per person trip of \$158, based on the most recent 12-month period.

If Liberty County and the Indigent Care Program are open to collaboration, the BTD could either provide more cost effective service to UTMB for the county residents or consult with the county and recommend cost saving measures. If this is successful, the money saved could be added to the local share funds already approved for the county-wide demand response system.

Other Recommendations

Establishing a transit planning committee/task force in the short-term, with the County taking the lead, will formalize the planning and public information process. Based on stakeholder input, participation in the task force would include the county, cities, human service agencies, and interested citizens. Other allies will be needed to provide active marketing for the transit service. According to many stakeholders, BTD's marketing and public information is very limited, so a local initiative will be needed to get the word out about local service. Some organizations that should be involved include the Liberty County Health Awareness Coalition and Cancer Network, which offer good conduits to local media, churches, and health care providers. In addition, it is recommended that transit advocates and BTD work with the two chambers of commerce in the county to provide public information and enlist business support for transit.

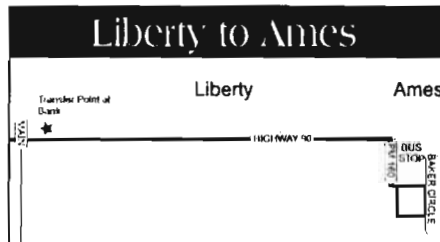
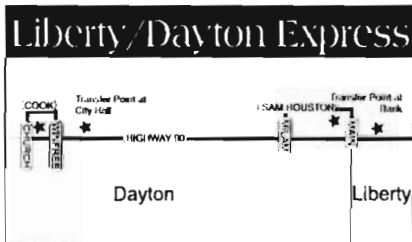
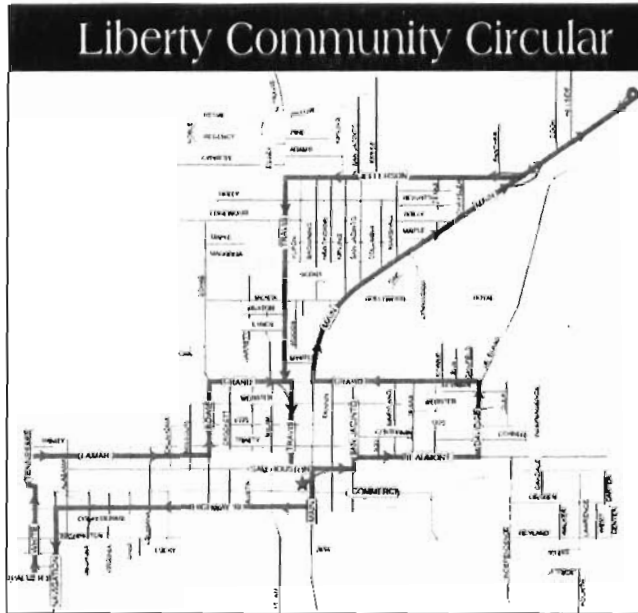
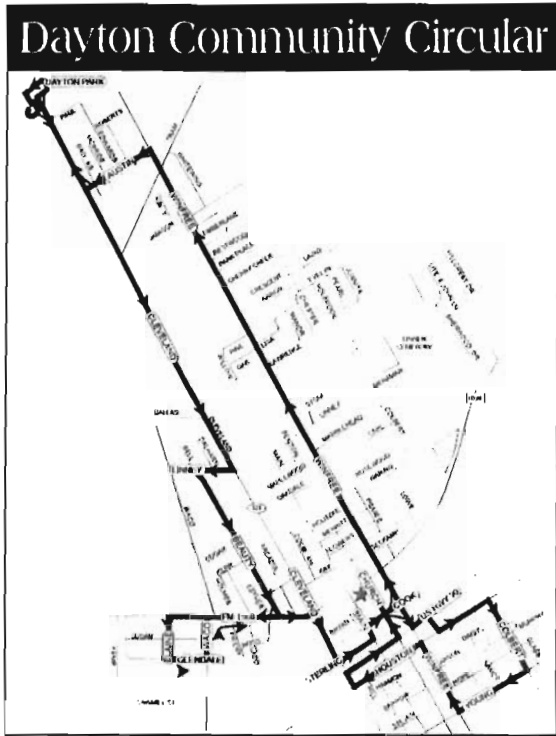
Participants and Sponsors

The following organizations and individuals were identified to have a role in the development of the transit service pilot project:

- **Houston-Galveston Area Council's** role is to lead the transit service planning assessment to finalize the service and to provide support in securing federal funds. H-GAC could also assist in the development of cost sharing agreements. H-GAC's rideshare and public information staff can work with local jurisdictions and promote the new facility and services to businesses and employers.
- **Texas Department of Transportation's** major role is to provide some funding for the proposed services and work towards a more coordinated public transport system. Potential funding sources include but are not limited to the rural 5311 and elderly and disabled 5310 programs.

- **Brazos Transit District** would be the lead operating agency, with policymaking and participation from an oversight committee.
- **Other Transit Providers** in the county would offer service connections to the proposed park & ride lot playing a key role in promoting the services and providing information about the new transportation options.
- **New Liberty County Transit Task Force** would create an oversight committee developed exclusively to focus on the transit services operating in Liberty County. The composition of the oversight committee would be elected officials and citizen representatives. Based on feedback from key stakeholders, only communities/jurisdictions that contribute financially to the operation of the service should have representation on the oversight committee although countywide service would be developed.
- **Liberty County** should move forward immediately with the development of a public transit task force. Judge Fitzgerald, on behalf of Liberty County, volunteered to lead the organization of a planning task force that might transition to a formal advisory committee or board once service is implemented.
- **Incorporated Cities of Liberty County** would have input in the development of the pilot project and could provide “in-kind” services to help promote the service. Political support and financial support also are important roles for these cities.
- **Regional Public Transportation Coordination Subcommittee** (Subcommittee to the H-GAC Technical Advisory Committee) would ensure interconnectivity between Liberty County and neighboring counties such as Harris, Montgomery and Chambers counties. The subcommittee will also work on a regional scale to coordinate seamless transfers between systems.

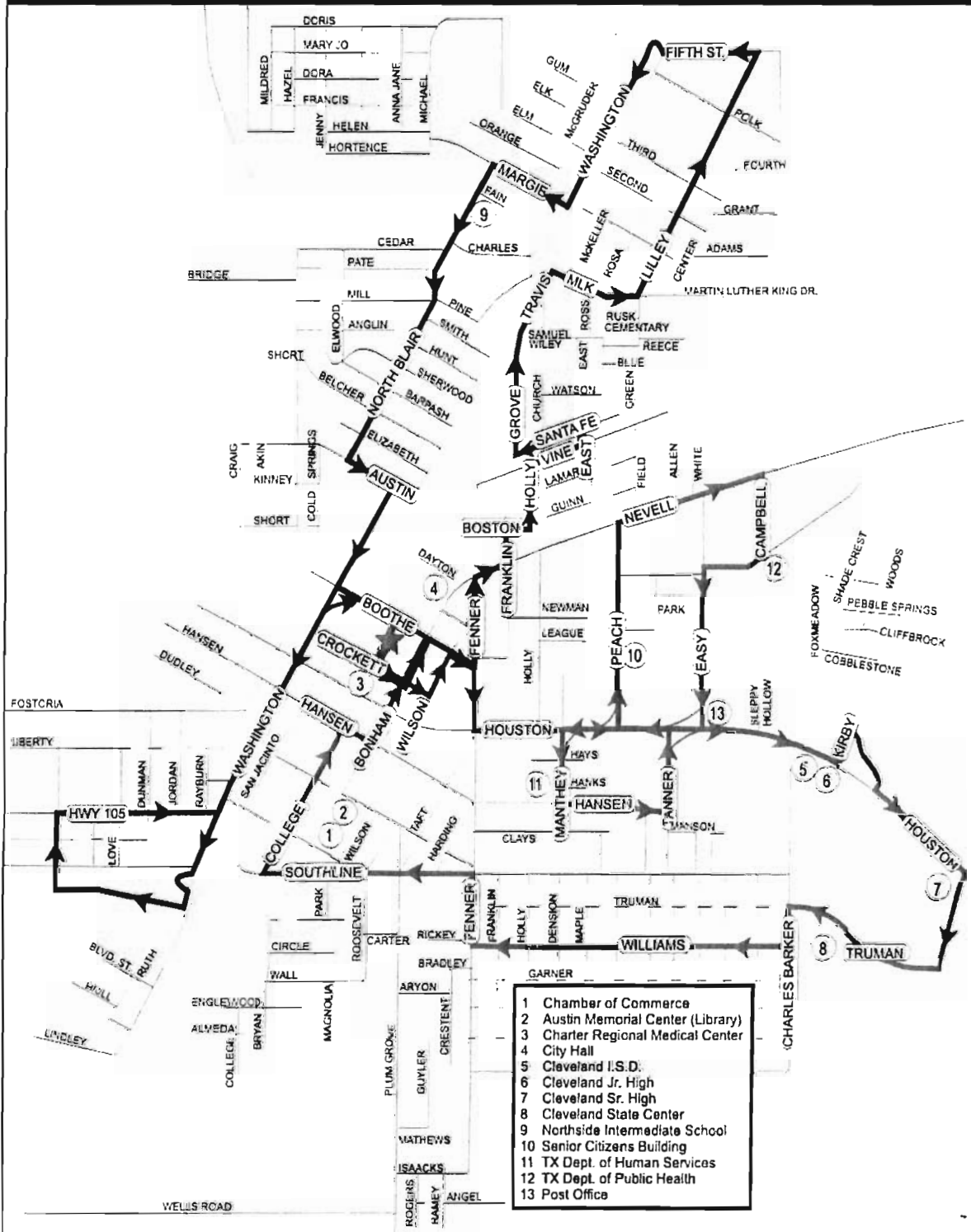
Figure 7: Brazos Transit District (BTD): Liberty and Dayton Circular



Source: Brazos Transit District website www.btd.org.

Figure 8: Brazos Transit District (BTD): Cleveland Fixed Route

Cleveland Fixed Route



Source: Brazos Transit District website www.btd.org.

Table 5: Demand/Response Timeline

| Task | Month 1 | | | | Month 2 | | | | Month 3 | | | | Month 4 | | | | Month 5 | | | | Month 6 | | | | Month 7 | | | | Month 8 | | | | Month 9 | | | | Month 10 | | | | Month 11 | | | | Month 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Establish Liberty County Transit Task Force/Planning Committee | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Assign responsibility for completing application for Liberty County JARC funding | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Affirm Liberty County and communities commit their local share funding | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Conduct transit service planning assessment to finalize service recommendations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Develop service agreements and cost-sharing agreements | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Finalize policy oversight plans with Planning Committee | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 BTD works with community groups and local organizations to provide marketing assistance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Implement and evaluate pilot service | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 9: Liberty County Park-and-Ride Options

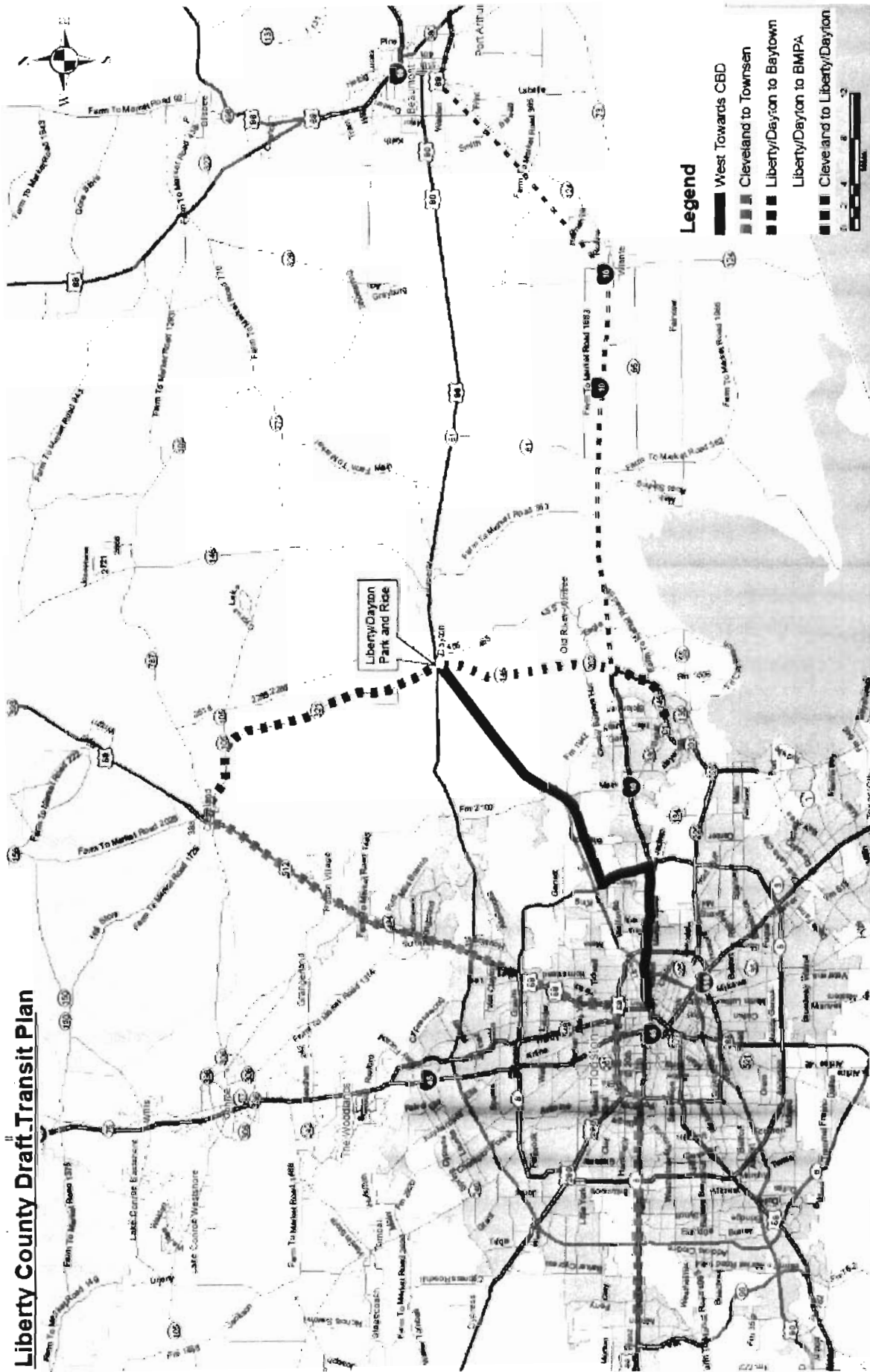


Table 6: Park-and-Ride Timeline

| Task | Month 1 | | | | Month 2 | | | | Month 3 | | | | Month 4 | | | | Month 5 | | | | Month 6 | | | | Month 7 | | | | Month 8 | | | | Month 9 | | | | Month 10 | | | | Month 11 | | | | Month 12 | | | |
|--|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|----------|--|--|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | | | |
| 1 Update 2004 transit service plan for regional service to and from the park-and-ride facility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Secure funding (CMAQ, Sec 5311, JARC and New Freedom) and ensure the project's inclusion in the TIP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 Advance the park-and-ride project from FY 2009 to an earlier year of the TIP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Complete FTA grant application for transit facility at park-and-ride | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 Issue Request for Proposals for final design of the Park and Ride | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Bid for construction | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 BTD implements service | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 Advocate on an ongoing basis to the State Legislature to increase rural public transit funding and to make adjustments to the funding formula | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ONGOING

Chapter 4

FINANCIAL PLAN AND COST ESTIMATES

In order to develop a financial plan for the proposed services in Liberty County, operating statistics were generated based upon the service plan as outlined above. The service plan and related financial plan reflects three time points – short-term (first year); mid-term (year three) and long-term (year five).

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

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

Each of these steps is discussed below as related to general population demand response services. A discussion of the Park-and-Ride Service between Liberty County and the Houston CBD is discussed shortly thereafter.

Demand Estimate

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

U. S. Census estimates for 2006 were used for the population of the service area. The total estimated population for Liberty County is 75,685 which reflects a 7.9% growth rate over year 2000 population. The split of population between the portions of Liberty County that are within the urbanized areas (clusters) and the portions of Liberty County that are rural (outside the urbanized areas) is based upon the proportion of each as established in the year 2000 Census.

Table 7 displays the resulting **projection** of ridership generated by circulator and demand response services in Liberty County, broken out by urbanized and rural areas of the county.

Table 7: Circulator and Demand Response Ridership Projection

| | Urbanized Area | Rural Area | Total |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 2006 Population | 27,247 | 48,438 | 75,685 |
| Per-Capita Ridership | 0.76 | 0.76 | 0.76 |
| Population not served | 25% | 75% | - |
| Net Increase Passengers | 5,177 | 27,898 | 33,075 |
| Current Annual Passengers | 53,014 | 8,915 | 61,929 |
| Projected Annual Passengers | 58,191 ¹ | 36,813 ² | 95,004 |

¹ Amount of annual passengers- Current annual Passengers plus 25% of existing population multiplied by the per capita ridership

² Based on per-capita ridership

Service Levels

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

For the urbanized area, since the current annual ridership with the Brazos Transit District is consistent with the projected per-capita ridership, the current ridership numbers for urbanized areas in Liberty County were used to generate current and future costs. Therefore, the net increase in projected ridership, 5,177 was used.

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

For purposes of planning, the peer average productivity value of 2.79 was selected for the rural area whereas 3.21 was used for the currently unserved urban area since the net increase in projected urban ridership only includes demand response. This is a reasonable assumption and comparable to the productivity of Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS), a rural provider outside Austin. **Table 8** displays calculation of service levels for Liberty County.

Table 8: Projected Increase in Service Level Calculation

| | Urbanized Area | Rural Area | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Annual Passenger Increase | 5,177 | 27,898 | 33,075 |
| Passengers/ Rev. Hour | 3.21 | 2.78 | - |
| Annual Rev. Hours | 1,613 | 10,035 | 11,648 |

Estimated Costs

The current costs of available transportation services are (estimates) based on the existing allotted transportation funds by agencies in Liberty County as shown in **Table 9**. The urbanized costs include Brazos Transit District demand response and circulator services. The costs (per person) to operate within the urbanized areas are higher than the rural areas. This is not typical; however, it can be attributed to volunteer driver service that various agencies in Liberty County may be operating with. This, in turn, can drastically reduce operating costs.

Table 9: Current Agency Funds

| | Urbanized Area | Rural Area | Total |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 2006 Estimated Ridership | 53,014 | 8,915 | 61,929 |
| Cost per person per trip ⁶ | \$7.07 | \$5.79 | - |
| Annual Funds | \$375,012 | \$51,577 | \$426,589 |

To calculate the net increase in cost for the additional demand response service the costs will be estimated by applying a cost per revenue hour to the revenue hours of service necessary to meet the projected demand. Assuming the service is provided by Brazos Transit District, the cost per revenue hour of service was \$70.00 as of May 2008⁷. **Table 10** displays the net increase cost calculation of public demand response service in Liberty County.

Table 10: Net Increase Cost Calculation

| | Urbanized Area | Rural Area | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Annual Rev. Hours | 1,613 | 10,035 | 11,648 |
| Cost per Rev. Hour | \$70.00 | \$70.00 | \$70.00 |
| Annual Cost | \$112,910 | \$702,450 | \$815,360 |

⁶ The estimated costs per person trip in the rural area were calculated based on the current agency budgets which may not reflect the total actual costs. The values shown are lower than reported nonurban average costs in Texas which were about \$15.00 per trip in 2007. (TxDOT 2007 Texas Transit Statistics).

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

Table 11 below displays the Total cost calculation of general public demand response service in Liberty County.

Table 11: Total Cost Calculation

| | Urbanized Area | Rural Area | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Current Costs | \$375,012 | \$51,577 | \$426,589 |
| Net Increase Cost | \$112,910 | \$702,450 | \$815,360 |
| Total Costs | \$487,922 | \$754,027 | \$1,241,949 |

Programming Service

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

Further, introducing new service can be staged in order to control initial costs and test planning assumptions. **Table 12** reflects the costs associated with this service programming.

Table 12: Programming General Public Demand Response Service in 2008

| Period | Annual Cost at Maturity (\$mil) | | Percent of Maturity | | Annual Cost for Period (\$mil) | | Total (\$mil) |
|------------------|--|-------|----------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | |
| Near-term | .49 | .75 | 75 | 50 | .37 | .38 | .75 |
| Mid-term | .49 | .75 | 75 | 75 | .37 | .56 | .93 |
| Long-term | .49 | .75 | 100 | 100 | .49 | .75 | 1.24 |

These data can also be used to estimate fleet requirements. An average vehicle will operate 10 to 12 hours per day for 260 days per year, or between 2600 and 3120 hours per year. Based upon service levels at the programmed levels, the required fleet for the near term is 5 vehicles; for the mid term is 14 vehicles; and for the long term is 21 vehicles. This does not include back-up or spare vehicles.

Park-and-Ride Estimate

The second element of the service program for Liberty County is the implementation of a commuter shuttle connecting Liberty County to the Houston CBD. For estimating purposes, it

was assumed that patrons would board at a parking area near Dayton or Liberty, and travel non-stop to the Houston CBD. The one-way route length is approximately 47 miles. The actual routing may include a stop in eastern Harris County near Crosby.

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

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

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| AM Peak | 3 roundtrips |
| Mid-Day | 1 roundtrip |
| PM Peak | 3 roundtrips |

This schedule would generate seven round trips each day, using two vehicles during the peak periods and one vehicle during the non-peak hours. The service would generate 3,640 annual vehicle hours, assuming service over 260 days. Based upon an estimated rate of \$130.00 per hour of service (inclusive of vehicle costs), the annual cost of service would be \$ 436,800. *Funding for the operations cost of this commuter service has already been applied for and a revised Advanced Planning and Environmental Report is being developed subject to approval by the Federal Transit Administration.*

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

The total service program would be as outlined in **Table 13**.

Table 13: Liberty County Total Transit Service Program Costs

| Period | Elements | Annual Cost (\$ million) | Incremental Annual Cost (\$ million) |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Short-term | County-wide Demand/Response | 0.75 | 0.32 |
| Mid-term | County-wide Demand/Response | 0.93 | 0.50 |
| | Dayton Park-and-Ride --Capital | 1.20 | 1.20 |
| | P&R—Operating (pending) | .44 | .44 |
| | MID TERM TOTAL⁸ | 2.57 | 2.14 |
| Long-term | County-wide Demand/Response | 1.24 | 0.81 |
| | Park-and-Ride—Operating | 0.44 | 0.44 |
| | TOTAL | 1.68 | 1.25 |

⁸ Note that the capital expense for the construction of the park and ride lot is a one-time expense, not part of the annual costs for subsequent years.

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

Table 14 identifies the primary funding by agencies providing public transportation services in Liberty County. Additional sources for local revenues to match federal and/or state funds should be considered in the development of a viable funding strategy. Other potential funding sources are presented in **Appendix D**.

Table 14 – Available Transportation Resources by Agency in Liberty County (\$)

| Agency | Liberty County⁹ | Area Agency on Aging¹⁰ | Elderly 5310 | Rural 5311 | Local/Other | Comments¹¹ |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Brazos Transit District | | | | 300,000 | 46,000 | Local match 26 k fares 20 k. |
| L.C. Project on Aging | 3,024 | 15,311 | | | | |
| Cleveland Senior Citizens | 4,542 | 3,194 | | | | |
| Hardin Senior Citizens | 1,518 | | | | | |
| L.C. Indigent Care | 35,000 | | | | | |
| Veterans | 18,000 | | | | | |
| SUBTOTALS | 62,084 | 18,505 | | 300,000 | 46,000 | 426,589 |

⁹ Liberty County General Funds are allocated to the senior centers for general operations in addition to transportation costs. It is assumed that 50% of those allocated funds are available for transportation purposes.

¹⁰ Area Agency on Aging Transportation funds.

¹¹ Local match and fare revenue estimates provided by Lyle Nelson, Brazos Transit District.

Table 14 does not include funds that have been tentatively obligated for the construction and operation of the Dayton Park and Ride Transfer Center. Approximately \$1.2 million for construction has been programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Two-hundred-and-fifty thousand (\$250,000) have been obligated by the Texas Transportation Commission (TxDOT) in Transportation Development Credits (TDC's) for local match for construction of the park and ride facility. Approximately \$550,000 (for operating expenses) have been applied for from federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funds and is pending Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval of the revised Advanced Planning and Environmental Report. Based on the County Transit Financial Plan and the information in Table 14, approximately \$427,000 of the needed \$ 1.24 million for the countywide demand response program (at maturity) is currently available through the combination of programmed and budgeted federal, state, and local funds. Therefore, approximately **\$800,000 additional dollars** is needed to fund the expanded countywide demand response program at full maturity. The services can be implemented incrementally over a longer time period time to reduce the short term fiscal impacts.

Summary of Projected Ridership and Costs for Liberty County

- 2006 population is 27,247 for urbanized area and 48,438 for the rural area for a total of 75,685 people.
- Projected increase in urban ridership is based on 25% of the 2006 urban population which amounts to 6,812 people. The projected increase in the rural areas was based on the 2006 rural population which is 48,438 people.
- The net increase in passengers is 5,177 in the urban area and 27,898 in the rural area for a total increase of 33,075 riders.
- The current annual passengers in the urban areas are 53,014 and for the rural it is 8,915.
- The total projected annual passengers at full maturity in the urban area are projected to be 58,191 and in the rural area the projected amount is 36,813 for a total of 95,004 passengers.
- The existing funds available for operations are estimated to be approximately \$430,000 thousand annually. Additional funding of \$550,000 has been applied for and is pending FTA approval, for a total of about \$980,000.00.¹²

¹² The estimated cost of \$550,000 is the value of the grant application that may include some capital items (to be determined.)

- The projected operating costs for the county wide demand response and park and ride services at full maturity is estimated to be about \$1.68 million annually. This results in an incremental annual cost of about \$700,000. (\$1.68 million-\$980 thousand).
- Approximately \$127,000 of the current expenses for public transportation by Liberty County, local fares and the participating cities can be considered as **local match** that can be used to **leverage** more federal (or state) funds.

Chapter 5

FEASIBILITY ASSESMENT

A financial strategy to address the identified funding shortfall of about \$ 800,000 could include the following elements over an extended period of time (2-3 years).

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

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

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

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

Appendix A – Public Involvement

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

- Regional Public Transportation Coordination Public Meetings (2006)
- Provider Survey Results (2006)
- Pilot Project Workshop Summary (2007)
- Stakeholder and Public Meetings (2008)
- Stakeholder and Public Meetings (2009)

Public Involvement Summaries - 2006

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

Liberty County North/City of Cleveland August 14, 2006 Twenty-three Attendees

Strengths of Existing Services in Cleveland:

- Cleveland does have fixed-route service provided by Brazos Transit District
- New Horizon Family Services does provide some transportation in the area
- BTD also provides services for 3 other cities in Liberty County (Liberty, Dayton and Ames)
 - o Buses are equipped with GPS technology to help identify rural users
 - o Try to use a “hub-and-spoke system” for their services

Issues/Challenges affecting Cleveland:

- Area senior citizens’ concerns:
 - o Scared to drive on freeways into Houston; and within Houston when they arrive
 - o need assistance with medical trips (TMC and UTMB-Galveston)
 - o many seniors are on fixed income
 - o some don’t qualify for Medicaid and have no access to public transportation
- City of Hardin concerns:
 - o there are no existing services in the area (even though they have paid money for them)
 - o must travel to Cleveland or Liberty at early hours to ride public transportation for various trip purposes
 - o many rural areas have insufficient access (around 80% of residents or Liberty County live in rural/unincorporated areas)
- Brazos Transit District concerns:
 - o forced to shelve some plans for local areas to wait for outcome of H-GAC study
 - o Have lost \$1.2 million in federal funding in last 2 years and looks to continue to drop
- Medicaid provider (AMR) concerns:

- no county-wide Medicaid provider in Liberty County
 - all contracts are with TxDOT
 - less access in rural areas
 - level of service has dropped
 - poor drivers (untrained)
 - not on time
 - some feel unsafe because of recent incidents (woman fell out of bus while driver was talking on cell phone)
 - there are discrepancies between the TxDOT contract for providers and the existing contract with AMR
 - trip-stringing is not allowed
 - a rider must be picked up and dropped off at the same location
- New Horizon Family Center concerns:
- serve victims of domestic violence and those affected by mental health
 - have desire to help many others, but have barriers in their way:
 - not enough vehicles
 - insurance barriers to using others' vehicles
- Chamber of Commerce concerns:
- get 300-400 calls a year about public transportation
 - don't know where to refer callers
- Infrastructure issues:
- Roadways:
 - need bypass for 105
 - buses need better roads to provide efficient services
 - other local locations
 - Existing bus stops in Cleveland:
 - not well maintained
 - feel unsafe

Suggested Actions for the City of Cleveland:

- Idea for a transit center in Liberty County to serve the entire county
- Recommend a single point of contact for each business concerning public transportation
- Encourage sharing of information between businesses
- Provide transit schedules to Chamber of Commerce
- look at Polk County for demand-response example (similar demographics and geography)
- Possible solution to seniors' connectivity to Texas Medical Center is a connection to METRO
 - Possible "park and ride" in north Liberty County
 - Connection with existing "park and ride" facility in Kingwood

Liberty County South/City of Liberty

August 14, 2006

Thirty-Eight Attendees

Strengths of Existing Services in Liberty:

- City of Liberty currently has fixed-route service provided by Brazos Transit District
 - o working well for some
 - o many have access to where they need to go
 - o service is connected with cities of Dayton and Ames
 - o service runs during the day Monday-Friday

- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is currently providing medical trips to veterans of Liberty County

- Baytown Medical Center is currently using a taxi voucher program for some patients

- Liberty County Indigent Care:
 - o currently operating a bus to Galveston
 - o open to all riders

Issues/Challenges affecting Liberty:

- Liberty County as a whole:
 - o underserved for medical trips to Houston and Galveston
 - o have long wait-times for services in the elements
 - o Liberty County is in bad need of county-wide demand-response services

- Brazos Transit District concerns:
 - o Dayton, Liberty and Ames are connected, but Cleveland is independent
 - o people need to go to Cleveland from other areas, but have no source of public transportation to get them there
 - o no existing connection to Cleveland from the rest of county

- City of Devers concerns:
 - o no connectivity to county transit services
 - o need public transportations for medical and shopping trips
 - o connection to Liberty would be good start; eventually to Beaumont

- Medical trip concerns:
 - o often no services offered
 - o Medicare not linked with Medicaid
 - o will riders who require assistance for getting to bus and into hospital be able to have someone ride with them to provide help; a companion
 - o for example: blind citizens, frail or elderly
 - o insufficient public transportation home for patients brought by ambulance or others
 - o cabs (taxi voucher program) are often inefficient

- Town of Hull concerns:
 - o currently no public transportation available
 - o need for buses to Houston and TMC- E.M.S. in City of Liberty concerns:
 - o get calls for transportation that are not emergencies
 - required by law to take people to doctor
 - using critical resources for non-emergency purposes
 - endangers well-being of community

- Cancer Awareness Group's concern:
 - o people need trips to free cancer screenings

Suggested Actions for Liberty:

- Medical trips originating in Liberty County:
 - o possibly have designated day for patients in Liberty County
 - o coordinate efforts with local fixed routes for pick up spot

- City of Devers representative believes that a connection to Liberty would be good start; eventually to Beaumont

- Suggestion for Brazos Transit District to expand fixed route to include nearby neighborhoods

Provider Survey Results - 2006

Name of Organization: Liberty Co. Project on Aging
Address 2000 Panther Lane, Liberty, TX 77575
Phone Number
 (936) 336-7265
Contact Person: Lloyd Griffith
Service Area: South Liberty County (Liberty, Ames, Hardin, Dayton, Daisetta, other)
Description of Service: Senior Transportation
Type of Service: Demand Response
Eligibility: Ages 60+
Hours of Operation: M-F: 8a.m. - 6p.m.
Fare Structure: Free
Typical Destinations: Store, Doctor, Post Office, etc.
Scheduling Requirements: Request 1 day in advance, but try to accommodate all
Contact with Drivers: Cell phone and Mobile radio
Technological Capabilities: None
Passengers/Yr: 2,000
Sedans: 0
Passengers per Sedan: n/a
Vehicle Idle Time: n/a
Vans: 2 Avg. Age - 5 yrs.
Wheelchair Accessible: 1 Gasoline fuel
Passengers per Van: 5

Vehicle Idle Time: M-F 9a.m.-4p.m., after 6p.m. all weekends

Mini Buses: 1 Avg. Age - 9 yrs.

Wheelchair Accessible: 1 Gasoline fuel

Passengers per Mini Bus: 9

Vehicle Idle Time: M-F after 7 p.m. all weekends

Full-Size Buses: 0

Wheelchair Accessible: n/a

Passengers per Bus: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Name of Organization: Brazos Transit District (BTD)

Address: 202 Pan American, Livingston, TX 77351

Phone Number: (936) 327-0193

Contact Person: Lyle Nelson

Service Area: Liberty, Montgomery, and Walker County

Description of Service: Public Transportation

Type of Service: Fixed-route, flex-route, subscription service and demand-response

Eligibility: All

Hours of Operation: M-F; 5a.m.-7p.m.

Fare Structure: Adults - \$1; seniors, children and disabled - \$.50; Fixed-Route All - \$2 for intra-county; \$2.50 for inter-county Demand-Response; \$8.25 for round-trip park-and-ride from The Woodlands to Houston

Typical Destinations: All

Scheduling Requirements: 1 day advanced notice; accommodate same-day requests

Contact with Drivers: cell phones, mobile radio and mobile data terminals

Technological Capabilities: computer dispatching, GIS and automated scheduling/routing

Passengers/Yr: 1,243,968

Sedans: 0

Passengers per Sedan: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Vans: 0

Wheelchair Accessible: n/a

Passengers per Van: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Mini Buses: 76 Avg. Age - 5 yrs.

Wheelchair Accessible: 76 65% use Gasoline

Passengers per Mini Bus: 18 35% use Diesel

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Full-Size Buses: 0

Wheelchair Accessible: n/a

Passengers per Bus: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Name of Organization: Liberty County Indigent Care

Not indigent only - mostly Medicaid, Medicare and Hospital District

Address: 501 Palmer, Liberty, TX 77575

Phone Number: 281-593-8428; 936-336-4693

Contact Person: Donna Burt

Service Area: Liberty

Description of Service: Medical

Type of Service: 501 Palmer, Burger King in Dayton - Annex Cleveland Dayton every trip but not other 2 locations

Eligibility: Liberty County resident with van card with apt at UTMB must be on list

Hours of Operation: 2-3 days a week 7:00 pick up - leave at 3:00 p.m. / Cleveland to local UTMB clinic, Indigent only

Fare Structure: avg cost per person \$158 a trip/ past years \$

not Indigent usually - 22 / 2 indigent - Medicaid Medicare and Hospital District clients primarily

Typical Destinations: UTMB only

Scheduling Requirements: By noon day before

Contact with Drivers: cell phone

Technological Capabilities: no

Passengers/Yr: last 12 mos. Oct. 217

Sedans: n/a

Passengers per Sedan: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Vans: 2

Wheelchair Accessible: 1

Passengers per Van: 14

Vehicle Idle Time: 1 - 2 days a week - not consistent

Mini Buses: n/a

Wheelchair Accessible: n/a

Passengers per Mini Bus: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Full-Size Buses: n/a

Wheelchair Accessible: n/a

Passengers per Bus: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Name of Organization: Cleveland VFW Post

Volunteer - personal van

Address: 201 CR 3891 South, Cleveland, TX 77328

Phone Number: 281-593-2997

Contact Person: Charles Skinner and wife driver

Service Area: Veteran only

Description of Service: Riders and caretaker meet at VFW

Eligibility: must have VA apt.

Hours of Operation: M, T, W, Thurs. F 7:00 a.m. VFW return when done

Fare Structure: Requested donation help w/gas/some VFW support

Typical Destinations: VA

Scheduling Requirements: as soon as they have apt. letter

Contact with Drivers: private cell phone

Technological Capabilities:

Passengers/Yr: n/a

Sedans: n/a

Passengers per Sedan: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: 2 personal vans of Post members

Vans: no

Wheelchair Accessible:

Passengers per Van: 9

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Mini Buses: n/a
Wheelchair Accessible: n/a
Passengers per Mini Bus: n/a
Vehicle Idle Time: n/a
Full-Size Buses: n/a
Wheelchair Accessible: n/a
Passengers per Bus: n/a
Vehicle Idle Time:

Name of Organization: Liberty VFW Post 5621

Volunteer; personal drivers & cars

Address: 1520 N. Main / P.O. Box 668, Liberty, TX 77575

Phone Number: 336-6832

Contact Person: Glen Rainey (936) 334-1440

Service Area: South Liberty County

Description of Service: volunteer driver/ personal car

Type of Service: flexible pick up

Eligibility: South Liberty County/ veteran/ with good reason

Hours of Operation:

Fare Structure:

Typical Destinations: VA Hospital and Beaumont

Scheduling Requirements: At least 1 or 2 days notice

Contact with Drivers: No

Technological Capabilities:

Passengers/Yr: no documentation - only 6 - 7 mos.

Sedans: n/a

Passengers per Sedan: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Vans:

Wheelchair Accessible:

Passengers per Van:

Mini Buses: n/a

Wheelchair Accessible: n/a

Passengers per Mini Bus: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

Full-Size Buses: n/a

Wheelchair Accessible: n/a

Passengers per Bus: n/a

Vehicle Idle Time: n/a

March 2007 Pilot Project Workshop Summary

After the regional transit coordination plan was completed in December 2006 a series of workshops were convened to focus on the highest priorities from the regional transit coordination perspective. Those priorities included regional coordination activities, transit services, legislative and funding issues.

The workshop that focused on transit related needs in Montgomery and Liberty counties was conducted in February 2007 in the city of Cleveland. Approximately 22 people representing various transportation related interests participated in the workshop. The discussions during the workshop included the need for expansion and better coordination of the transit systems in those counties. The input that was gained through the workshops led to the development of action plans to implement the recommendations within each of those counties. The action plans included the following elements:

- Description of proposed services
- Participants and sponsors
- Estimated costs and funding
- Implementation steps and timelines.

The recommended pilot projects became part of the initial list of transit projects that were included in the first drafts of the Transit Plans for the respective counties. Those recommendations were refined and expanded through subsequent public outreach efforts in 2008 and 2009 as described below.

More information about the Pilot Projects Workshops is available in the summary report available online at www.ridethegulfcoast.com.¹³

Liberty County Transit Plan Public Involvement (2008)

Meetings, Briefings, Workshops and Open Houses:

Presentation of findings and recommendations for the proposed Liberty County Transit Plan, accompanied by a public comment period that ran from May 14, 2008 through June 16, 2008:

- **Liberty County South/ City of Liberty** (April 30, 2008): Briefing for county and area officials
- **Liberty County Courthouse/ City of Liberty** (May 14, 2008): Public meeting for area officials, stakeholders, and citizens
- **Liberty County/ KSHN-FM Radio** (May 20, 2008 – Listening Audience includes Liberty County and part of Chambers County): Talk radio interview and live call-in

¹³ Gulf Coast Region Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan-Pilot Project Workshop Summary Report, March 2007, H-GAC, The Goodman Corp. et al.

show with the Party Line show host, the County Judge, and H-GAC project manager. Callers voiced a range of ideas and concerns for commute and travel needs within the county, as well as from Liberty into both the Houston and Beaumont/ Port Arthur areas.

- **Liberty County South/ City of Liberty** (May 27, 2008): Workshop for Commissioner's Court, area officials, stakeholders, and citizens
- **Liberty County North/ City of Cleveland** (June 10, 2008): Workshop/ public meeting for the Cleveland City Council, area officials, stakeholders, and citizens

General Comments and Concerns on County Public Transportation:

Issues and concerns raised in the 2008 meetings have been similar to the 2006 outreach efforts, with more emphasis added regarding the need to advance the proposed service expansion recommendations. Elected officials, economic development groups, transit officials, business people, and residents are more concerned about the higher price of gasoline and its impact on those less able to afford it.

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

From: Peter Wang, LCI
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2008

I am unable to attend the meeting in Liberty, but I do have some comments based on the published study summary.

Bicycles are the unparalleled masters of short trips, in terms of cost per mile to the user. My estimate is on the order of \$0.05 per mile. This fact is of great importance to the 8% of Liberty County households without access to an automobile, and the 14% who subsist below the poverty line. Integration of bikes and transit in Liberty County could add a tremendous amount of value to low income or other customers without cars.

The proposed demand-response service

Having bicycle racks on the front of the transit vehicles would significantly extend the reach of the transit service. A customer could easily bike several miles to a transit stop, have his or her bike throughout the day for additional mobility, then use the bike to ride from the transit stop back home at the end of the day. Bicycles on on-demand transit services are described and shown in a photograph on page 33 of *TCRP Synthesis 62**. Speaking as someone who puts his bicycle on Harris County METRO buses six times per week, I can testify first-hand that bike racks on buses extend my personal mobility tremendously, and I save tremendous amounts of money, thousands of dollars per year, by combining my bicycle and transit instead of driving.

The proposed park & ride facility

Again, it would be very easy for a customer to ride several miles from home to the transit center, park his or her bike, then join some other conveyance to get to a final destination; a carpool, a vanpool, commuter transit to Houston, etc. Those other vehicles may not be able to accept a bicycle, therefore safe and secure bicycle parking racks are a necessity. The entire Chapter Six of *TCRP Synthesis 62** is devoted to bicycle parking at transit locations. I highly recommend bike parking at the transit center.

* how to obtain TCRP Synthesis 62: purchase or download for free from the Transportation Research Board, http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?ID=2457

Thank you.

--

Sincerely,

Peter Wang, LCI

Citizens' Transportation Coalition Board Member
BikeHouston Advisor

From: Barbara McIntyre, Cleveland City Council Member
Date: May 14, 2008

Would like to see a meeting in the north end of Liberty County – Cleveland so that the 10,000 + people will have an input. Need a park-and-ride site in Cleveland to Liberty for WorkSource and from Cleveland to Houston, as well.

From: Nancy Brandli
Date: May 14, 2008

Service down FM 8636 between Hwy 90 and I-10. Large elderly population. Service to Beaumont is needed.

Petition for a Park-and-Ride Facility in Cleveland, with 34 signatures, presented at the Cleveland City Council meeting held on June 10, 2008 by Reuben C. Johnson, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran:

Petition / PARK & RIDE FOR CLEVELAND, TEXAS

WE THE UNDERSIGN BELOW ASK THAT OUR CITY OF CLEVELAND LEADERS WILL BRING A WELL DESERVED VENUE TO THIS CITY. THIS WILL ASSIST ALL RESIDENT NEEDS. PEOPLE TO THEIR JOBS, STUDENTS TO COLLEGE, VETERANS AND SENIORS NEEDS SOCIAL AND MEDICAL. HELP BRING A PARK & RIDE TO CLEVELAND, TEXAS .

| NAME | ADDRESS |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) <u>Bernice Gibson</u> | <u>1700 N Travis .</u> |
| 2) <u>Bernice Mitchell Sr.</u> | <u>708 N. Lemmon</u> |
| 3) <u>Jannie Perkins</u> | <u>1630 N. TRAVIS AV</u> |
| 4) <u>Frank Clark</u> | <u>901 Daniel Cleveland</u> |
| 5) <u>Walter Clark</u> | <u>705 N Washington</u> |
| 6) <u>Charles M. Smith</u> | <u>202 Harsden Way</u> |
| 7) <u>Donald Goddard</u> | <u>705 N Washington</u> |
| 8) <u>James D. Smith</u> | <u>701 N Washington</u> |
| 9) <u>Tom Dickerson</u> | <u>1625 Ross St</u> |
| 10) <u>Melba + Donnell Johnson</u> | <u>1733 Lilley St</u> |
| 11) <u>Richard O. J.</u> | <u>1999 Lilley St</u> |
| 12) <u>Dr. M. J. Johnson King</u> | <u>1738 Center Ave</u> |
| 13) <u>Harold P. Young</u> | <u>1101 E 2. St</u> |
| 14) <u>Hania Young</u> | <u>1737 Lilley</u> |
| 15) <u>Billie Lewis</u> | <u>1105 East 2nd St</u> |
| 16) <u>Latia Young</u> | <u>1704 Lilley St</u> |
| 17) <u>Monica Garrison</u> | <u>1107 East 2nd St</u> |
| 18) <u>Azalea Ross</u> | <u>1107 East 2nd St</u> |
| 19) <u>Mary Williams</u> | <u>1510 M L C</u> |
| 20) <u>Albert Galley</u> | <u>222 N. TRAVIS AVE.</u> |

WE NEED PARK & RIDE IN CLEVELAND, TEXAS

Petition / PARK & RIDE FOR CLEVELAND, TEXAS

WE THE UNDERSIGN BELOW ASK THAT OUR CITY OF CLEVELAND LEADERS WILL BRING A WELL DESERVED VENUE TO THIS CITY. THIS WILL ASSIST ALL RESIDENT NEEDS. PEOPLE TO THEIR JOBS, STUDENTS TO COLLEGE, VETERANS AND SENIORS NEEDS SOCIAL AND MEDICAL. HELP BRING A PARK & RIDE TO CLEVELAND, TEXAS .

| NAME | ADDRESS |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1) <u>Robert C Johnson</u> | <u>1111 E 2nd St Cleveland TX 75327</u> |
| 2) <u>Mary B Johnson</u> | <u>815 Junction Ave</u> |
| 3) <u>Feather Johnson</u> | <u>1111 E 2nd St Cleveland TX</u> |
| 4) <u>Jana Ward</u> | <u>PO Box 1610 Cleveland TX</u> |
| 5) <u>Naama R Phlegm</u> | <u>706 N. Holly Cleveland TX</u> |
| 6) <u>Fanny Edwards</u> | <u>815 Junction Cleveland TX</u> |
| 7) <u>Michelle</u> | <u>17 CR 2193 Cleveland TX</u> |
| 8) <u>Regina Brown</u> | <u>1217 Church Cleveland TX</u> |
| 9) <u>Glenn McBrown</u> | <u>1603 McKelley Ave.</u> |
| 10) <u>Sheila Dightower King</u> | <u>1738 Center AVE</u> |
| 11) <u>Wanda Smith</u> | <u>1270 Rachel B Scott</u> |
| 12) <u>Jamie Gray</u> | _____ |
| 13) <u>Connie Skinner</u> | <u>201 CR 3891 S. Cleveland TX 77328</u> |
| 14) <u>E. Hank Skinner</u> | <u>201 CR 3891 S. Cleveland TX 77328</u> |
| 15) _____ | _____ |
| 16) _____ | _____ |
| 17) _____ | _____ |
| 18) _____ | _____ |
| 19) _____ | _____ |
| 20) _____ | _____ |

WE NEED PARK & RIDE IN CLEVELAND, TEXAS

The Liberty Vindicator

May 10, 2008

Opinion

Looking at the future of Liberty County transportation

Liberty County Judge Phil Fitzgerald looks eastward and sees thousands of jobs being created by the industrial boom in Jefferson and Orange counties and thinks many of those positions could be filled by Liberty County residents.

A key question in his mind is how local workers could get to those job sites, especially with gasoline prices still rising.

That's why he told transportation planners for the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) that the regional public transportation plan now being updated needs to take into account that many area residents may be working in Jefferson County as well as in Baytown, parts of Houston and other areas to the west.

The HGAC, in cooperation with Liberty County and the Texas Department of Transportation, is seeking public comments on the transportation plan. Citizens can make verbal comments at a public meeting set for 3 p.m. Wednesday, May 14, in the 75th District Courtroom in the Liberty County Courthouse. Comments also can be mailed or faxed to HGAC or submitted online at www.h-gac.com/transportation. A draft of the regional plan summary also can be viewed there.

"I hope county residents interested in seeing that Liberty County residents get their share of all these jobs coming to the Beaumont-Port Arthur area will make their views known to HGAC," Judge Fitzgerald said.

Options being considered include new park-and-ride lots and additional bus service provided by Brazos Transit.

"Monies might be available for some of these alternatives," the judge said, "but only if the public is supportive."

A job fair for Liberty County residents featuring more than a dozen Jefferson and Orange county plants and companies that will be needing workers is also in the works. Details will be announced when they are firmed up. Fitzgerald thanked Laura Wilson with the Chambers Liberty Counties Navigation District and Kim McMurray of Entergy Texas economic development for working on the job fair and transportation issues.

The Judge brought up the issue at a recent meeting of the newly formed Liberty County Economic Development Alliance and Wilson and McMurray "took the ball and ran with it," he said. "That's the kind of teamwork we need to deal with these exciting times."

From: Allen Youngblood

Sent: Sunday, June 01, 2008

Dear Mr. Hackett,

Please include the article below as a public comment on the recently prepared Liberty County Transportation Summary.

H-GAC Transit Study Ignores the Obvious

LIBERTY, May 29, 2008 - The Liberty County Regional Public Transportation Coordination Summary prepared by the Houston Area Galveston Council (H-GAC) is a start in the right direction but overlooks major factors that affect transportation to and from Liberty County.

Transportation studies are very import to determine what methods and solutions could best reduce the number of trips citizens have to make, reducing our dependence on oil and improving quality of life.

The reason that H-GAC, largely concerned with Houston and Harris County, came to Liberty to conduct this study is due to a mandate of the State Legislature, who recognized that traffic and transportation is a regional problem and solutions should be coordinated region wide. Without that mandate, H-GAC would have never came to Liberty County in the first place.

The demographic profile of Liberty presented in the report closely mirrors statistics from the census bureau that characterize Liberty County as being old, poor and sick. 21% of the people living in Liberty County are disabled compared to only 16.5% in the 13 county region that comprises H-GAC. 10.3% of our population is over the age of 65 compared to 7.9% across the region. More people live in poverty in Liberty County in percentage terms than in the region as well.

One of the pilot programs recommended in the report for Liberty County is a Regional Transfer Park and Ride Facility. It is proposed that this facility be located in Dayton, TX somewhere along US 90. This facility is being proposed to meet the growing demand of commuters from Liberty County outside the county to go to work.

Key markets for this service, in order of priority, are as follows:

1. Commuters to Baytown or Houston
2. Persons making medical trips to Houston
3. Persons making educational trips to schools, colleges and job training centers
4. Shopping, recreational and social service trips
5. Persons making regional trips on private carriers

According to the study there are about 10,000 commuter trips to Harris County each day from Liberty County and if only 2% of those commuters opted to take park and ride services, it would reduce the number of trips by 200 per day.

This is certainly a reasonable goal and such a facility would be very beneficial to our community.

The report fails to address perhaps the one major factor that could reduce the number of trips from Liberty to surrounding counties that is most important. The report makes no mention of how High Speed Internet access or the lack their of impacts commuter traffic, transportation, quality of life or economic development. It ignores the obvious issue entirely and never mentions it.

Ford Motor Company only a few weeks ago announced that it would be making far fewer pickups and SUV's this year as opposed to last year and announced that they would soon ideal several of is assembly plants. This is due to the fact the people, as gasoline approaches \$4.00 per gallon are making different choices concerning transportation.

Wide spread Internet Access in our area is not available. If it were some could telecommute a couple of days each week. Students could take courses and earn online degrees from accredited universities and would not have to commute to campuses outside the county. Shopping for just about everything would also be done online.

Having wide spread high speed internet service available throughout the county is the one single thing that could reduce traffic more than any item recommended in the entire summary report. Yet, it's author's chose to ignore it.

This is 2008 and no transportation study would be complete without surveying the available Internet infrastructure and determining the impact it will have on the transportation needs of any community.

**Public Comments on the Liberty County Transit Plan
Taken from the Minutes of the
City of Cleveland City Council Meeting
City Hall, 907 E Houston Street, Cleveland, TX 77327**

**Public Hearing
June 10, 2008 - 6 PM
Attendance: 39**

Liberty County Judge Phil Fitzgerald reviewed the needs for the system for education, jobs, and medical services that included both demand response and park-and-ride options.

City Councilmember Harry Williams asked if there had been a study for a park-and-ride from Cleveland, down U.S. 59 to Houston. He advised there is a great need and demand for such a service in the Cleveland area.

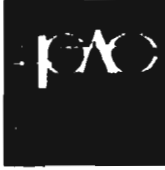
City Councilmember Barbara McIntyre advised that the school has tracked students who have gone to college, and the number of students who cannot get to their work source, jobs, or campus, or veterans who have trouble getting to the medical center. These include those who need to commute into Montgomery County for jobs and education, both to colleges and technical schools.

Reuben Johnson, Marine veteran and Cleveland resident, thanked the presenters for the opportunity to have this service in the area and advised the need to include the Cleveland community in the park-and-ride facility to service area citizens, seniors, and veterans.

James Young, Post 1839 Cleveland VFW, advised that there is a great need in Cleveland for a park-and-ride or shuttle to the VA Hospital in Houston, as many veterans do not get medical attention because they cannot afford the fuel.

Lyle Nelson, Brazos Transit District (The District), reviewed studies and the feasibility of establishing a park-and-ride either with Houston METRO or Montgomery County Transit. The District has a shuttle from Lufkin to Livingston and on to the VA Hospital, and he hoped to have a stop in Cleveland to the VA Hospital in place in a few weeks. Mr. Nelson advised that anyone could call Brazos Transit now to schedule a one day/ week trip to the VA Hospital.

RECEIVED MAY 21 2008



Liberty County Transit Plan Comment Card

May 14, 2008

Name: Robert A. Buzza SR.

Email Address: _____

Address: 140 Coritar ST.
Liberty TX 77575-6154

Phone: Cell 936-641-2309

Comments / Questions / Concerns (cir 5/14/08 meeting Liberty)
I believe this would be a very good
thing for us in Liberty / Baytown
where it would provide a way for
us to travel to go to other places
with out having to cash for a monthly
member to take off work to take
them or us to Home Depot Baytown
or Home where ever we could use
big bus's to go to the Home Depot
to 2455 main street to do it or in the
to believe we could start a place for
Liberty Baytown would be a good idea
what it Bldg 4 parking lot

Thank you! Please check here if you would you like to be added to the H-GAC Transportation Department's mailing list.

1/19/04

Admission Building
140 Center St
Haverhill, MA 01830
5780/04
Cell Phone # 978-641-2309

Liberty Co. Transit Plan

(5/14/08 meeting)

H C A C

Shared note! I thank you for this
 outline Transit Plan for the (we hope) near
 near future you brought up a lot
 of issues to be reached by this Transit
 program. I felt it was well put
 together in a respect it would be
 great to have a way to go to N. Haver
 Hill Summit, or downtown Haver
 Hill on this bus system. I would like
 to make a connection with the Metro
 Park Ride along Deer Brook Mall
 by taking 90 or around 1460 Trace,
 go to E. Hill way 8 to 59 Park Ride.
 Myself I probably a lot of others
 don't have a vehicle & it would be
 so nice to be able to go on the bus.
 Also I would have to go to the
 Haverhill Medical Center, it would be nice
 to have a way there without having
 someone take off work to do this or take
 me to Haverhill. After I had gotten out of
 Swanton (Vermont) back in 1st of 2005
 my daughter had to take off work & take me
 to the doctor in Haverhill every 2 weeks. If we
 had had a bus here I could have gotten myself

I do realize this Bus Project is only in the planning stages now, but I would be a good thing if it could be up & running real soon. I wrote on the public comment sheet that I thought a good place for the likely transit place would be the old Walmart Bldg, & parking lot, for a temporary place to start with. It is close to the Bypass, Walmart right on main, between Brookshire Brothers store & the Bypass!!

I do wish you a total luck on this program. I do ride the Brazos Dayton & Liberty buses quite a bit, also. I'm thankful they are around.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Dargiza Sr.
 Cell Phone # 936-641-2309

PHIL FITZGERALD
COUNTY JUDGE



1923 SAM HOUSTON
LIBERTY, TEXAS 77575

THE COUNTY OF LIBERTY
Est. 1836

April 17, 2008

To: Elected Officials, Mayors, Senior Citizen Organizations, & Veterans Services

Re: County Transit Meeting

Dear Sir/Madam:

You are invited to attend a briefing on the proposed Liberty County Transit Plan at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30, at the Juvenile Probation Meeting Room located at 1811 Trinity, Liberty, TX. Representatives from the Houston-Galveston Area Council will be here to brief area leaders on plan elements, budgets and timeline. Your input is important as they gather ideas and recommendations before taking the transit plan to the public.

This plan is part of the Regional Transit Coordination Plan, which will address the need for improved public transportation options for Liberty County residents, including the elderly, disabled, and low income individuals that are mobility limited.

House Bill 3588, passed during the 78th Texas Legislature, mandated the coordination of public transportation services and funding among the Health and Human Service agencies, Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Although it is a statewide mandate, planning and coordination efforts took place at the local and regional levels. Documents and information from the initial studies and 2006 public meetings are posted at www.ridethegulfcoast.com.

As you may recall, a key recommendation over the years has been a county-wide demand response system that would augment the local circulators in the cities of Ames, Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland. Local officials had set aside funds to provide that county-wide system, but it was put on hold, due to a reduction of state transit funding to the Brazos Transit District. An important funding strategy in the Liberty County Transit Plan will be to acquire more federal and state funds by consolidating the local funds that can be used for local match. During the interim, some of those local funds have been reallocated to other medical transportation services.

Another initiative that is progressing is the development of a Park and Ride lot and express bus service connecting Liberty and downtown Houston along US 90. Ideally, linkages will be needed eventually to connect the park and ride lot, local neighborhoods, and local circulators to employment, retail, medical, and recreational centers within Liberty County.



REC'D APR 21 2008

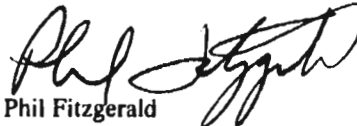
936/336-4665

FAX: 936/336-4518

281/592-6144

Please join us! To RSVP, contact Diane Hartfield at philfitzgerald@imsday.com or 936-336-4667. We look forward to your insight and participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Fitzgerald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Phil" being more prominent.

Phil Fitzgerald
County Judge

cc: Kari Hackett

Liberty County Transit Plan Public Involvement (2009)

Meetings, Workshops and Open Houses:

The attendees were briefed on the revised recommendations, the estimated costs and timeframes for implementation. Some of the public comments that were made underscored the need to advance the implementation schedules for the transit services in the Cleveland area.

The presentation of findings and recommendations for the proposed Liberty County Transit Plan was accompanied by an extended public comment period, February 19 through March 27, 2009:

- **Liberty County South/ City of Liberty** (February 19, 2009): Public meeting/ open house for area officials, stakeholders, and citizens
- **Liberty County North/ City of Cleveland** (March 10, 2009): Public meeting/ open house for area officials, stakeholders, and citizens
- **Liberty County North/ City of Cleveland** (March 10, 2009): City Council meeting; presentation for officials, stakeholders, and citizens

Other Area Meetings and Briefings:

Presentation of recommendations for the proposed Liberty County Transit Plan, with discussions and updated information were provided to the program directors and administrators:

- **Cleveland Senior Center** (March 10, 2009)
- **Liberty Senior Activity Center** (March 17, 2009)

General Comments and Concerns on Public Transportation:

Issues and concerns raised in the 2009 meetings are similar to the 2006 and 2008 outreach efforts, with greater emphasis on the need to advance proposed recommendations for service expansion as soon as possible. Current economic and employment conditions added to rising fuel prices underscore the need for inter-county service to training sites and college campuses in Montgomery County.

Impacts from Hurricane Ike (September 2008) on Liberty County's infrastructure, employment, and revenue base and funding opportunities available through the 2009 economic stimulus package highlight current discussions. One additional focus has been added regarding the need to connect transportation systems in Liberty County with the planned expansions of the petrochemical industry plants along the IH-10 Corridor, particularly in Beaumont and Port Arthur.

Reader Comments (posted to The Cleveland Advocate story, pub. 2-16-09):

five 0h wrote on Feb 20, 2009 2:07 PM:

".... Dayton P&R facility, I support. Might even consider a line to Baytown for the workers going down there. The rest, not so much. I could support a Cleveland P&R that might have

connections to the METRO Townsend P&R, as well as a Conroe or Woodlands Connection if it connects to any public transportation in those areas. Granted some people might hop 2 or 3 busses to reach their locations, but it gives people options to reach some higher paying jobs than are offered in the Cleveland area.”

Reader Comments (posted to The Cleveland Advocate story, pub. 2-23-09):

five 0h wrote on Feb 23, 2009 9:48 AM:

"Oh and the article, written for the Cleveland Advocate (news for the Cleveland Area, ahem), failed to mention the following:

(7) A Transit Feasibility Assessment (Phase 2-Transit Plan) of a Park-and-Ride service in Cleveland, Texas with connecting routes along US 59 North, southbound to the Townsend METRO Park and Ride lot and a cross-county connecting route to Dayton/Liberty along FM 321. I think that is news enough to justify being mentioned in the article. Not to mention that HGAC made an error and called it FM 321 when it is SH 321."

Comment Card Received:

From: Mark Bradshaw, Cleveland

Date: March 10, 2009

Think it's great, hope it works.



Participants at a public meeting in Cleveland, 2009.

Additional meetings were held with representatives of the senior citizen centers in Liberty and Cleveland to clarify the information about their transportation related needs. Both senior center representatives expressed a need for more funding to augment their transportation services and replacement vehicles for their aging fleets.



Seniors accessing the Cleveland Center by van (2009).

The lack of sidewalks and roadway shoulders in Cleveland, Texas creates other potential safety hazards for pedestrians and cyclists traveling along some busy roads as shown in the following picture.



PHIL FITZGERALD
COUNTY JUDGE



1923 SAM HOUSTON
LIBERTY, TEXAS 77575

THE COUNTY OF LIBERTY
Est. 1836

June 18, 2008

Mr. Alan Clark
HGAC
P.O. Box 22777
Houston, Texas 77227

Re: Liberty County Park and Ride

Dear Mr. Clark:

I would like to express my support for the Liberty County Park and Ride. With the high cost of fuel and the need to cut down on air pollutants, projects such as the Park and Ride are essential. A large majority of Liberty County residents work in the nearby metropolitan areas and will greatly benefit from this Park and Ride.

If I can assist in any manner, please contact my office. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Fitzgerald".

Phil Fitzgerald
County Judge

PF/dh



936/336-4665

FAX: 936/336-4518

281/592-6144



117 Clark St. • Dayton, Texas 77535 • Telephone • (936) 258-2642 • FAX • (936) 258-2348

June 19th, 2008

Alan Clark
Director, Transportation Planning
Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments
P.O. Box 22777
Houston, Texas 77227-2777

Dear Alan:

Please find enclosed with this letter a copy of Resolution 2008-10. The resolution was passed by the Dayton City Council on Monday, June 16th, 2008. The resolution re-affirms the City of Dayton's support for the Projects included in the Regional Transportation Coordination Summary produced by HGAC and dated May 2008. Specifically the Council expressed their strong support for the construction of a Regional Transfer and Park and Ride Facility in Dayton.

We have been tracking this project closely for the past several years. We have participated in the regional planning process that took place in 2007 and have supported the Brazos Transit District's efforts to acquire funding for operations of the facility. We have even offered to provide a temporary location to get the service up and running as soon as possible.

The City of Dayton recognizes the need to put transportation solutions in place to assist commuters and to help reduce the volume of single car trips between Liberty County and surrounding employment, education, business and medical service centers.

We look forward to partnering with HGAC, the Brazos Transit District and the other governmental entities in our area to get this project up and running.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Stephens", is written over a horizontal line.

Steve Stephens
Mayor

Enc. City of Dayton Resolution 2008-10



RESOLUTION NO. 2008-10

A Resolution By The City Council Of Dayton, Texas; Said Resolution stating support for the Liberty County Transit Plan and the establishment of a Liberty County Park & Ride facility in Dayton.

WHEREAS, the demand for transportation solutions has continued to grow; and

WHEREAS, the need for a park and ride facility in Dayton was initially identified by Brazos Transit District and the City of Dayton several years ago; and

WHEREAS, the Liberty County Regional Public Transportation Coordination Summary produced by HGAC in May 2008 includes the Regional Transfer Facility and Park and Ride Facility in Dayton; and

WHEREAS, construction funds have been programmed for FY2009 in the HGAC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, the City of Dayton plays an active role in transportation and transit related projects; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is willing to provide a temporary park and ride location until the facility is constructed.

NOW, THEREFORE, Be It Resolved by the City Council of Dayton, Texas that:

The City Council does herein indicate its full and complete support for the Projects included in the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Summary produced by HGAC and dated May 2008.

The City Council does herein indicate its full and complete support for the Brazos Transit Districts efforts to obtain operational funding for the Park and Ride Facility

The City Council does herein call for the regional park and ride facility in Dayton to be constructed as soon as possible.

The City Council authorizes the Mayor to forward a copy of this resolution to HGAC and TxDOT along with a letter more fully expressing the City's support for this project.

By MELECIO FRANCO

Updated: 02.23.09

The Houston-Galveston Area Council unveiled new transit options for residents of Liberty County during a public meeting in Liberty on Feb. 19. The plan could improve public transportation within the county and create opportunities for residents to travel outside the county for work or medical care.

The plan consists of three phases with short-term, mid-term and long-term projects. The short-term phase includes several options such as county-wide dial-a-ride service where residents could call 24 hours in advance for a ride.

"Local buses currently service Liberty County but are not connected county-wide," said Kari Hackett, program manager of the transportation department of H-GAC.

"One of our key recommendations is to expand it to the general public," he said.

Hackett explained that Liberty County is already spending \$400,000 a year on transportation and that the proposed plan calls for pooling local services and using them to obtain federal money to expand public transportation opportunities.

The plan also calls for a park and ride service and transfer center in Dayton or Liberty with service to the Houston central business district with a stop in eastern Harris County at a proposed Crosby park and ride lot.

Hackett said that the funds for this service, which would cost approximately \$1.6 million annually, are currently with the Federal Transit Administration and that this project is almost a "done deal."

The second phase includes proposals for a park and ride facility from the Dayton-Liberty areas down SH 146 to Interstate 10 and then eastward to Port Arthur and Beaumont.

The third phase includes projects more than five years in the future such as a proposed high speed passenger rail service between Houston and Beaumont.

Funding for the majority of phase one (\$1.2 million) is currently available and approximately \$200,000 and coordination of existing services is needed. (Correction: \$800,000 additional funds needed).

The plan may become a reality, according to Liberty County Judge Phil Fitzgerald.

"I think the plan fits our goals," he said.

Fitzgerald stated that public transportation will have a larger role in the future for the county. He encouraged residents to review the plan online and to submit comments.

"We would appreciate everyone's input," he said. "We don't want to make the decision by ourselves. We want to address everyone's needs if we can."

A second public meeting is scheduled for March 10 in Cleveland from 3 to 6 p.m. at city hall located at 907 E. Houston St. To view the draft Liberty County transit plan online, visit www.h-gac.com/transportation.

Next hearing

A second public meeting is scheduled for March 10 in Cleveland from 3 to 6 p.m. at city hall located at 907 E. Houston St. To view the draft Liberty County transit plan online, visit www.h-gac.com/transportation.

Reader Comments

Five Oh wrote on Feb 23, 2009 9:34 AM:

" Shortcut for everyone instead of digging to find the info.

Better link than given in the article: http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/default.aspx

From there you can look at:

Liberty County Transit Plan Executive Summary

[http://www.h-](http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/LCTP%20ExecSum%20Final%20Draft%2012-10-08.pdf)

[gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/LCTP%20ExecSum%20Final%20Draft%2012-10-08.pdf](http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/LCTP%20ExecSum%20Final%20Draft%2012-10-08.pdf)

Draft Liberty County Transit Plan

[http://www.h-](http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/LCTP%20Final%20Draft-KJH%2012-11-08.pdf)

[gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/LCTP%20Final%20Draft-KJH%2012-11-08.pdf](http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/LCTP%20Final%20Draft-KJH%2012-11-08.pdf)

Liberty County Open House flier

[http://www.h-](http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/Liberty%20Co%20Transit%20Plan%20Flier%202009%20Rev2-16-09ams.pdf)

[gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/Liberty%20Co%20Transit%20Plan%20Flier%202009%20Rev2-16-09ams.pdf](http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Transit%20Plan/Liberty%20Co%20Transit%20Plan%20Flier%202009%20Rev2-16-09ams.pdf)

Presentation

http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public_info/documents/Liberty%20County%20Final%20Presentation.pdf "

Five Oh wrote on Feb 23, 2009 9:48 AM:

" Oh and the article, written for the Cleveland Advocate (news for the Cleveland Area, ahem), failed to mention the following:

(7) A Transit Feasibility Assessment (Phase 2-Transit Plan) of a Park-and-Ride

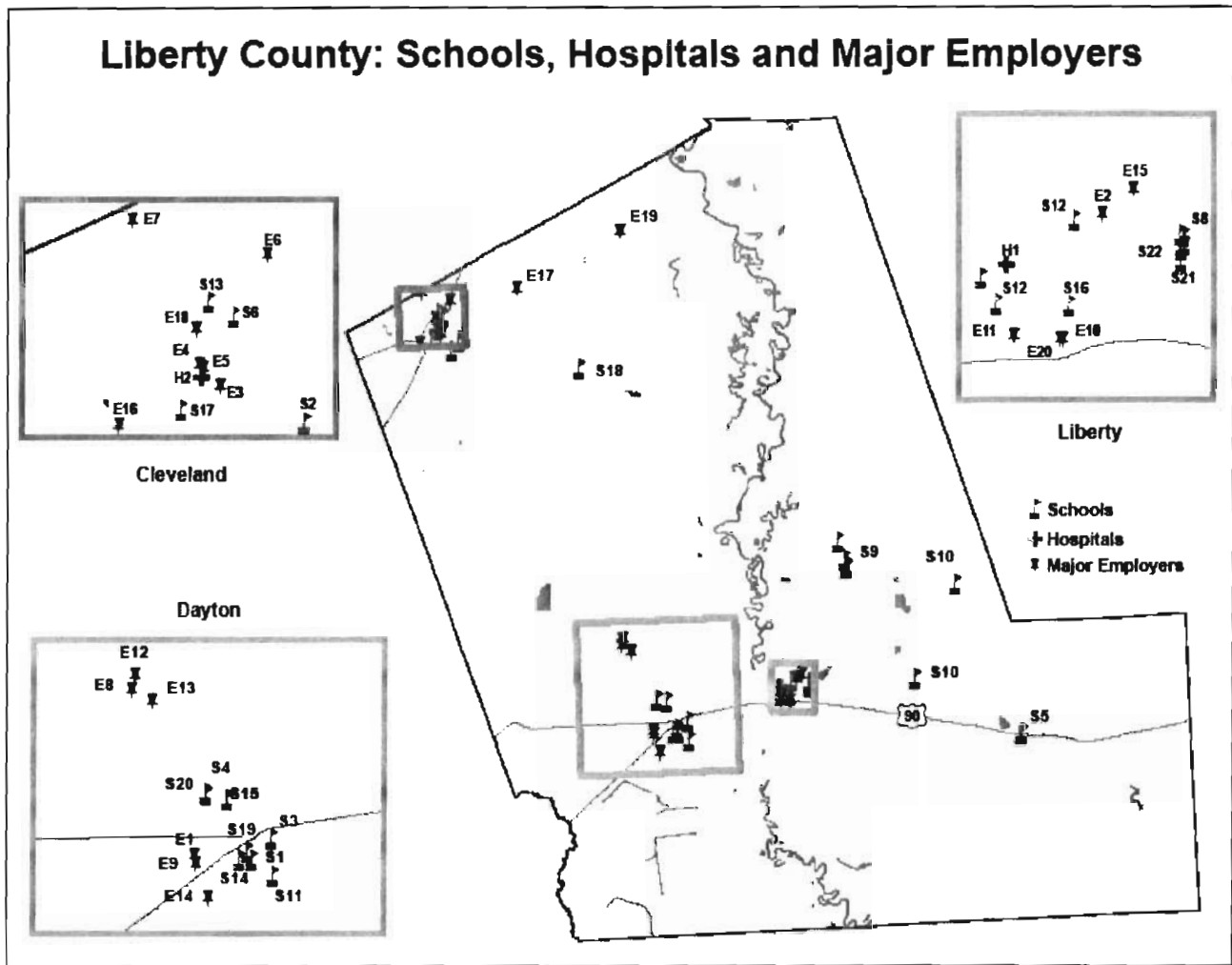
service in Cleveland, Texas with connecting routes along US 59 North, southbound to the Townsend METRO Park and Ride lot and a cross-county connecting route to Dayton/Liberty along FM 321.

I think that is news enough to justify being mentioned in the article.

Not to mention that HGAC made an error and called it FM 321 when it is SH 321. " (Corrected)

Appendix B – Major Attractors and Generators

Liberty County: Schools, Hospitals and Major Employers



| SID | School |
|-----|---------------------------|
| S1 | ADAPTIVE BEHAVIORAL UNIT |
| S2 | ANAHUAC MIDDLE |
| S3 | AUSTIN EL |
| S4 | BARBERS HILL PRIMARY |
| S5 | CLEVELAND H S |
| S6 | COLBERT EL |
| S7 | DAYTON ALTERNATIVE ED CTR |
| S8 | DAYTON H S |

S9 DEVERS AEP
S10 DOUGLASS SCH
S11 EAST CHAMBERS ELEMENTARY
S12 GULF COAST H S
S13 HARDIN EL
S14 HARDIN/CHAMBERS CTR
S15 HULL-DAISETTA EL
S16 KIMMIE M BROWN ELEMENTARY
S17 LIBERTY EL
S18 NORTHSIDE EL
S19 NOTTINGHAM MS
S20 RICHTER EL
S21 SAN JACINTO EL
S22 SOUTHSIDE PRIMARY
S23 TARKINGTON H S
S24 WILSON J H
S25 EASTSIDE INT
S26 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LARGEST SINGLE EMPLOYER BUILDINGS IN LIBERTY COUNTY (100+ JOBS)

| ID | Company | Street Address | City | Estimated Employees |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| E1 | Amico Klemp | 111 Klemp Rd | Dayton, TX 77535 | 100-499 |
| E2 | Brookshire Brothers | 2325 N Main St | Liberty, TX 77575-3901 | 100-499 |
| E3 | Brookshire Brothers | 603 E Houston St | Cleveland, TX 77327-4877 | 100-499 |
| E4 | Campbell Concrete | 105 E Boothe St | Cleveland, TX 77327-4003 | 100-499 |
| E5 | Cleveland City Offices | 203 E Boothe St | Cleveland, TX 77327-4091 | 100-499 |
| E6 | Cleveland Correctional Ctr | 901 E 5th St | Cleveland, TX 77327-3416 | 100-499 |
| E7 | Clw Inc | 10001 FM 2025 Rd | Cleveland, TX 77327 | 100-499 |
| E8 | Criminal Justice Dept | 902 FM 686 | Dayton, TX 77535-2299 | 340 |
| E9 | Insteel Wire Products CO | 500 Klemp Rd | Dayton, TX 77535-7288 | 100 |
| E10 | Liberty County Jail/Juvenile | 2410 Beaumont Ave | Liberty, TX 77575-5902 | 120 |
| E11 | Liberty Utilities | 1829 Sam Houston St | Liberty, TX 77575-4742 | 100 |
| E12 | Plane State Jail | 904 FM 686 | Dayton, TX 77535-6477 | 365 |
| E13 | Sam's Distribution Ctr | 451 FM 686 | Dayton, TX 77535-6378 | 130 |
| E14 | Tanner Construction CO | 699 County Road 493 | Dayton, TX 77535 | 100-499 |
| E15 | Wal-Mart | 2801 N Main St | Liberty, TX 77575-3910 | 100-499 |
| E16 | Wal-Mart Supercenter | 831 Highway 59 S | Cleveland, TX 77327-4873 | 100-499 |

LARGEST MULTIPLE EMPLOYER BUILDINGS IN LIBERTY COUNTY (100+ JOBS)

| ID | Major Employers | Street Address | City | Estimated Employees |
|-----|---|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| E17 | UTLX Manufacturing Inc(508); Union Tank Car CO (278); | 604 County Road 2205 | Cleveland, TX 77327-2754 | 790 |
| E18 | Texas Home Health of America Inc(458) | 407 Beicher | Cleveland, TX 77327 | 465 |
| E19 | Georgia-Pacific Corp(439) | 12936 FM 787 Rd W | Cleveland, TX 77327-9569 | 470 |
| E20 | CCA Acquisition Inc (156) | 2400 Beaumont Ave | Liberty, TX 77575 | 160 |

| Facility | Address | City | County | Zip | Beds |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|---------|------------|------|
| Cleveland Regional Medical Center | | Cleveland | LIBERTY | 77328-1688 | 107 |
| Liberty-Dayton Community Hospital, LP | 1353 North Travis Street | Liberty | LIBERTY | 77575-3595 | 25 |

Appendix C – Transit Needs Index (TNI) Methodology

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

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

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

Table 3 – Transit Needs Index Weights

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

The TNI factors were calculated as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix D – Potential Transit Funding Programs¹⁴

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

Federal Funding Resources

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

Surface Transportation Program

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

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program

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

H-GAC's **Commute Solutions** program (www.CommuteSolutionsHouston.org) is CMAQ-funded and offers a range of options for commuters. Rideshare initiatives include carpooling, vanpooling, and transit. A new and innovative carpool matching program called NuRide facilitates carpooling and provides incentives for participation. Commute Solutions is a one-stop alternative transportation resource in the Houston-Galveston area for both commuters and businesses. Staff and stakeholders provide advice, answers and assistance on commuting options and employee transportation programs. Collectively, Commute Solutions has helped

¹⁴ Excerpts from the *Gulf Coast Region Coordinated Regional Public Transportation Plan*, The Goodman Corp, et al, for H-GAC, 2006

some of the largest and most prestigious employers in the region get their employees to work faster and less stressed, while saving them thousands of dollars in fuel and automobile maintenance costs. In addition the Houston-Galveston region's Telework program now includes close to 200 major employers.

FTA Section 5307 and Section 5309 Statutory Provisions

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

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

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

Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program

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

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

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

SAFETEA-LU authorized \$25 million during 2005 and \$61 million each year from 2006 to 2009. TCSP funding competes with no other federal community betterment appropriation and, in most cases, requires no local share. The TCSP program research and grant components require dedication of a portion of the awarded funds toward an evaluation component for the program.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

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

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

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

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

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

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

State Administered Federal Funds

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

governor delegates that responsibility to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to administer.

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

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

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

Urbanized Area Grants Program (Section 5307)

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

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

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

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

The funding ratio is 80 percent federal maximum and 20 percent local match. TxDOT has been designated by the Governor to administer the Section 5310 program. Grants are typically used to purchase vans (many of which are lift-equipped) and ancillary equipment, such as radios. The Section 5310 program is undergoing a major redesign at present to reflect the strengthened

coordination requirements for local recipients. Refinements are also necessary to ensure that federal planning requirements are met.

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

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

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

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

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

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

New Freedom Funds (Section 5317)

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

Useful Federal Funding Tools

Capital Cost of Contracting

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

Joint Development Provisions

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

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

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

Transportation Corridors

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

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

Funding Partnerships

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

Parking and Farebox Revenue

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

Livable Communities Initiative (LCI)

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

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

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

State Funding Resources

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

Transportation Development Credits

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

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

State Public Transit Funding

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

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

In addition, the Texas Transit Association is requesting an additional \$16.7 million of state funding from any source to replace the small urban and rural state transit fleets, as well as an

increase in state transit funding by \$18 million per biennium for a total of \$90 million in state funding. This additional funding is justified to support the locally required match for federal funding and to assist local transit agencies in meeting infrastructure requirements necessary to meet state regional transit coordinating objectives.

State Transit Funding Distribution Formula

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

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

Intercity Bus Funding

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

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program

Ten percent of STP funds are set aside as a separate funding category for transportation enhancements. Funds are allocated to state departments of transportation for distribution. In Texas, TxDOT administers a competitive program known as the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP). The goal of STEP is to encourage diverse modes of travel, increase community benefits of transportation investment, strengthen partnerships between state and local governments, and promote citizen involvement in transportation decisions. To

be eligible for consideration, all projects must demonstrate a relationship to the surface transportation system through either function or impact and go above and beyond standard transportation activities.

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

Leverage/Use of Local Resources

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

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

Land Donation

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

Private Utility Relocation

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

Bond Program

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

Sales Tax

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

Regional Mobility Authorities (RMA)

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

Local Development Council – Worker Transit Fund

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

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



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